
TEXT AND ITS CULTURAL INTERPRETATION

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SONG QI AND “THE NOTES OF MR. SONG JING-WEN”

Song Qi (宋祁, second name Zi-jing, 子京, posthumous name Jing-wen, 景文) was born in 998 and died in 1061 at the age of 64. According to his contemporaries the birth of Song Qi and his elder brother Song Xiang (宋庠, 996—1066, Yuan-xian, 元憲) was preceded by prophetic dreams. Wang De-chen (王得臣, 1036—1116) in his collection of stories “Zhu shi” (“塵史”, “The Story with Feather Duster”), wrote:

My countrymen say that Yuan-xian's mother dreamed of a man in red [clothes], who was giving her a big pearl. [The woman] took it and put in bosom, and when she woke up, she remembered the dream. Some time later Yuan-xian was born. Later on she dreamed of the same man in red holding forth an “Analects” to her and shortly after that Jing-wen was born. That's why his infant name was Suan-ge, “Chosen brer” [1].

As it is said in the Song Dynasty history brothers Song “came from Anlu, the Anzhou district [the province of Hubei] and later moved to Yongqiu, not far from Kaifeng [Henan]”. However this is not totally right, since according to Song Qi the Song clan had moved to Kaifeng area already four generations before and only after their father Song Qi (宋玘, ?—1017) [2] death brothers Song found themselves in Anlu under care of their stepmother Mrs. Zhu, 朱夫人.

Song Qi and his brother spent their juvenile years in poverty, which was quite typical for many other Song scribes, who later glorified Chinese culture (for example, Ouyang Xiu). The future author of “Song jing wen gong bi ji” (Frag. No. 23) wrote:

When I began studying in my young years, I had neither a tutor nor classmates. In our poor house we didn't have any books and I practiced in poem and ode writing on my own.

And here is the evidence of Wang De-chen:

Mrs. Zhu, Song Yuan-xian's stepmother, was my neighbour. Since Yuan-xian and his brother Jing-wen were relatives on the maternal side, they studied in Anlu, but were poor. On midwinter holyday they invited their classmates to have a drink, and Yuan-xian said to his guests: “The holyday has come, but we have nothing to set the table with. There is only one thing left — a *liang* of silver from our father's sheath. It will be enough to buy some food”. And then he added with a smile: “On midwinter day we eat the sheath away, and for the New Year we'll eat the sword!” [3].

Juvenile years spent in poverty, probably, had a certain effect on both brothers. At least a contemporary researcher Wang Rui-lai, 王瑞來 shows in a number of examples that Song Xiang was assiduously frugal all his life, unlike the future author of “Song jing wen gong bi ji” (“宋景文公筆記”, “Mr. Song Jing-wen's Notes”), who had a taste for parties and other amusements worthy of a scribe and Confuciusian [4].

According to the customs Song Qi studied at home, but he also got education from other sources as noted by Wang De-chen:

My fellow countrymen say that when Song Jing-wen didn't go to pass his exams, he studied at a Buddhist skete in Yongyang [5].

Having finished his studies Song Qi took part in the exams.

I didn't think of finding the place for my name in the current century, but counting the millet I nourished plans to support my family and multiply our own clan's fame.

In other words, Song Qi just wanted to get a high post in the administrative apparatus of the country. He was attracted not by future literary fame, but by a desire to keep his family well and earn respect and honour with

good service. It seems that Song Qi didn't have particularly ambitious plans. Having a purely pragmatic aim he chose a beaten path like many of his foregoers: he began to copy literary writings that were considered the best by his contemporaries, and he fairly believed that mastery of this style would help him in the exams.

At the age of 24 I managed to show my works to the prime minister, Mr. Xia [6]. He singled them out and said that [with their help] I would certainly take the highest degree" (Frag. No. 23) [7].

And that actually happened: in the second year of Tian-sheng governing (1024), together with his older brother, Song Qi passed his imperial examinations successfully and got the *jinshi* degree. Song Qi was the first in the list among those who passed the examination and Song Xiang was just the third. However, according to the Song Dynasty history the empress Zhang-xian (Zhang-xian ming-su, 章獻明肅, 969—1033), who reigned at that period,

didn't want the younger brother to be ahead of the elder one and ordered to give the first place to Song Xiang shifting Song Qi to the tenth place.

Song Qi was appointed a *tuiguan* in the province of Fuzhou (Hubei), but his service in the province didn't last long. With the help of a high official Sun Shi (孫奭, 962—1033), who highly appreciated Song Qi, he was appointed to Dalisi (the Chamber of Punishment) and got a post of professor in metropolitan college.

With varied success Song Qi worked all his life in the capital city and in provinces: he was *zhizhigao* (a civil servant in charge of drawing up drafts of emperor's papers), held a post in the Administration of Ministries (Shangshusheng), was a member of court academy Hanlinyuan, the head of Shouzhou and Haozhou (both occupied the territory of the present day Anhui province), Chenzhou, Zhengzhou and Xuzhou (all of them are in the present day Henan province), Yizhou (Sichuan), Dingzhou (Hebei), the head of the capital of Sichuan, the city of Chengdu (1056), etc. During the years of Qin-li's rule (1041—1048), under the influence of the elder brother, whom he treated with great respect all his life and whose opinion he highly appreciated, Song Qi spoke out against reforms proposed by Fan Zhong-yan [8]. Many of the reformists including Fan Zhong-yan himself were his friends: when Fan Zhong-yan was sent to work in province, Song Qi was one of the few people, who despite all former political disputes wrote a poem "I Say Good Bye to Fan Xi-wen", "送范希文", where he regretted the injustice towards this outstanding figure. This act required considerable courage.

In 1045 Song Qi got an appointment for a post of *xiueshi* in the Chamber of Longtuge [9] and in the Historic Chamber [10]. Before that Song Qi, who earned fame by his erudition, had got an order from the court to take part in writing a new official history of the Tang Dynasty ("新唐書", "Xin tan shu") under the supervision of Ouyang Xiu. Song Qi was the author of the sec-

tion called "Lie zhuan" ("列傳", "Individual biographies") that consisted of 150 *juans* and formed two thirds of the whole text. In comparison with "Jiu tang shu" (舊唐書, "Ancient History of the Tang [Dynasty]"), biographies written by Song Qi stand out, since he used a great number of additional materials, such as narrative prose, *biji*, sagas, and unofficial historic works, which allowed for Song Qi to significantly enlarge the section of already existing biographies as well as bring in new ones. Song Qi added three hundred and ten new biographies and expanded already existing ones with more than two thousand historic episodes and evidences. Song Qi worked on compilation of "Xin tang shu" during seventeen years (from 1044 to 1060). He took all the materials along from one place of employment to another. Wei Tai (魏泰, 1050—1110) writes in "Dong xuan bi lu" (東軒筆錄, "Notes from Eastern Veranda").

Every time after the feast [in his house] they opened the doors of the dormitory, drew the curtains and lit two big candles. There stood two maids ready to soak the brush with ink or unroll the paper. And everybody knew that Mister Song was working on the Tang history. From afar he had a look of an immortal saint [11]!

When the work was completed, the court expressed a wish to give stylistic homogeneity to the text written by two different authors. This task was given to Ouyang Xiu, who upon reflection refused to make any changes in Song Qi's section. Moreover, when they decided to sign "Xin tang shu" only with the name of the work supervisor, Ouyang Xiu decisively opposed to it and insisted on signing the biographies authored by Song Qi with his name. In fact the scope of work carried out by Song Qi was two times larger than that of Ouyang Xiu for the modern Tang history. In "Mo zhuang man lu" ("墨莊漫錄" "Unhasting Notes from Mozhuang") by song Zhang Bang-ji (張邦基, 13th century) it is said:

The court decided that one book written by two authors can't be stylistically homogeneous and, thus, ordered Mr. Ouyang to look through the biography section carefully and edit it. Mister took the order but later refused with a sigh: "Mr. Song belongs to older generation and our knowledge differs to a large extent. And how could I study thoroughly everything that he has already set out in writing!", and he didn't change anything. The work was finished, submitted for censor's approval, and the censor said: "When compiling such works in former times, only the name of one [author] with a higher position was signed and you, Mister, are superior that's why you should sign [the book] with your name". "But Mr. Song's input in compiling the section of biographies is very significant too!", objected [Mr. Ouyang], "[He] spent so much time doing it, so how is it possible to pass over in silence and disregard his merits?" That is why weather chronicles and the section of notes were signed with the name of Mr. [Ouyang], and biographies were signed with the name of Mr. Song. When Mr. Song learned about it, he rejoiced: "Since ancient time scribes have competed with each other and treated each other unfairly, but I have never heard about such a case!" [12].

Song Qi didn't expect any honours for his work. "Xin tang shu" gave him an opportunity to reveal his talent of a historian. Nevertheless the honours followed. Song Qi was appointed the first Deputy Head of the Administration of Ministries (Shangshusheng) and the Head of Labour Ministry, but soon he died [13]. According to the tradition and taking into account his mer-

its Song Qi was appointed the Head of the Administration of Ministries Shangshusheng posthumously. Respecting the will of the departed his family didn't file a petition to the court on conferring him a posthumous name. It was done later by a famous Song writer Zhang Fang-ping [14]. Only after that Song Qi got a posthumous name Jing-wen (景文, "Blessed and Enlightened").

Song Qi was also known as a poet and even a popular one for some time.

In the second year of the Tian-sheng reign, in a provincial examination Song Qi was the best to write a poem [that was called] "I Choose My Lord" that had such a line — "The dawn is dying away in the gleam behind the clouds. Everything subsides toward the slow-paced moon" and all people living in the capital knew it by heart. The candidates of that time called him "Song-Choose-the Lord".

Being a son of his time, in the juvenile years like his elder brother he was influenced by the popular poet school *xikun* in versification. In the course of time Song Qi developed his own original style, since he was not satisfied with the creative activity of contemporary poets and encouraged others to learn from the poets of the previous times. The anthology of "Song shi ji shi" ("宋詩紀事" "Historical events in Song poetry") compiled by Li E (厲鶚, 1692—1752) includes more than thirty poems by Song Qi. It is also mentioned that when living in Sichuan he wrote three hundred poems that were compiled in a book called "Wei Gao" ("猥稿", "Vulgar Sketches") [15]. Twenty two *juans* of his poems in the book "Quan song shi" ("全宋詩", "All Song Poems") as well as seven poems in *ci* style in the anthology "Quan song ci" ("全宋詞", "All Song ci") preserved till the present day. Song Qi also left plotless writings in traditional genres — sketches,

reports, discourses, epitaphs, letters, etc. Complete set of his works — "Song jing wen ji", "宋景文集" — counted 150 *juans* in Song times, but it was lost and we have only Qing reconstruction of one hundred *juans*.

Today Song Qi is known as the author of "Xin tan shu" in the first place. This work was of special meaning in his life: it did not just inscribe the name of Song Qi in history, but also, as he confessed, the work on "Xin tan shu" (to be more precise, an essential detail study of different materials and multiple writings) made a kind of revolution in his consciousness:

I have looked through everything I have created during all my life, and flushed with shame, broke into a sweat. I understood that I haven't written anything worthy yet (Frag. No. 24).

Within the framework of the present investigation we are interested in another Song Qi's work, namely, his book "Song jing wen gong bi ji" that is probably the shortest in comparison to all other Song *biji*. This book of poems is not particularly outstanding in the history of Chinese literature [16]. However in the name of this book the term *biji* was used for the first time in the sense, in which it was later applied for the whole school in Chinese scriptural culture. It seems impossible to study *biji* as a phenomenon without a short characteristic of the Song Qi's book.

Many parts of "The Notes..." were written simultaneously (or a little bit later) with "Xin tan shu" that had been completed by Song Qi one year before his death. We don't know when the collection itself was compiled. Chao Gong-wu (晁公武, 13th century) writes in his bibliography that Song Qi did not even make it himself [17]. It is proved by the fact that the 3rd *juan* includes writings that fall out of the general context and have headings. Moreover, the title of this work has the posthumous name of Song Qi — Jing-wen, and he is called *gong* "公", which means "the deceased mister". It is likely that the first name of the book was "Bi ji" "筆記", or it didn't have any name at all, and later somebody gave it another longer title. The book could be compiled by Li Kan (李衍, 1189—1243), who added a short epilogue to the text dated 1226. This epilogue is almost completely devoted to the analysis of discrepancies and questionable points. However, it didn't prevent him from emphasizing the merit of Song Qi, who created this work "for the descendants to learn everything he heard from the older generation" [18].

Evidently this book as well as the complete set of Song Qi's works hasn't fully preserved till the present day. Bibliographical section of the Song Dynasty history mentions the text of "Notes..." consisting of five *juans* [19]. Chao Gong-wu says that the text is composed of three *juans*. The bibliography written by Chen Zhen-sun (陳振孫, 1190—1249) states that the text has only one *juan* [20]. The Dynasty history of Liao, Jin and Yuan do not mention the collection at all. The name of Song Qi's collection is also given in different ways: Chen Zhen-sun calls it "Song jing wen bi ji" "宋景文筆記", while Chao Gong-wu — "Jing wen bi lu" "景文筆錄". There could be two different texts that were parts to the original one that was lost for some reason, and only one of them preserved. It could be one and the same text compiled in different ways. In any case the collection had acquired its present-day form and title "Song jing wen gong bi ji" by the Qing times. In Qing time Zhou Zhong-fu (周中孚, 1768—1831) mentions that the text was composed of three *juans* [21]. The book could have undergone late reconstruction that made its composition inhomogeneous and rough.

The present day text of “The Notes...” consists of three *juans* that combine one hundred and sixty six

fragments. All three *juans* have headings.

The First *Juan*

The first *juan* is called “Shi su” (“釋俗” “The Interpretation of Customs”). Among its thirty three fragments one can single out several rather stable thematic groups.

(i) Notes and observations of Song Qi on spelling or use of hieroglyphs incorrect from his viewpoint. The author suggests that one should look for the causes in those ancient times, when standardized writing didn't exist:

There were no standards of [writing] hieroglyphs in ancient times and many [hieroglyphs] were borrowed [on the basis of similarity]: *zhong* “中” was substituted for *zhong* “仲”, *shuo* “說” was substituted for *shui* “悅”, *zhao* “召” — for *shao* “邵”, *jian* “間” — for *xian* “閑” (Frag. No. 21).

Proceeding with this diversity, next generations made it even more complicated:

I often see that the current generation is far from being as thorough as the ancient one. Every time [I] feel ashamed. Once I read something about sacrifice and saw signs of *renqi* “任器” there. The commentaries said that their sense was unclear. However, *renqi* is something that can be put over the shoulders. Read more books on philosophy and history and you will understand everything” (Frag. No. 17).

Song Qi offers correct spelling of hieroglyphs explaining the origin of the mistake; he gives the original spelling and comments on specific use of this or that hieroglyph backing his viewpoint with examples from works of the foregoers, where the hieroglyphs in question are used, including those from the most ancient monuments. Here's another observation of the kind:

There are *guduozi* “骨朵子”, “mace-bearers” in the court that are almost the same as palace guards. Once at leisure I began to study this problem. Owners of large bellies, people living inside the gateways [i. e., the inhabitants of middle plains or Great Plain of China itself — *I. A.*] are called “胍托”, where the first [character reads] *gu* and the second one reads *du*. Since in colloquial speech the chief of the guard is also called *gudu*, later on they started to say it as *guduo* “骨朵”, [where] *duo* was pronounced in an even tone. But it is difficult to find a phonetically similar syllable and today this term is used for a man leading the troops. Now it can't be changed! (Frag. No. 3).

(ii) Fragments, where Song Qi explains the meaning of a certain word partially tracing back the history of its origin.

Mister Song Xuan-xian has a work called “Lu bu ji” (“鹵簿記” “The Notes about Wand-Bearers of [the Emperor's Guards]”). I got to the pole *baoshuo* “爆槩” [22] and could not define its origin. All scientists that I turned

to didn't know [it] too. Only ten years later I was able to find it: they say that [once] on the left riverbank there were pole axes *boshuo* “爆槩” [23], with a knob as big as a pumpkin. That is why it is called in such a way (Frag. No. 5).

Song Qi also mentions the system of reading hieroglyphs *fanqie* [24] used in Chinese defining dictionaries. Information from “The Notes...” often has ethno-linguistic character:

The southerners call all the rivers *jiang* “江”, while the northerners call them *he* “河”. There is a lack of clarity in the names of the rivers Huai and Qi because of the dialectical differences (Frag. No. 11).

Some fragments are devoted to the customs prevailing in Song Shu (the present day province Sichuan): instead of *lao* “老”, they call old men *po* “皤”. Here's another example

When the inhabitants of Shu see something unusual, they exclaim with surprise: “Yi-xi-xi!” (“Oh, oh!”). Li Bo uses this exclamation in his poem “Hard are the roads to Shu” (Frag. No. 14).

Some fragments about the realities of animal world also belong here:

Ju-gong told: to the north of the River [i. e., Yangzijiang — *I. A.*] lives a fish called *wangwei* “王鮪”, or “royal sturgeon” that is the same as present-day perch. Its shape reminds that of a pig and its mouth and eyes are on the belly. Every year in the second moon of spring [*wangwei*] comes out of stone holes, gets to water, and moves upstream where they catch it. *Wangwei* has such a strong fish smell that it's impossible to approach it. Official figures salt and pickle this fish to take it to the court. It tastes extremely well, but it is poisonous. It is also called “a royal sturgeon living in mountain grotts” [25] (Frag. No. 12).

(iii) Fragments describing certain customs prevailing in Chinese society in the time of Song Qi. For example, a general discussion of paper is rather interesting.

In ancient times all books were written on yellow paper only, that is why they were called *huangjuan* (“黃卷” “yellow scrolls”). Yan Zhi-tui says: “In the Heavenly Empire one can't read all the books and blur over all the mistakes”. He is talking about the yellow paint of the same colour as the paper that is why they used it to correct mistakes. Now they write on white paper, but the connoisseurs correct mistakes with yellow paint. The colours don't match. Only Daoist and Buddhist works are still written on yellow paper” (Frag. No. 7).

Here you can also find commentaries on stone gongs, clothes of court nobility, steles, scholarship, etc. For example:

Recently those who get [the post of] *guanchashi* are not wearing a gold fish on their belt. When a well-known official Qian Ruo-shui (錢若水, 960-1003) was given [the post of] *guanchashi* first, he put the fish on his belt. Everybody he met on his way was surprised. They [bothered] him with questions and Ruo-shui got tired of telling [about that fish], so he invented a story about a Tang foreigner, who carried [a fish] in his sleeve and showed it upon request (Frag. No. 1).

Here's another case:

If the stele was put up near a grave, it signified that there was a coffin in it, but if it was put up near a temple, then it was meant for sacrificial animals to be tied down. The ancient people made inscriptions about it on the steles. And today in Buddhist temples they choose big stone pieces to engrave inscriptions on, and the upper class people compose [those inscriptions] and call them epitaphs. Why do they do it? That is not clear to me (Frag. No. 9).

(iv) The fragments that are devoted to poetry and resemble early Song *shihua* (“詩話” arguments about poems) [26], where Song Qi gives his opinion on the poems

(or separate lines) written by a certain author, compares them, lists the poets whom he considers outstanding and worthy, gives other people's statements on poetry and poets that provoked his interest. Among these poets are Li Bo (李白, 701—762), Du Fu (杜甫, 712—770), Liu Yü-xi (劉禹溪, 772—843), Yang Yi (楊億, 974—1020), Mei Yao-chen (梅堯臣, 1002—1060) and some others. For example:

The Prime minister Yan [27] is a recognized master of versification of the century. Late in life [I] saw a set of his works and it comprised more than ten thousands pieces! All the Tang authors, [whose works] preserved till the present day, have nothing of the kind. But the Prime minister didn't put a lot of value in his own writings. Those, who stayed at his place, as well as his subordinates, took away his sounds and rhymes and used them for poetic impromptus (Frag. No. 26).

Some notes about Song Qi's contemporaries also belong here:

My friend Yang Bei, 楊備 got “Shang shu” [28] written with Zhou script [29], translated and read it. How great his joy was! Since that time he wrote all documents and papers in Zhou. His colleagues and friends didn't understand anything and considered [Yang] strange (Frag. No. 22).

The Second *Juan*

The second *juan* of sixty eight fragments is called “Kao Gu” “考古”, which we conventionally translate as “Researches into Antiquity” [30]. The second *juan* is not fundamentally different from the first one, because as an ordinary Chinese scribe Song Qi mostly studied the antiquities as well as investigated the word origin and the meaning of concepts. All major topics of the first *juan* can be found here. However the customs are not emphasized that strong, which allows for a bit different thematic groups to be singled out.

(i) The fragments devoted to the famous scientists, first of all to Confucians of the past and Song Qi's contemporaries. Here we include statements about poets and poetry. For example, the remarks upon the spelling of Bao Zhao [31]: “At present they often misspell the name of Bao Zhao writing it as *zhao* ‘昭’” (Frag. No. 32). Statements and comments on the opinions of historical figures and Song Qi's friends:

Late Mr. Song Xuan-xian [32] once said that Zuo Qiu-ming [33] became skilful in describing human deeds, and Zhuang Zhou [34] acquired skill in making speeches about the Divine Dao, and nothing can surpass the perfect works of these two sages. Even if there appeared absolutely wise people, they would not add anything new. As for me I consider the chapters on Dao and De Lao-zi to be the forefathers of sayings on the hidden, “Li sao” by Qu [35] and Song [36] — the forefathers of the ode poetry, “Historical Commentaries” [37] by Sima Qian — the forefather of historical records and biographies. Writings that

were created after are not able to complement it in any way (Frag. No. 65).

(ii) The fragments explaining why the present-day Song Qi researchers make so many mistakes. On the one hand their illiteracy is based on not knowing one of the first Chinese defining dictionaries “Shuo wen jie zi” “說文解字” that could provide them with the original meaning of a certain hieroglyph: “Scientists do not read “Shuo wen”, and I consider it wrong” (Frag. No. 48). A whole set of examples illustrates the mistakes caused by such ignorance. On the other hand illiteracy is hidden in ignorance, lack of erudition in ancient texts and works of the foregoers: “In ancient times people said: if you are a stupid ignoramus, you wouldn't be able to hide it” (Frag. No. 63). This ignorance was also caused by mere absence of books:

At the end of Tang [Dynasty reign] the collections of books were scattered, lost, that is why Confucians were not very literate (Frag. No. 44).

In reading ancient texts the so called *weizi* (“偽字” “false hieroglyphs”) are particularly difficult. These false Chinese characters were especially wide-spread during the rule of the Late Wei and Northern Qi Dynasties (534—577).

(iii) The fragments devoted to the clarification of other writings. First of all this includes different commentaries, explanations, textological comments to the text

parts or even specific hieroglyphs from “Han shu” (“漢書” “History of the Han [Dynasty]”) and clarification of meaning in commentaries to “Han shu” by Yan Shi-gu (顏師古, 581—645). There are also remarks on the philosopher Wang Bi's (王弼, 226—249) comments to “Yi jing” (“易經” “The Book of Changes”).

(iv) The fragments about plotless writings and their authors both ancient and modern. These fragments of textological character present evaluations given by Song Qi or other people to writings of certain authors. Often the two great Tang poets and thinkers Liu Zong-yuan and Han Yu are discussed and compared. For example, Song Qi stresses that Liu Zong-yuan used the style of the ancient, but nevertheless he managed to convey new ideas, etc.

(v) The fragments devoted to the argument on governing the state.

True laws ruled in the Heavenly Empire in the time of Chunqiu. Kong-zi had a talent to rule the Heavenly Empire, but he didn't have a chance to do that. Therefore his ideals were obvious during the reign of Chunqiu — so that due to them the whole Heavenly Empire could rejoice and glorify the ruler, honourable people wouldn't dare to think of their private lives and the Heavenly Empire wouldn't blame them for their arguments, and villains wouldn't dare to disturb the peace (Frag. No. 71).

The Third Juan

If the first and the second *juans* are rather homogeneous, than the third *juan* composed of sixty six fragments totally corresponds to its name: “Za shuo” (“雜說” “Various Statements”).

(i) The commentaries on the problems of governing the state and relationships between the governor and the governed:

That monarch is exceptional, who restrains the evil, ends wars, and makes officials obey his orders, in this case all work is done. If you want to control the outskirts, you should first put the centre in order. And the centre is the monarch himself (Frag. No. 101).

Or:

A monarch shouldn't ask for things that are impossible to get; a monarch shouldn't forbid the things that are impossible to forbid; a monarch shouldn't give orders that can't be carried out. That's why people say: the more you ask — the less you get, the more you forbid — the less they obey, the more orders you give — the slower they carry them out. They say that the monarch has lost his power if he orders something and gets no result; the monarch is called inhumane, if he asks for something that should not be asked for, and gets his object; the monarch is called unworthy, if he forbids but nobody obeys; the monarch is called inhumane, if he forbids something that shouldn't be forbidden; they say that the monarch has lost respect, if he orders and nobody obeys; the monarch is called perverse, if he gives orders that shouldn't be carried

Song Qi gives models of ideal rulers: for example, Han Gao-zu (on the throne from 205 to 195 BC) was such a wise governor that his successors continued to rule in peace and nothing made them feel anxious. In Song Qi's opinion, only men of education should hold power. But history provides us with other examples:

The world glorifies Wen-di [38] — a Hang lord of great virtues. But there was only one educated Confucian Jia-yi in the court, and those who held the posts of ministers were mediocre people, furious military leaders from the time of Gao-zu [39], who didn't know a lot about ceremonies and music, resolutions and rules. In those times “Shi [jing]” and “Shu [jing]” were not wide-spread, they didn't even exist, but the Heavenly Empire lived peacefully — the troops didn't exult, the landlords were held subject, Nanyue was filled with virtue, and though Xiunnu maliciously passed the borders several times, they didn't dare to move deeper into the country. Since then people thought that it would be enough to have natural talent to rule the Heavenly Empire, and education should not be valued. They said that natural talents are close to the truth, while fine words can give fame only. The fine words dried out, but people pretended to be happy! (Frag. No. 79).

out and gets his end. That is why sages attached special importance to the removal of [such] mistakes: if you manage to get rid of the three “you should not” — it would be great! (Frag. No. 106).

(ii) The commentaries on world order and interrelationship between the earth and the heavens. Not all of the given adages belong to Song Qi here, but there are almost no references to the sources.

Food is such a thing that human life depends on. If you [eat] in time — you have a full belly, and if you have nothing to eat — you suffer. And if you suffer too much — you die. The laws are the thing that peace in the state depends on. The laws are proper and the order prevails, the laws are — there is disorder. And large disorders destroy the state (Frag. No. 108).

(iii) Short sayings (from eight to twenty hieroglyphs) of aphoristic character on various topics (many of them are written in rhythmic prose):

There is nothing more life-giving than rain and dew, but luxuriant grass is dying again; there is nothing more severe than frost and snow, but pine trees and cypresses are green even in winter (Frag. No. 122).

They do not speak of education in the century of fighting disorders; they do not speak of wars in the century of striving for peace (Frag. No. 147).

If you go to the forest without an axe, you won't get the brushwood (Frag. No. 155).

Fragments of the kind are concentrated in the end of this *juan*.

Four fragments in the end of the *juan* stand apart, since they differ in size and in content. These works have autobiographical character including the text of the epitaph and memorial stele for the author's grave, and an address to relatives explaining what should be done with Song Qi's body after his death. The epitaph and the text for the stele were written by Song Qi. One can't but notice a self-deprecating character of the epitaph (which is quite traditional, though) as well as other autobiographical fragments of the collection. Song Qi keeps repeating that he doesn't deserve glorification after death, because he hasn't done anything outstanding as a statesman. He even asks his descendants not to waste time and energy in compiling the collection of his works, since he hasn't done anything worthy in this field too (but we can't agree with the last, if we remember "Xin tan shu", for example):

After my death tell everybody in the family to gather for the funeral ceremony. Perform ritual bathing and put a coat made from crane feathers, tulle hat, and thread sandals on me. In three days make entombment, in three months inhumate the body, but never listen to fortune-tellers of the In Yang school! For the coffin take poor quality wood, wash the coffin with varnish three times only instead of four — that would be enough, so that my mortal remains preserved for several decades — that would be enough. My life flared and now [I] (mingle) with all the things in existence, return to primordial emptiness and merge with the [body] decaying in the grave. There infinitude is waiting for [me], so why should I grumble? Dig the grave with the depth of three *zhang*, make a small shrine with space enough just for the coffin and funeral utensils. On the left [of the coffin] put two bowl with clean water and two jugs with wine, on the right put two baskets with rice flour, put one set of court clothes and one set of informal clothes, as well as embroidered shoes. Put [the stele] with epitaph on the left, and on the reverse side inscribe the necrology. Mould a grave hill the simpler and more modest, the [better]. Don't put golden and bronze objects into the grave. The things I followed during my life haven't been widely recognized. My writings, crea-

tive work of a man with average abilities, do not deserve the glory of the descendants. And at the time of the court service [my] salary did not exceed two thousand *shi* [40] — enough to provide for several people! I don't deserve well of the emperor and I haven't given favours to people. Thus, you shouldn't ask for granting me a posthumous name, and shouldn't take offerings for the funerals or turn to outstanding man to compose an epitaph or necrology for the stele. Plant five weeping cypresses and make a hill three *chi* high. Call neither Taoists nor Buddhists for the memorial service. This is what I ask while still living. Follow my orders very closely, because if you break them, I would be already dead and wouldn't know anything about it. When you will be visiting my grave in mourning, don't put four funeral boncuks as customary, but use simple clothes and utensils in order to honour my inclination to modesty. The things I was talking about in my life are not special or unique and for me it is important that [you] don't have any intentions to make a collection of [my] works... (Frag. No. 164).

The above mentioned groups of fragments characterize the collection "Song jing wen gong bi ji" as a documentary artefact resembling early Song *biji*, such as "Gui tian lu" ("歸田錄" "The Notes of the Returned to the Fields") by Ouyang Xiu or "Meng xi bi tan" ("夢溪筆談" "Records of Conversations in Mengxi") by Shen Kuo (沈括, 1031—1095). At the same time, despite the small size the compilation is very broad-ranging and diverse in topics in contrast to "Bei meng suo yan" by Sun Guang-xian. Noticing that his "contemporaries can't reach the depth of the ancient", Song Qi tried to clarify the obscure and correct the false. For him the true knowledge is mostly associated with the original meaning of the hieroglyphs and their correct spelling and, hence, with the correct understanding of the text meaning and related customs. According to the tradition Song Qi bases his observations on the opinions and works of influential authors, uses examples from poetry and often makes references to his own experience or cites the words of his brother, whom he calls with an honourable title Ju(guo)-gong, 莒(國)公 given by the emperor for outstanding service.

Thus, the collection of Song Qi presents a compilation of short and laconic fragments with neither a plot nor a common story line. Purely informative pieces, ethical evaluations, poetic lines, aphorisms, and autobiographical sketches are combined in this book that features no general narrative. "Song jing wen gong bi ji" can be compared to a notebook of a scholar for keeping the materials that have not been used in other works. Though these materials are not divided into the thematic groups, one can find in the compilation general topics that the author was interested in and that he kept developing in different parts of the book: governing of the state, correcting the mistakes, evaluation of poetry, etc. The author of the book Song Qi is presented as a model Chinese scribe, who constantly doubts the perfection of his knowledge and strives to expand it all his life considering exact ideas to be an absolute; who makes high and

often non-realizable demands to himself and to others, and who is always extremely strict to slightest inaccuracy and carelessness. Song Qi was not a spoiled child of fortune and everything that he achieved was a result of hard work partly compensating the absence of great talent:

Heaven granted me with talents of an ordinary man and by his nature an ordinary man can't make its name renowned in the world.

Work every day, restlessly grind away at your studies, labour with zeal and the reward will come. Ignorant people aroused indignation bordering with growling in Song Qi. During his life Song Qi was probably a dry-as-dust pedant, strict and dispassionate, but we will never be able to tell it for sure.

Notes

1. Wang De-chen, *Zhu shi* ("The Story with Feather Duster") (Shanghai, 1986), p. 32.
2. His father was a petty official. The highest post he held was that of the head of a province. He died in the rank of a regional military inspector. Song Qi was twenty at that moment. Song Qi and Song Xiang's mother used the name of Han, 韓. However, there are different opinions upon this matter: for example, Kong Ping-zhong (孔平仲 end of 11th — beginning of the 12th century) says in "Tan Yuan" ("談苑" "Garden of Talks"): "Zhong Zhu-zuo, 鍾著祚 had two daughters and the elder one married Song family, and gave birth to Xiang and Qi" (a quotation from: Ding Chuan-jing, *Songren ishi huibian* (Collection of Informal Stories About Those Living Under the Song Dynasty) (Beijing, 2003), i, p. 309).
3. Wang De-chen, *op. cit.*, pp. 28—29.
4. Wang Rui-lai, "Shilun Song Qi" ("About Song Qi"), *Xinan Shifan daxue xuebao* (1988), No. 4, pp. 71—72. Particularly, Wang Rui-lai describes one episode from the life of brothers Song. When they already served at the court, on New Year's day Song Xiang was reading "Yi Jing" in solitude, while his brother Song Qi was having fun at the party with his friends. Next morning Song Xiang blamed his younger brother for his prodigality and for having forgotten those times, when they couldn't eat well.
5. Wang De-chen, *op. cit.*, p. 58. On poverty of bothers Song see his note on pp. 28—29.
6. I. e., to Xia Song (夏竦, 985—1051), a Song statesman and writer. It is not quite evident, where and when Song Qi showed his writings to Xia Song. At least in the fourth *juan* "Qing xiang za ji" ("青箱雜記", "Various Notes of Qing-xiang") Wu Chu-hou (吳處厚, 12th century) writes that he met Xia Song, when the latter was the head of the Anzhou, where brothers Song lived then. Xia Song gave high estimates to the work of Xiang and Qi saying that Xiang was so talented that could become a minister, while the younger brother could also take a post among the emperor retinue.
7. Below I'm giving a complete translation of a rather important autobiographical fragment from "Song Jing-wen gong bi ji", that is being cited here:

When I began studying in my young years, I had neither a tutor nor classmates. In our poor house we didn't have any books and I practiced in poem and ode writing on my own. I didn't think of finding the place for my name in the current century, but counting the millet I nourished plans to support my family and multiply our own clan's fame. At the age of 24 I managed to show my works to the prime minister, Mr. Xia. He singled them out and said that [with their help] I would certainly take the highest degree [in the examinations]. I was at a loss: would it be so? In the year of *jia-zi* during the Tian-sheng rule I came to the Ceremony Department upon recommendation. And since Liu Gong-tan, *xiueshi* from Longtu[ge] chamber, the chief examiner in ode poems, gave me quite high estimates in the court, I put on a square cap. Since then I began to work hard tempering and polishing up my style. I carefully copied the woks of famous people. All textualists praised me saying that I was doing everything in a right way. At the age of fifty, I was called to write the Tang history, and my mind was set on it during ten odd years. I studied the works of my foregoers in full and understood the difficulty of writing. Having realized that with all my heart I turned to ancient authors and only then I started to understand the main thing. [I] have looked through everything I have created during all my life, and flushed with shame, broke into a sweat. I understood that I haven't written anything worthy yet, and the work that took all my time and efforts was nothing but trash, as they say — a straw dog [in ancient China, a dog made of straw used for sacrifice and thrown away after; later this phrase became synonymous to junk, that can be only thrown away — *I. A.*] Writing should win fame by itself, because only then it will be handed down [from generation to generation] without dying away. We draw a circle with the help of a drawing compass, and a square — with a triangle, but in the end both [drawing compass and triangle] are just servants to people. The ancients mocked at those who so to say built a house inside another house [an idiomatic expression about excessive bunching or sophistication — *I. A.*] It is fair. Han Yu said: "The point is in putting aside all trite words. And this is the most important thing in any kind of writing". There are five canons and all of them have different composition ("Yi jing", 易經; "Shu jing", 書經; "Shi jing", 詩經; "Li ji", 禮記 and "Chun qiu", 春秋 — *I. A.*) After Kong-zi's death, the writers came into blossom, but the tradition was not handed down from generation to generation any more, and those who lived before us had managed to understand the meaning of that. Hey-ho! It was too late when I saw the light. But it doesn't matter, if the Heaven lengthens my life, I hope to reach perfection in my later years.

8. Fan Zhong-yan (范仲淹, 989—1052) was a Song high official and reformist. He was born to a noble, but poor family of civil servants. He was made an orphan at the age of two. He studied hard and became *jinshi* in 1012. With the help of Yan Shu (晏殊, 991—1055) he was given a post of text verifier in the imperial library and started his career. Later on Fan Zhong-yan became a member of the court academy Hanlinyuan, a deputy head of Shumiyuan and *canzhi zhengshi*. He fought against Lü Yi-jian (呂夷簡, 979—1044), who had concentrated all supreme power in his hands by that time. In particular Fan Zhong-yan appealed to the highest authority with the report "Si lun" ("四論", "Four Judgments"), in which he criticized all-powerful minister and the court policy. For this criticism he was exiled to work in Raozhou (Jiangxi). In the course of time Fan became the leader of the opposition. In 1040 at his own request Fan Zhong-yan was moved to work in Yanzhou, the most important strategic centre in military confrontation to Tanguts. On his own initiative he built fieldworks there. Fan Zhong-yan also paid special attention to the training of border guard troops. In 1043 Fan took the post of Assistant to the Prime Minister and sent a report to the Emperor offering a plan on reformation of administrative system. However, in 1044 Fan was forced to resign through efforts of reform oppositionists. He was proficient in Confucius law. See the official Fan Zhong-yan's biography in *juan* 314 of the history of Song Dynasty.

9. The chamber, where the emperor Tai-zong's private papers, books, pictures, etc. were initially kept. In 1004 they set up a service to keep Luntuge in order; in 1007 the posts of *xiueshi* were established.

10. This court establishment, traditionally headed by a civil servant of ministerial rank as a second post was founded in the times of Tang Dynasty. It was in charge of writing an official Dynasty history and calendar notations as well as storing imperial papers. Song Qi held a post of *xiuzhuan*, a court historiographer there (they were appointed from among the courtiers).

11. Quoted from: Ding Chuan-jing, *op. cit.*, i, p. 287.

12. Quoted from: *ibid.*, p. 385.

13. See more about Song Qi in his official biography in *juan* 284 of the Song Dynasty history, in the attachment to his elder brother's biography, and the materials in "Songren zhuanji ziliao suoyin" (Index of Biographical Data of Those Living Under the Song Dynasty) ((Beijing, 1988), i, pp. 738—739), in the above mentioned work by Wang Rui-lai and Xie Si-wei, *Song Qi yu Song-dai wenxue fazhan* (Song Qi and the Development of Song Literature) (Wenxue ichan, 1989), No. 1, etc.

14. Zhang Fang-ping (張方平, 1007—1091) — a Song nobleman and scholar of authority. His second name was An-dao, 安道, his pen name was Lequan jushi, 樂全居士. From an early age he had great inclination to studying and exceptional memory: according to his contemporaries, he could remember a text after reading it just one time. He served in Censor chamber in the Administration of Ministries Shangshusheng. The Song Dynasty history (paragraph 318) features his official biography.

15. Li E, *Song shi ji shi* (Historical Events in Song Poems) (Shanghai, 1983), i, p. 264.

16. Researchers are not particularly interested in this book. For example, in one of his articles Xie Si-wei mentions Song Qi's prosaic heritage only briefly and says nothing about "The Notes...", though the article has references to it (see: Xie Si-wei, *op. cit.*)

17. Chao Gong-wu, *Jun zhai du shu zhi jiao deng* (The Notes on Reading Books at the District Officer's Study) (Shanghai, 1990), p. 574.

18. Song Qi, *Song jing wen gong bi ji* (The Notes of Mister Song Jing-wen) (Shanghai, 1936), p. 27.

19. *Songshi yiwenzhi* (Data on the Literature from the Song [Dynasty]'s History) (Beijing, 1958), p. 1023.

20. Chen Zhen-sun, *Zhi zhai shu lu jie ti* (Annotated Sketches About the Books from Zhi zhai's Study) (Shanghai, 1987), p. 308.

21. Zhou Zhong-fu, *Zhen tang du shu ji* (The Notes on Reading Books from Zhen tang's Hall) (Shanghai, 1959), ii, p. 1105.

22. The pole with a carved design of a hump-backed bull, a symbol of power that wand-bearers carried before the Imperial parade.

23. An axe with a knob in the form of a small pumpkin used in the times of Sui Dynasty.

24. It is a system of hieroglyphic notation and reading, when two other hieroglyphs are used to read a sign. The first one gives the initial and the second one — the final. The introduction of this system is associated with the name of a well-known critic of literary works Sun Yan, 孫炎, who lived during the reign of Wei in the time of the Three Kingdoms (220—265).

25. It is hard to say what animal should *wangwei* be associated with. At least Zhang Heng (張衡, 78—139) states that "王鮪岫居" "*Wangwei* lives in caves", and that like turtles it can be used for three ritual services (worshipping the spirits of heaven, earth and ancestors): "能繫三趾". Late on Lu Ji (陸機, 216—303) wrote that "王鮪懷河曲" "*wangwei* is hiding in bends of rivers".

26. The first work with the character *shihua* in its name, that is considered a forebear of the style, appeared after Song Qi's death. This is "Liu-yi shi hua" ("六一詩話" "Shihua of Liu-yi [a Hermit]") by Ouyang Xiu dated 1070.

27. Song writer and high official Yan Shu (晏殊, 991/993?—1055) is meant. In juvenile years he developed a great gift for literature. He could versify at the age of seven and the countrymen called him "a divine youth". Having passed imperial examinations for talented juveniles, he took the degree of *jinshi* and also the post of text verifier in the Imperial library. He was in the future emperor Ren-zong retinue, and when Ren-zong acceded to the throne (1023), Yan Shu became his adviser and court reader. He took active part in compiling "Zhen-zong shi lu" ("真宗實錄" "Truthful Notes in Zhen-zong"). In 1030 he was appointed a chief examiner and gave the first place to Ouyang Xiu during the exam. Later he became a member of the court academy Hanlinyuan, but was sent to govern the province of Songzhou (Henan) for his obstinate character. After some time he was returned to the court and in 1043 he became the Prime Minister. He had a taste for feasts with his friends, where they composed impromptu poems. His poetic works are notable for sophistication and fine style. See *juan* 311 in the Song Dynasty history for the biography of Yan Shu.

28. I. e., "Shu jing" "書經", one of the most esteemed ancient Chinese scriptural artefacts. Its title is normally translated as "The Book of History" or "The Book of Documents". Compiling and editing "Shu jing" is ascribed to Confucius. We can't state it with certainty, since the original text of the book has not preserved. During the rule of Qin dynasty (221—207 BC), when the emperor Qin Shi-huang burnt all the books unfavourable from his viewpoint, "Shu jing" was destroyed too. However, in 178 BC it was partly recreated. The history of this artefact is rather thorny: it was lost and found many times, they doubted its origin and suspected it to be a forgery. The text today known as "Shu jing" consists of fifty eight chapters, but only thirty three of them are considered to be original without any doubt. "Shu jing" is a collection of fables, myths, legends, records of historical events, imperial resolutions, etc. related to the 14th—8th centuries BC. Plenty of Confucian ideas (the principles of state governing, requirements to the governor of the Heavenly Empire, ethical and moral categories) prove that if not Confucius himself, then his disciples and followers took part in work on the text.

29. The script of "big *zhuan*" is meant. This style of hieroglyphic script appeared as a result of the reform on writing that took place in the time of Zhou Xuan-wan (827—782 BC). It doesn't differ much from ancient inscriptions on oracle bones and bronze vessels.

30. The translation is given at: *A Sung Bibliography* (Hong Kong, 1978), p. 279.

31. Bao Zhao (鮑照, 405/412?—466?) — an outstanding poet during the time of the Six Dynasties (420—581), whose creative work was recognized only in later historical periods. He was born to a poor family. It is a classical example of a Chinese scribe, who couldn't achieve the desired in his life. He wasn't that successful in service and laid down his life during a revolt of soldiers.

A little bit more than two hundred poems preserved till the present day, and eighty of them refer to the genre of folk songs *yuefu*. Many of the poet's works are full of grief and despair.

32. A Song official, historian, bibliophile, and calligrapher Song Shou (宋綬, 991—1040), whose posthumous name was Xuan-xian, 宣獻. Already in young age he showed a desire for studying and rich home library contributed to it. He took the degree of *jinshi* without passing the examinations. He started to serve early in his life and held a number of high posts at court. He was *canzhi zhengshi* (1033), *xueshi* in the court academy Hanlinyuan, as well as took part in compiling the chronicle of the emperor Zhen-zong's rule and preparing the materials for the Song Dynasty history. He was a connoisseur of historical and canonic writings by Confucius and a recognized master of old style prose. The collection of his works was lost and only separate writings in some anthologies survived to this day. The official biography of Song Shou is given in *juan* 291 of the Song Dynasty history.

33. Zuo Qiu-ming (左丘明, the end of 6—5 centuries BC) — an outstanding historiographer of Chinese ancient times, Confucius' contemporary (551—479 BC), the author of commentaries “Zuo Zhuan” (“左傳” “Zuo's Commentaries”) to a well-known historical chronicle “Chun qiu” (“Springs and Autumns”). The text of the artefact presents a chronicle of events from 722 to 468 BC, and mostly contains the description of historical events and dialogues of historical figures.

34. Zhuang Zhou (庄周, ca. 369 — ca. 286 BC), also known as Zhuang-zi, 庄子 — a famous Chinese philosopher, one of the Daoism founders, the author of the “Zhuang-zi” treaty. For some time he held a petty post in the government, but then he left the service to lead an independent life.

35. An ancient Chinese poet Qū Yuan (屈原, 340?—289? BC) is meant. His poem “Li sao” (離騷, “Grief of an Exile”) tells about bitter luck of a man who was exiled because of his wish to prevent the fall of his motherland (the empire of Chu, conquered by Qin), and about not less tragic destiny of a people betrayed by the government officials. In exile Qū Yuan lost hope to attain justice and committed suicide by jumping into the river.

36. I. e., a famous ancient Chinese poet Song Yu (宋玉, 290?—223? BC), who is considered to be the second greatest poet after Qū Yuan. There is an opinion that Song Yu could be a remote relative of Qū Yuan. His most famous writing is the poem “Nine Discourses” that has a lot in common with “Li sao”.

37. “Historical Notes” by Sima Qian — “Shi ji” “史記” is the first in China historico-biographical work that in many aspects defined the following historiographical tradition and that became a model of an official historical chronicle for many centuries to come. It consists of 130 chapters covering the time period from the rule of mythic Huang-di, the Yellow emperor, and till Han emperor Wu-di (武帝, 140—87 BC). The author of “Shi ji” Sima Qian (司馬遷, 145?—? BC) was a historian, a writer and emperor's historiographer in the Han court. In 99 BC he called down the wrath of the emperor, who put him in prison and castrated. His father started to write “Shi ji” and Sima Qian managed to complete it in 92 BC.

38. I. e., the Han emperor Liu Heng (劉恒, 202—157 BC), the third son of the Han Dystany founder, ruled during 180—157 BC. He considered agriculture to be the basis of the state and in order to develop it he reduced taxes several times, however landlords were the first to benefit from it. Complete abolishment of land tax in 167 BC contributed to consolidation of central administration in the state. Reinforcement of central administration was also supported by the practice of selling titles and ranks introduced during the Wen-di's rule, which matched the ambitions of the nobles. Wen-di also paid special attention to developing legislation, which stimulated consolidation of power and improved the life of common people. The emperor fought senseless wastefulness, particularly, he opposed pompous burial ceremonies. He improved the relation with the governmental body Nanyue that had declared independence from Han. Wen-di managed to make Nanyue a part of the state again. In 162 BC Han concluded an alliance with Xiongnu that had been a trouble to the empire before, and though *xiongnu* still raided the state, Wen-di neither paid special attention nor responded to it. Wen-di died of a disease in the age of forty six.

39. I. e., Liu Bang (劉邦, 256—195 BC), the founder of the Han Distany. He got the title of an emperor in 202 BC. In order to solve the problem of labour shortage (the population decreased as a result of the previous devastating wars) he partly dismissed the army and gave freedom to personally dependent people. He introduced the laws common for the whole empire on the basis of Qin legislation, but with additions, changes and reductions to the latter. Liu Bang pursued a policy of disparaging the merchant class. He banned silk clothes and carriages for the merchants and imposed heavy taxes on them. Gradually he started to fight the nobility depriving them of land and influence. Though he was born to a family of an ordinary peasant and didn't have much education, Liu Bang foresightedly cancelled the Qin laws on forbidding Confucian books, started to attract scholars to state government, established emperor's protection of Confucius' followers. In other words Liu Bang greatly contributed to the formation of a new class of well-read scholars, who closely associated the teaching of Confucius with service to centralized monarchy headed by an emperor.

40. Measure of weight, a bit more than 3.5 kg. *Shi* together with *dan* (103.5 kg) was a traditional unit for counting monthly salary of an official. In the time of Tan and Song the salary of officials was generally counted in *shi* or *dan* and was paid in a combined way, i. e., with corn and with money (about one third) and with things including clothes, silk, fuel materials, stationary, etc. The amount of salary depended on the rank of the post. The Han Dynasty was the first to introduce such official salaries instead of just giving the land or allowing for the officials to withhold taxes in the controlled territories.