

The richness of Chinese names

Analyses of personal names with special reference to *Zuǒ Zhuàn*

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Preface

Firstly, I would like to thank my academic supervisor professor Christoph Harbsmeier for helping me through this thesis and my entire study at University of Oslo. He sets a good example for me as an intelligent scholar, an international citizen and a decent man. From the first time I met him at Frankfurt airport by accident, he began to give me a lot of help, and I really appreciate that, without his help I will not survive my first day in Norway.

Secondly, I would like to express my gratitude to Halvor Eifring, who taught me a lot about how to do academic works, and how to maintain a neutral attitude when judging things, and my very early idea of this thesis is also inspired by him.

Last but not the least it is my pleasure to thank my family and friends, without their encouragement I will never be able to finish this thesis.

Chapter 1. Introduction

1.1 Importance of names

To a certain extent names of persons reflect many facts of human civilization. In many cultures personal names are vitally important. It surprises me to think about how much time we spend on our names, and how our names influence our lives in all sorts of ways. In western society, a very common example is so-called "alphabetism", which involves discrimination on the basis of the first letter of a name. When two patients, Adam and Zara, go to the same hospital, poor Zara have to wait after Adam, because who's first is quite often decided by first letter of people's name. Think about it: if both of them are in danger, Zara might dead because he has a "wrong name".

If the story about Adam and Zara is only a joke, then the story about Chinese names can be much more serious. Across the whole of Chinese history, it is not difficult to find people who were killed simply because of issues related to their names. Around 300 AD, we are told there was a Chinese minister whose name is Wáng Zhuì 王墜, which literally means "the falling of the king"¹. This poor person was given the death penalty simply because emperor of the time did not approve of his name. He may have been the first person to die because having a "bad name" in Chinese history.² As Chinese civilization progressed, people, especially emperors, paid more and more attention on their names, and it became a real matter of life and death. Sometimes Chinese emperors were over sensitive about names. This leads to people being unable to even realize that they made a terrible mistake about emperor's names.

¹ In general a Chinese name can contain many different meanings, this is only one of them.

² This case was first record in *Zī zhì tōng jiàn* 資治通鑒, *Comprehensive Mirror to Aid in Government*, written by Sīmǎ Guāng 司馬光 in 1084 AD, Beijing 北京: Yan Shan Press 燕山出版社, 2000.

In Qing Dynasty a scholar called Chá Sìtíng 查嗣庭 wrote a book called *Wéi zhǐ lù* 維止錄³, which should be a very common title at that time. However, the story goes

yōng zhèng
雍 正

Remove head

wéi zhǐ
维 止

*After removing the head of
emperor's title, we got the
name of the book.*

that the emperor of that time was called Yōng Zhèng 雍正 (1678 AD)⁵, and he believed the title of this book was very dangerous for him, because wéi 维 and zhǐ 止 suggested that his royal title Yōng Zhèng 雍正 will without a head (see the left picture), and this title could be a sign that the author wanted to chop his head off. It is not surprising that the scholar end up dying a miserable death.⁶

In Chinese history, not only emperors pay a lot of attentions to names, but also those bureaucrats in their service. Although their power was not as large as emperors, many of them still did some ridiculous things because of their names. There used to be a procurator called Tián Dēng 田登 (990 AD), because his given name dēng 登 is a homophone of dēng 燈, which means lamp, he did not allow people to use this term in daily life, as a way of respecting his name. As a result, it is said people were not allowed to say "light the lamp" (diǎn dēng 點燈), instead they have to use the term "start a fire" (fàng huǒ 放火), and unavoidably this stupid prohibition brought a lot of chaos to daily conversation, as

³ Literally the title of this book means "record of habitation", wéi 维 is interchangeable with wéi 為, which means "as", zhǐ 止 means habitation and lù 錄 means record. Origin of this title is a line from *Shi Jing* 詩經 (*Classic of Poetry*, Shanghai 上海: Hua Xia Press 華夏出版社, 1998): “邦畿千裏，維民所止”.

⁵ Yōng Zhèng 雍正(1678) was the third emperor of Qing Dynasty, in fact Yong Zheng 雍正 is his royal title, his official name is Aisin-Gioro Yīnzhēn 愛新覺羅·胤禛.

⁶ This case was first recorded in *Qīng shí lù* 清實錄 (*The record of Qing Dynasty*, Shanghai 上海: Zhonghua Book Company 中華書局, 1986 .) volume 4, Qīng shì zōng shí lù 清世宗實錄, 9th April .

people had to "start a fire" at home almost every day. This story later became a Chinese proverb to mock bureaucracy: "procurators were allowed to start a fire, while common people were not allowed to start a light." (只許州官放火，不許百姓點燈)

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1.2 Bibliography on personal names

Since personal names are such a serious matter which influences many aspects of Chinese life, it is not surprise that Chinese scholars paid a great deal of attention to studying them. From ancient time until today, many works on Chinese names or onomastic were written, and many of them are remaining useful for studying Chinese names.

1.2.1 Books about names before modern times

The most famous Chinese books about names is *Bǎi jiā xìng* 百家姓 (*Hundred Family Surnames*). This is a classic Chinese text composed of common surnames in ancient China, which was composed in the early Song Dynasty and be used as an enlightened reading material until today. This book recorded about 400 common used Chinese surnames, and ordered them as rhyming poem in lines of eight characters. However, surnames in the book are not listed in the order of popularity; instead, the first four surnames listed were from the most powerful families at the time:

First ,Zhào 趙 : surname of the Song Dynasty emperors

Second, Qián 錢 : surname of the Kings of Wú and Yuè 吳越

Third , Sūn 孫 : surname of the Queens of Wú and Yuè 吳越

Fourth , Lǐ 李 : surname of the Kings of Nán Táng 南唐

⁷ This story was first recorded in *Lǎo xué ān bǐ jì* 老學庵筆記 written by Lù Yóu 陸遊 (1125 AD - 1210 AD), volume 5.

Bǎi jiā xìng might be the most well-known book about names in Chinese history, however besides this book, I can hardly find any other specialized book about names or how to make a proper name before modern times. Instead of that, we can find many articles and statements about making proper names from other books. For instance, in *Zhōu lǐ* 周禮 (*Rites of Zhōu*), we can find some earliest articles about personal names, including when to make a name for babies, and some naming taboos. ⁸

1.2.2 Dictionaries of personal names

In modern time, in order to explain the complicated system of Chinese names, many reference books about names were written in the last decades. One of the most comprehensive books of them, is *Zhōng guó rén míng dà cí diǎn*, 中國人名大辭典⁹ (*Dictionary of Chinese personal names*). This book is basically a Biographical Dictionary of Chinese personality. It records records over 40,000 people, from remote antiquity to the end of Qing Dynasty (1912), together with their names, official titles and brief introduction of their lives. It is well indexed by stork order *bǐ huà* 筆劃 (stroke count) ¹⁰, and convenient to use. If you find a Chinese person in a book, and are interested in him/her, you can easily use this dictionary and find many useful information: all of his/her appellations¹¹, in addition to date of birth and death, birthplace, and a brief introduction about this person's life. However, this book also has two limitations: first of all, as authors of this book mentioned in the preface, in Chinese history, many people happen to have same names as others, while this

⁸ Relative articles can be found from chapter *qū lǐ shàng* 曲禮上 and *tán gōng shàng* 檀弓上 of *Lǐ jì* 禮記 .

⁹ Fāng Yì děng 方毅等, *Zhōng guó rén míng dà cí diǎn* 中國人名大辭典, Shanghai 上海: Shāng wù yìn shū guǎn 商務印書館, 1998.

¹⁰ *Bǐ huà* 筆劃 is number of strokes of a Chinese character.

¹¹ Before modern time, many Chinese had more than one names, including many different types, we will discuss them later in this article.

dictionary did not record all of them. Secondly, this dictionary simply recorded names of people, it did not explain the meaning of those names, or detailed stories behind these names, and so if you want to learn the culture phenomenon behind Chinese names, this book is not enough.

For people who happen to have the same name as others, there was a special biographical dictionary for them, *Gǔ jīn tóng xìng míng dà cí diǎn* 古今同姓名大辭典 (*Dictionary of same personal names, ancient and modern*)¹². This dictionary focused on people who have the same name as others, and it recorded 56,700 cases of this kind, from remote antiquity to 1936, and it also recorded general information about those people. This book is a useful reference tool when one gets confused by different people who used the same name.

In ancient Chinese books, it is very common that people were not referred to original names, instead, their titles were used to address them. It is very usual for people to have several different titles: family, kin, professional, trade, official and many other appellations. Those titles were often used together with personal names, knowledge about them is also necessary for understanding the entire naming system. In order to do that, *Gǔ dài míng rén zì hào cí diǎn* 古代名人字號辭典¹³ (*Dictionary of alternative names of ancient personages*) is the book one needs to use. Unlike the two Biographical Dictionaries we mentioned before, this book only concerned about titles of people, In this book, over 40,000 alternative names are conveniently listed by pinyin and identified with their owners. There is also a pinyin index of regular names, which makes this dictionary very easy to use.

¹² Péng Zuòzhēn 彭作楨, *Gǔ jīn tóng xìng míng dà cí diǎn* 古今同姓名大辭典, Shanghai 上海: Shàng hǎi gǔ jí chū bǎn shè 上海古籍出版社, 1983.

¹³ Bái Xiǎoláng děng 白曉郎等, *Gǔ dài míng rén zì hào cí diǎn* 古代名人字號詞典, Beijing 北京: Zhōng guó shū diàn 中國書店, 1996.

Among all those appellations, two of them are extremely common, alternative names of litterateurs, and posthumous title of emperors. Two books are very useful for us to understand them: For understanding alternative names of litterateurs, *Gǔ jīn rén wù bié míng suǒ yǐn*, 古今人物別名索引¹⁴(An index to alternative names of personalities, ancient and modern) is what we need, it lists 70,000 alternative names of some 40,000 people, and all of them were well arrangement is by *bǐ huà* 筆劃 with index. For understanding posthumous title of emperors, *Lì dài rén wù shì hào fēng jué sǒ* 歷代人物諡號封爵索¹⁵ (*Personal posthumous titles and noble titles for successive dynasties*) is again a useful tool. This book listed all the posthumous titles of Chinese emperors and nobles, and explained the entire system of posthumous title; we can easily find information about posthumous titles by using its Pinyin index.

As we mentioned before, in China sometimes a name is matter of life or death, when people dead because of issues related to names, in most cases it is because they break the name taboo or *bì huì* 避諱 in Chinese. For understanding the naming system, taboo of name is a topic that people must not disregard there is *Lì dài bì huì zì huì diǎn* 歷代避諱字彙典¹⁶ (*Compendium of historical taboo characters*) is a professional dictionary about taboo of names, which will definitely be helpful. In this dictionary, more than 900 of taboo characters were recorded, together with explanations, and it also recorded more than 1200 cases about how taboo characters should be avoided.

Not only Chinese scholars think that names are a very serious matter, there are also some good English resources we can use. For instance, *Dictionary of Ming Biography*,

¹⁴ Chén Déyún 陳德芸, *Gǔ jīn rén wù bié míng suǒ yǐn* 古今人物別名索引, Shanghai 上海: Shàng hǎi shū diàn 上海書店, 1982.

¹⁵ Chén Zhènfāng děng 陳振方等, *Lì dài rén wù shì hào fēng jué suǒ yǐn* 歷代人物諡號封爵索引, Shanghai 上海: Shàng hǎi gǔ jí chū bǎn shè 上海古籍出版社, 1996.

¹⁶ Wáng Yànkūn 王彥坤, *Lì dài bì huì zì huì diǎn* 歷代避諱字彙典, Beijing 北京: Zhōng zhōu shū jí chū bǎn shè 中州書籍出版社, 1997.

1368-1644¹⁷, published by Columbia University Press, is a dictionary that pays close attention to personal names from Ming Dynasty(1368 -1644). This book explores the lives of nearly 650 representative figures from all different social classes, from emperors to artists, and it is also rich resources of personal names from that period of time. Similar to this one, another book called *Eminent Chinese of the Ch'ing Period*¹⁹ recorded information of people from Qing Dynasty (1644-1912)

1.3 Selection of my topic

Among all the history of Chinese names, I think Eastern Zhou Dynasty ²⁰ 東周 is a very unique period of time. Eastern Zhou Dynasty is the beginning of a phenomenon known as *bǎi jiā zhēng míng* 百家爭鳴²¹ (Contention of a Hundred Schools of Thought). At that time philosophers and schools known as the *zhū zǐ bǎi jiā* 諸子百家²²(The Hundred Schools of Thought) flourished. Therefore this period of time was widely known as the Golden Age of Chinese culture, and many classic works were

¹⁷ Luther Carrington Goodrich , Dictionary of Ming Biography, 1368-1644 ,published by Columbia University Press, 1976 .

¹⁹ Arthur W. Hummel , Eminent Chinese of the Ch'ing Period ,published by United States Government Printing Office , 1943.

²⁰ The Eastern Zhou Dynasty 東周 (770–256 BC) was a Chinese dynasty that followed the Western Zhou Dynasty 西周 and preceded the Qin Dynasty . The Eastern Zhou Dynasty is further divided into two sub-periods. The first, from 722 to 481 BC, is called the Chūn Qiū 春秋 (Spring and Autumn Period); the second is known as the Zhàn Guó 戰國(403–221 BC, Warring States Period).

²¹ Even though Eastern Zhou Dynasty was fraught with chaos and bloody battles, it is also known as the Golden Age of Chinese philosophy because a broad range of thoughts and ideas were developed and discussed freely. This phenomenon has been called *bǎi jiā zhēng míng* 百家爭鳴, and it was often translated as "the Contention of a Hundred Schools of Thought" in English.

²² Philosophers and schools of thoughts, which flourished from 770 to 221 BC during the Spring and Autumn period and the Warring States period, were called *zhū zǐ bǎi jiā* 諸子百家 in Chinese history, and they were often translated as "The Hundred Schools of Thought".

passed from that time until today. Those documentary materials are very good resources of personal names. But in this article, I will not discuss the entire naming system Eastern Zhou Dynasty. Instead, I will choose one specific book to analyze in order to give readers a general idea about how complicated Chinese name is.

There are many materials from Eastern Zhou Dynasty we can use as our resources. According to Yuǎn Xíngpèi 袁行霈, documents from Eastern Zhou dynasty can be classified into three main groups²³: Firstly, narrative prose, or " *xǔ shì sǎn wén* " 敘事散文 in Chinese. Most of them are history records, which concentrate on recording history events. Typical works are *Zuǒ zhuàn* 左傳²⁴ and *Guó yǔ* 國語²⁵. Secondly, argumentative prose, or "*shuō lǐ sǎn wén*" 說理散文²⁶ in Chinese, which recorded ideas, words and deeds of great philosophers, typical works include *Lún yǔ* 論語²⁷ and *Zhuāng zǐ* 莊子²⁸; Thirdly, poetry anthologies, which recorded the earliest poems in Chinese history, typical work is *Shī jīng* 詩經²⁹.

Among all the three types of materials, I think narrative prose is the best material for the study of the early use of Chinese personal names. That is because those historic

²³ Yuán xíng pèi 袁行霈, *zhōng guó wén xué shǐ* 中國文學史, Beijing 北京: Gāo děng jiào yù chū bǎn shè 高等教育出版社, 2005.

²⁴ *Zuǒ Zhuàn* 左傳 was commonly translated as the Chronicle of Zuo or the Commentary of Zuo, it is one of the earliest Chinese narrative history records, covering the period from 722 to 468 BCE.

²⁵ *Guó yǔ* 國語 was commonly translated as The Discourses of the States. Although its author is unknown, it is still a classical Chinese history book that collected the historical records of numerous states from the Western Zhou to 453 BC.

²⁶ In fact many articles or books under this section are not prose, some of them are quotations.

²⁷ *Lún Yǔ* 論語, commonly translated as the Analects of Confucius, are the collection of sayings and ideas of Confucius.

²⁸ *Zhuāng Zǐ* 莊子 was named after its author Zhuāng Zhōu 莊周 (369 BC), it is a composite of writings from various sources, which recorded the philosophic thinking of Zhuāng Zhōu.

²⁹ *Shī Jīng* 詩經 was commonly translated as The Classic of Poetry, its author is also unclear. This book is the earliest existing collection of Chinese poems and songs.

records include great amount of real personal names³⁰, together with many conversations that can help us understand how names were used in daily life.

When talking about historic records of that time, we cannot disregard the special social structure of Eastern Zhou Dynasty. Emperors of that time had hardly any power, and nobles break up the entire country into several different regimes by force of arms. Under these circumstances, unlike other dynasties in Chinese history, we do not have an official, comprehensive history record existed in Eastern Zhou Dynasty. Instead of that, many history record about Independent states were written, and among all of them, am most interested in *Zuǒ Zhuàn*.

Zuǒ Zhuàn is a history record about the State of *Lǚ* 魯³¹, and it is a very special state in Eastern Zhou Dynasty. First of all, State of *Lǚ* has longest history (from 1042 BC-256 BC) among all these states, almost as long as Zhou Dynasty (1046 BC - 256 BC) itself. Secondly, State of *Lǚ* has a direct connection with the Zhou Dynasty, the first ruler of State of *Lǚ* is *Bó Qín* 伯禽 (around 1000 BC), who used to be a prince of Zhou Dynasty³². Thirdly, State of *Lǚ* is the home of Confucius, and it's also the home of Confucianism. Confucius himself is sometimes said to have compiled the history of the state of *Lǚ*, and the *Zuǒ Zhuàn* being attribute to one of his disciples, I shall say more about that later in this article.

³⁰ For instance, only in *Zuǒ Zhuàn*, more than 3,000 personal names were recorded.

³¹ State of *Lǚ* 魯國 was founded in the 10th century BC. The state's capital was in *Qūfǔ* 曲阜 and its territory mainly covered the central and southwest regions of what is now Shandong 山東 Province.

³² *Bó Qín* 伯禽 is the son of *Zhōu Gōng Dàn* 周公旦 (around 1000 BC), the second emperor of Zhou Dynasty.

Chinese plain in the late Spring and Autumn period (5th century BC)



The red part of picture above is location of the State of Lǔ

1.4 Structure and presentation

When we read the *Zuǒ Zhuàn*, it is impossible to ignore the huge amount of personal names in it; According to published statistics, This book includes 2455 different persons who are referred to by no less than 3454 names³³. It is clear that there are many more names than the number of persons, which means many people have more than one names, and this presents us some questions of this article: What are these names? How many types of names existed in this book? How these naming systems work? For discussing these questions, I dived up my thesis into 8 chapters, besides the first chapter which is the introduction and the last chapter which is the conclusion, each of the other 6 chapters will discuss one special topics, I arrange them as follows:

³³This number is based on Shigezawa Toshio , *Index of personal names and place names of Zuǒ Zhuàn* , Tokyo: Koubundou Press , 1935 .

Chapter 2, historical review. In this chapter I will analyze and review the general structure of Chinese personal names from a historic viewpoint. The key problem I want to discuss in this chapter is the reasons behind the development of Chinese naming system, and why the East Zhou Dynasty occupies such a unique position in the history of Chinese names.

Chapter 3, research materials review. In this chapter I will introduce the main research material I used, *Zuǒ Zhuàn*, besides introducing the basic information about that book, I will also explain why I use this book and compare it with all the other possible choices from the same time in order to support my point.

Chapter 4, euphony in Personals names. This is the one of the main part of this article, in this chapter I will concentrate on analyzing the pronunciation of personal names from *Zuǒ Zhuàn*, especially disyllabic given names. In this chapter I will list all the disyllabic given names from nobles of *Zuǒ Zhuàn*, and try to summarize their disciplines of the usage of tones, and I will also compare these disciplines with some existed rules summarized by other scholars.

Chapter 5, surnames from *Zuǒ Zhuàn*. In this chapter I will focus on the system of surnames from *Zuǒ Zhuàn*, in this book there are not so many family names and clan names, but there are many very special cultural phenomenons related to surnames in this book. I will list all the family names of different states from *Zuǒ Zhuàn*, and try to explain how the entire system of family names works.

Chapter 6, posthumous names and noble titles. Posthumous titles and noble titles are very common to find in *Zuǒ Zhuàn*, however, these titles sometimes can make people real confused. In this chapter, I will analyze the system of posthumous titles and noble titles from *Zuǒ Zhuàn*, and try to explain why so many nobles in *Zuǒ Zhuàn* were using the same posthumous titles and why these titles matter a lot.

Chapter 7, women's names. In the 7th chapter of my thesis, I will analyse personal names of female from *Zuǒ Zhuàn*. One of the most special situations in *Zuǒ Zhuàn* is women always do not own a name, and I will try to explain why that happened and how different women were addressed in this book.

Chapter 8, conclusion and topics for further study. In the last chapter of this thesis I will summarize the results I got from study. I will also review the entire process of my research in order to find out the weak points of my study and the many questions it leaves open for future research. Finally, I will provide some possible ways to improve those weak points if I have the opportunity to carry on this line of research.

Chapter 2. History review of Chinese names

"Before the Qin unification, the possession of a clan name, a title, or a posthumous name, or even just a patronymic, a cognomen, or a style, was a mark of high status, Ordinary people did not have names." - Endymion Wilkinson ³⁴

It seems like Chinese always have a great passion for names. In the long river of Chinese history, Chinese people showed great creativity of making new types of names, and left us a massive system of making and using these names. It is impossible to discuss every aspect of personal names in one article; however, it is necessary to go through the basic information about personal names before we go any further. Because of this reason, this chapter begins by reviewing the general information about Chinese personal names, including basic structures of them and the path of its development. Next come a detailed analysis about the East Zhou Dynasty, I will discuss the special social features of that time and try to explain why naming system of that time is so important for studying personal names.

The main materials I will use to support my point are modern biographical dictionaries and articles related to personal names. I will also quote many view points from Endymion Wilkinson's book *Chinese History A Manual* ³⁵ because I found that book is extremely useful for my study.

³⁴ *Chinese History A Manual*, p. 98, paragraph 2.

³⁵ Endymion Wilkinson, *CHINESE HISTORY: A MANUAL*, Boston, Published by the Harvard University, 1998

Before I start, I must make explicit something I find very important. As China is a multinational country (today there are 55 minorities in China), Mandarin is not the only language in China. Many minorities have their own languages, and of course they also have their own culture of names. In this thesis, when we talk about "names", no matter it is family name or given name or other kinds of names, they all represent the names used by Hà 汉 Chinese, which is the major nationality in China (more than 94% of the population). Names of minorities will not be discussed in this thesis in order to avoid complicating this large article.

2.1 Basic structures and history of Chinese names

Nowadays, like many other civilizations, an official Chinese name includes two parts: a family name and a given name. However, there are also several conventions different from those of personal names in Western cultures. Most noticeably, a typical Chinese name is written with the family name first and the given name next, it is opposite to the English naming system. Another noticeable fact is Chinese commonly address each other with their full names, it is impolite to call someone with their family name or given name alone, unless you both know each other well or under special situations.

2.1.1 Chinese family names

A Chinese family name, like many other cultures, is handed down from or inherited from the father's line. In China, family names are often used with a title or honorific. In conversation, people always address each other by using their family name with honorific in order to show respect.

It is a common misunderstanding that Chinese has only 100 surnames because of the wide spread of the popular Chinese enlightened reading material *Bǎi jiā xìng* 百家姓 (*Hundred Family Names*) from Song dynasty. However, the fact is this book only listed about four hundred (not one hundred) common used Chinese surnames in a non-statistical order. (For example, the surname of emperor of that time is the first in the list, and that does necessary means his surname is the most common one in China)³⁶. Nowadays, many scholars believe that there are more than 8,000 surnames in Chinese history. To a certain extent that number is right but it is also a misleading one. Although these more than 8,000 surnames were used and recorded by historical documentary materials³⁷, the fact is at any given time in Chinese history, there are no more than 1,000 surnames are in daily use, including those most rare ones. For the vast majority of the popular, the surnames they used are less than several hundred.³⁸ From a historical perspective, on one hand, the common used surnames are less and less³⁹, on the other hand, the population of Chins is generally growing during the history (If we exclude those short warring ears in Chinese history), so the trend of using surname is that more and more people are using fewer and fewer surnames.

Today , the total number of used Chinese surname is about 3,000, of which the three most common one, Lǐ (李) , Wáng (王) and Zhāng (張) were used by more than 300 million people. In fact the top 20 common used surnames are shared by more than one third of the entire population.⁴⁰ I guess the reason for that phenomenon it that many surnames with identical pronunciations were unified and became the same one.

³⁶ You can find more information about this phenomenon from page 3 of this thesis.

³⁷ Fāng Yì děng 方毅等, *Zhōngguó Rénmíng Dà Cídiǎn* 中國人名大辭典, Shanghai 上海: Shāng wù yìn shū guǎn 商務印書館, 1998.

³⁸ *Chinese History A Manual* , p.97 .

³⁹ Chén Jiànkú 陳建魁 , *Zhōngguó Xìngshì Wénhuà* 中國姓氏文化, Beijing 北京: Zhōng guó nóng mǐn chū bǎn shè 中國農民出版社, 2008 .

⁴⁰ This number is Based on the statistics of household register in 1998.

Evidence of my assumption is that in the top 20 common used surnames⁴¹, there is no other with an identical pronunciation. No matter what are the reasons behind this phenomenon, the fact is, quote what professor Endymion Wilkinson said, "There are today, as there were in the past, an extraordinarily small number of names in use by a large number of people."⁴²

If we look back the source of Chinese surname, most of these surnames were the name of ancient states, topographical features, ⁴³official titles or occupations. However, many oldest surnames in Chinese history are composed of a *nǚ* 女 (meaning "female") radical, that might be evidence to prove that the earliest Chinese surnames were originated from matriarchal societies, which means those family names were passed from the female lineages. In fact the Chinese character for surname xìng "姓" also has a *nǚ* 女 radical, which makes this hypothesis more reliable. However, in recent years another hypothesis has been proposed by sinologist Léon Vandermeersch. After analyzed the evolution of characters in oracular scripture from the Shang dynasty through the Zhou dynasty, he suggested that the radical of *nǚ* indicate an ethnic group or a tribe, which means "lady of such or such clan". It could reflect the fact that at least in the beginning of Chinese civilization, only females were given a family name, while the men were usually designated by their titles.

Whatever the source of family name is, before the Qin unification (221 BC), like many other types of names, surnames are luxury things for ordinary people. The possession of names was definitely a mark of high social status, as people with low

⁴¹ Based on the statistics of household register in 1998, the top 20 common used surnames in China are : Wáng 王, Lǐ 李, Zhāng 張, Líu 劉, Chén 陳, Yáng 楊, Huáng 黃, Zhào 趙, Wú 吳, Zhōu 周, Xú 徐 , Sūn 孫 , Mǎ 馬 , Zhū 朱 , Hú 胡 , Guō 郭 , Hé 何 , Gāo 高 , Lín 林 , Luó 羅 (<http://baike.baidu.com/view/1719115.html?fromTaglist>)

⁴² *Chinese History A Manual* , chapter 3, people.

⁴³ Hé Xiǎomíng 何曉明, *Xìng míng yǔ zhōng guó wén huà* 姓名與中國文化, Beijing 北京: Rén mín chū bǎn shè 人民出版社 , 2001.

social status did not have their own names. However, after Qin unification, according to administrative records, almost every person got their own family name⁴⁴; it seems like the use of surnames spread very fast after that period of time. I think the reason behind this phenomenon is the new household registration system in Qin Dynasty⁴⁵. This system require every single family member to register and all of them have responsibilities to each other, that means if one person commit crime, the entire family will be punished. In Zhou Dynasty, the situation of most ordinary people are not better than slaves, so they do not really need surnames, but when it comes to the Qin Dynasty, single people have more personal responsibilities (sometimes one person can represent the entire family), so people need their own names to indicate their identity, especially their families. I think that explain why after Qin unification family names spread very fast in China.

After Qin Dynasty, the typical Chinese surname has been a single character. However, before that period of time there have been several thousand double-character surnames. Although many of those double-character surnames are disappear in the river of history, about 80 of them are still used today.⁴⁶ A uncommon but existing phenomenon is that some parents combine their family name together to make a double-character surname for their children ,that is why surnames like Lǐ Zhāng 李張 do existed in China today, especial in rural areas. However, this kind of double-character were not accepted by the official registered residence system, in most case only the first character of the disyllabic surname will be registered as the family name, and the second one will be consider as part of the given name. Nowadays there are some Chinese surnames are longer than two characters, but these surnames are very rare, and in most case they represent transcriptions of non-Han

⁴⁴ *Xìng míng yǔ zhōng guó wén huà* 姓名與中國文化, p. 25.

⁴⁵ This household registration system was called "shí wǔ lián zuò" , 什伍連坐, or "lián zuò" 連坐 for short. In general it is a punishing system, that if one person commit a crime, all the people from his family will be punished together.

⁴⁶ This number is based on the census of 2000.

names.

2.1.2 Different types of Chinese given names

It is pretty difficult to define what Chinese given name is because there are too many types of them. In modern times, given names are simply the names after surnames, but in earlier ears, given names are much more complicated. Professor Endymion Wilkinson surmised the main types of given names as follows:

1. *Xiǎo míng* (小名) : Names for infants
2. *Míng* (名) : Names for children
3. *Zì* (字) : Names given on coming of age
4. *Hào* (號) : Nicknames for adults
5. *Shì hào* (諡號) : Names given after death

However, in my opinion this chart is still far from comprehensive, and many types of common used given names were not included. Besides family names, there are a lot other types of names, and in order to understand the Chinese naming system, at least we should know what they are:

Xué míng 學名 : Literally *xué míng* 學名 means "study names"⁴⁷, and commonly be translated as "school names". It is a name given when a boy (sometimes a girl, but not often as in ancient time most Chinese girls did not go to public school.) reaches the age of school. In some cases, school names and original given names are the same thing⁴⁸. But there are some exceptions, sometimes school names and given names

⁴⁷ *Xué* 學 means "study" and *míng* 名 means "name".

⁴⁸ That is because most people tend to use their original given names at school, and they do not make another specific name only for using in school.

were not exactly the same thing. One famous example is Dèng Xiǎo Píng 鄧小平⁴⁹, known as "the father of modern China". His official given name is Xiǎo Píng 小平, and he also got a school name which only used in school called Xī Xián 希賢.

***Xiǎo míng* 小名:** In China, before official given names were made, babies were given a name only for infants called *xiǎo míng* 小名⁵⁰. This name was made in order to let their parents or nurses call the baby before an official name is given. In general, official given names of babies were given three months after birth. Records about this tradition can be found as early as in *Rites of Zhou* 周禮, which means this tradition is more than 2000 years old. But there are also some exceptions, for instance, Liú Chè 劉徹(156 BC - 87 BC), the Emperor Wǔ of Han Dynasty 漢武帝, did not get his official name until he was seven years old, and before that he had to use his ignominious infant name *zhì* 彘⁵¹, which literally means "boar", for a long time.

***Guān míng* 官名:** As a proper noun, *guān míng* 官名 means "official titles". In Chinese history⁵², it is a very common phenomenon that people put their official title into their names, that's why we put it into the given name section. One example is the famous Chinese poet Dù Fǔ 杜甫 (712—770). Instead of using his given name, a lot of people like to call him as Dǔ Gōngbù 杜工部, and that is because *gōng bù* 工部⁵³ is his official title, and under some situations this title was used more often than his

⁴⁹ Deng Xiǎopíng 鄧小平(1904 - 1997) was a Chinese politician, statesman.

⁵⁰ literally Xiǎo míng 小名 means "little names", as xiǎo 小 means "little" and míng 名 means "names".

⁵¹ He got that name because his father dreamed that his ancestor told him it is a good name. This story was first recorded in the book *Hàn wǔ gù shì* 漢武故事, Chengdu 成都: Sichuan Press 四川出版社, 1997.

⁵² Even until today, when Chinese people call someone with an official title, they always like to address him/her by replacing his/her given name with official title, that was considered as a way of showing respect.

⁵³ *Gōng bù* 工部 means "Board of Works" in English.

given name.

Zì 字: Unlike the original given names, Chinese courtesy names, or *zì* 字, are always disyllabic. Besides that, there are several differences between the original given names and courtesy names. Firstly, not everyone own a courtesy name, it is only for people of social standing. Secondly, a courtesy name was given at the coming of age instead of after birth, in general boys got their courtesy name at the age of 15 while girls at the age of 20 (although most girls do not have a courtesy name). Sometimes courtesy name was chosen to extend the meaning of original given names, and his kind of courtesy names were called **biǎo zì** 表字. However, we can hardly provide any simple examples because translate Chinese given names and courtesy names into English is definitely improper.

Hào 號: Although there are many types of Chinese given names, it is very common to find some people bearing the same name.⁵⁴ It is not surprise under this circumstances, people, especially literates, eager to adopt some other alternative names in order to show their special personalities. That is why **Hào 號**, or "literary names" in English, was invented. Sometimes a person could have dozens of literary names in his life, and besides the most common used literary way, the rest of them were called **bié hào** 別號, which literally means "other literary names". Literary names can contain various meanings; popular ways include using someone's house name or studio name as literary names, which was called **shì míng** 室名⁵⁵, famous

⁵⁴ In fact in Chinese history this kind of matter happened all the time, in *Gùjīn Tóng Xīngmíng Dà Cídiǎn* 古今同姓名大辭典, a dictionary that recorded ancient and modern same names, 56,700 people are with the same names from ancient time to 1936. Reasons for that phenomenon are various, one obvious reason is the lager population in China, and another reason is the habit of choosing names. Even though there are thousands of Chinese characters and can make up several million different given names, Chinese people always like to choose these given names with optimistic and fortunate meaning again and again, that makes only a small amount of Chinese characters were used for making names, and finally many people have to bearing the same names.

⁵⁵ *Shì míng* 室名 literally means "room names".

example including Pǔ Sōng Lín 蒲松林⁵⁶, he was commonly known as Liáo zhāi xiān shēng 聊齋先生, and that is because *liáo zhāi* 聊齋 is the name of his room, and *xiān shēng* 先生 means "Mr". In general the choice *hào* 號 of was quite personal and has no relationship with original given names or courtesy names.

Miào hào 廟號, **zūn hào** 尊號 and **shì hào** 諡號: Like literates, emperors or nobles also have three different kinds of special titles, *zūn hào* 尊號⁵⁷, *shì hào* 諡號⁵⁸ and *miào hào* 廟號⁵⁹. *zūn hào* 尊號 were used while the emperors or nobles were still alive, in order to show people's respect. *shì hào* 諡號 were given after the emperor's death⁶⁰, and *miào hào* 廟號 were generally used in commemorative activities. Theoretically speaking these three titles can only be used by emperors or kings, however, there is one exception. In ancient China, when people with high principles dead, sometimes they were also given posthumous titles by others⁶¹, and this kind of title was called *sī shì* 私諡, which literally means "private posthumous titles".

2.1.3 Special naming methods of Chinese

In China, it is the normal practice for fathers to make names for their children. However, fathers cannot pick names for their children casually, instead, in many cases

⁵⁶ Pǔ Sōnglín 蒲松林(1640-1715) is author of *Liáo zhāi zhì yì* 聊齋志異 (*Strange Stories from a Chinese Studio*)

⁵⁷ In English *zūn hào* 尊號 means "respectful titles", as *zūn* 尊 means "respectful" and *hào* 號 means "titles"

⁵⁸ As a proper noun, *shì hào* 諡號 means posthumous titles

⁵⁹ *Miào hào* 廟號 literally means "temple titles", but here *miào* 廟 does not mean religion temple, instead it means ancestral temple, a place where people honor their ancestors.

⁶⁰ Theoretically speaking a posthumous title can only be given after the owner is dead, however, in Chinese history we do not lack of examples that someone's posthumous title was decided before his/her death.

⁶¹ In most cases these kind of posthumous titles were from their friends or relatives, very occasionally, people with high popularity will earn their posthumous titles from ordinary people.

they have to follow certain rules. One example is using ranking characters in given names, that is because in China the seniority among brothers or sisters was very important, especially for those big families.⁶² In order to make this ranking clear, sometimes parents add a so-called "ranking character" in the given names in order to indicate the seniority among different family members. The oldest and most common ranking characters are *bó* 伯, *zhòng* 仲, *shū* 叔 and *jì* 季, which were used to represent "first", "second", "third" and "fourth" separately. For instance, Confucius's *zì* 字 is Zhòng Ní 仲尼, which indicates that he was the second son of his family. Starting from Song Dynasty, a new way of indicating seniority among family members was invented, which was called the *zì bei* 字輩, or "generation names" in English. This system requires each member of a generation (for example, siblings and cousins of the same generation) to share a same Chinese character in the middle of their given names. The sequence of generation is typically prescribed and kept in record by a generation poem, known as *bān cì lián* 班次聯 or *pài zì gē* 派字歌 in Chinese. "Those poems have a mnemonic function, and they can vary in length from around a dozen characters to hundreds of characters, and each successive character becomes the generation name for successive generations. After the last character of the poem is reached, the poem is usually recycled though occasionally it may be extended."⁶³

Nevertheless, when someone's given name has only one character, then it is impossible to add a generation name in their given name. In this case a character with the same classifier or radical will be used. One example is the great scholar Sū Shì 蘇軾⁶⁴ from Song Dynasty, and his brother Sū Zhē 蘇轍⁶⁵, their given names Shì 軾 and Zhē 轍 are both represent a part of cart, and also shared the same radical of cart (車字旁). The trend of identifying all members of the same generation with the same

⁶² Because ranking of siblings is a matter about inheritance, Chinese people care about that a lot.

⁶³ This explanation comes from : http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Generation_name

⁶⁴ Sū Shì 蘇軾 (1037 - 1100) was one of the major poets of the Song era.

⁶⁵ Sū Zhē 蘇轍 (1039-1112) was brother of Sū Shì 蘇軾, and he was a great litterateur of his time.

character or character with the same radical use to be very common in China, however, with the one child policy⁶⁶ in China (which means most people are only child in his/her generation), this old tradition is also disappearing.

Theoretically speaking it is free to use either a two-character names or single-character name; however, the policies of government sometimes also changed the fashions. During the mid of Han Dynasty, ruler of that time, Wáng Mǎng 王莽, (45 BC - 23 AD) forbid people to use disyllabic names, cause he thought it is "improper"⁶⁷. Even after his death, that policy lasted until the third century, and had further impact on the future generations. That is why we can hardly find any disyllabic names at the end of Han dynasty. From Ming and Qing Dynasty until recent, both single-character names and two-character names were in use.

It is a common misunderstanding for westerners to think that their names can be translated into Chinese properly and Chinese names can be translated into English as well. The fact is to translate any kinds of Chinese given names into English always gives us a very strange impression. The reason for that is that there are many fundamental differences between Chinese and other western languages, and the way of making Chinese names and western names are also totally different. Although in some cases meanings of some Chinese names can be explained quite well, I still suggest not to translate a Chinese name into other languages.

2.2 Women's names

According the Chinese history, the social standing of women is always pretty low, and as a result of that, in general women had fewer names than men. In fact, a lot of

⁶⁶ This policy was published in 1986, which required every family in mainland China to have only one child.

⁶⁷ This case can be found in *Hàn shū* 漢書, the chapter of Wáng Mǎng Zhuàn 王莽傳.

women, especial those from rural areas do not even have regular given names. Instead of having proper given names, they usually use their infant names or nick names until they get married. After marriage, their original names were abandoned, and they can only use their family name together with a title *shi* 氏 in order to show they already get married. Although some women have regular given names (most of them have big, rich families), their names should not be heard or used by outsiders, and that is why the given name of unmarried is also called *gū míng* 閩名, which means "boudoir name" in English. When outsiders have to call them, a gently way is to call them by mention their father's name, such as "someone's daughter", or "someone's second daughter "and so on.



The picture above is modern tomb of a Chinese woman, it mentioned her husband's name, her children's name, but not her own name. (The picture was photoed by Bao Yue at Hefei.)

On coming of age, women must make an important choice, accept the husband chosen by their parents, or become a Buddhist nun⁶⁸. For most of them they do not have any choice but to get married. Marriage in China is a critical rite of passage for both men and women, but the effects of this rite on their names are very different. For men, marriage can enhance their social standing, as well as their public reputations. Nevertheless, for women, marriage means they have to say goodbye to their previous lives together with their independent social status. Unlike many other cultures, in China, women do not need to assume her new husband's family name. However, after

⁶⁸ Very occasionally a Chinese girl can engage into a free love and get married at last, but a marriage without the permit from parents was still considered as improper by most people.

marriage, new wives will be given a new title , "inner person", or *neì rén* 內人, which was used by their husbands. Officially, they lost their given name and be addressed by their surname with the title *shì* 氏, which literally means "the member of ". Most women will remain nameless even after their death. On their gravestone, names of their husbands or sons were mentioned instead of theirs, the only title they got is "someone's wife" or "someone's mother". (See the picture above)

Typically, women in China do not have several different names, even for women with high standings. For female members of royal family, they always got a respectful title to show their special identities, but besides that they do not have any other names. ⁶⁹ It is a tradition that women do not have courtesy names, even if they are great litterateur or artist. For example, the famous Chinese poet *Lǐ Qīngzhào* 李清照 (1084 AD - 1155 AD) do not have her owe courtesy name until death , as for male poets , courtesy name is a must-have title to show their personality, even she is one of the greatest poets in Chinese history. In modern society, the situation is much better. Nowadays, women can have their own names like any other men, and they do not need to follow their husbands' surname after marriage.

2.3 The development of Chinese names

I think the development of Chinese names is extremely imbalance, especially in two aspects, continuity and gender. About gender imbalance, we have already discussed it in the earlier part of this chapter, but for the continuity of Chinese names, we still have a lot of unsolved questions. On one hand, Chinese naming system was well developed since the very beginning of Chinese civilization, on the other hand, in certain period of Chinese history, the Chinese naming system was extremely simple compare to other times; and up until today, many naming methods were totally

⁶⁹ One exception is *Wǔ Zétiān* 武則天 (624 AD- 705 AD), as the only female emperor in Chinese history, she had many different types of names.

abandoned. What is the reason behind the progress of Chinese naming system, and why many naming methods were disappearing?

For answering this question, we must have a clear view about the history of Chinese naming system in general. Many scholars believe that the Chinese naming system was highly influenced by the rulers' idea of different dynasty⁷⁰, and it has no clear path to follow. To a certain extent that is the fact, because in many periods of Chinese history the naming system was highly affected by the policies of government. As we mentioned before, in a certain period of Han Dynasty, the ruler did not allow people to use two-character given names, and in Yuan Dynasty, and when Mongol ruled the entire China, some Han Chinese names were replaced by Mongol names. The naming taboos of different times are also different; all of these facts have influenced the development of Chinese naming system.

Nevertheless, I think we can still find some regular patterns of Chinese naming history. In order to explain my idea clearly, first I will cut Chinese history into four stages, together with three turning points:

Stage 1: Remote antiquity to Zhou Dynasty (Remote antiquity - 221 BC)

First turning point: Unification of Qin Dynasty.

Stage 2: Qin Dynasty to Song Dynasty (221 BC - 1276 AD)

Second turning point: China was ruled by Mongols.

Stage 3: Yuan Dynasty to Qing Dynasty (1276 AD - 1912 AD)

Third turning point: New Culture Movement

Stage 4: After Qing Dynasty until now (1812 AD - now)

Before Zhou Dynasty, the Chinese civilization was still at its early stage, and Chinese naming system was simple but developing very fast. At the mid of Zhou Dynasty, a

⁷⁰ *Xìngmíng Yǔ Zhōngguó Wénhuà* 姓名與中國文化, chapter 5.

complete and comprehensive naming system was created and Chinese naming system experienced its first peak (it is also the first peak of Chinese culture) . However, after the unification of Qin Dynasty, the old feudal system was abandoned, and a new centralized government was built. In a centralized country like Qin, theoretically speaking everyone is slaves of the emperor. As a result, many types of names, especially nobles' names, which were used to show their high social status , were disappeared, because no one's social status is higher than the emperor. This trend lasted until Song Dynasty. In Song Dynasty, people typically have only two or three kinds of name: surname, given name and courtesy name.

However, after Qin Dynasty, with the progress of Chinese culture, especially the development of Daoism and Buddhism, many new ways of making given names were invented. In fact most naming methods we mentioned earlier were introduced in this period of time. After Song Dynasty, Yuan Dynasty is another turning point in Chinese naming history. During that period of time, China was ruled by Mongols, and many traditions were abandoned, including many naming method. Evidence is many names from Yuan Dynasty are very simple. For instance, the first emperor of Ming Dynasty was Zhū Yuánzhāng 朱元璋⁷¹ , when he was born his name was Zhū Chóngbā 朱重八, which means "double - eight", and he got that name simply because his birth day was 9th August. He is not the only one who uses this kind of simple name; all his siblings were given the same style of names. In fact name someone by using their birthday is so common in Yuan Dynasty, which makes some scholars believed that this is a rule given by government. ⁷²

After the Yuan Dynasty, the Chinese naming system experienced another great development. In Ming and Qing Dynasty, together with new naming methods, many

⁷¹ Zhū Yuánzhāng 朱元璋(1328 - 1398), he was born in Yuan Dynasty and finally overthrow the domination of Mongols.

⁷² *Xìngmíng Yǔ Zhōngguó Wénhuà* 姓名與中國文化, chapter 14.

new types of names were also invented, especially names used by scholars. In early part of this chapter I already put some of them under the section of given names, and most of them were first used in Ming and Qing Dynasty.

When it comes to modern society, we will be surprise to discover that all the sudden almost all the traditional names system was gone. After New Culture Movement ⁷³ , most types of Chinese names were totally disappeared, left only surname, given name and courtesy name. Nowadays, even courtesy name was almost abandoned⁷⁴, every Chinese has only two names, surname and given name. This phenomenon left us a big question, why a system existed for more than 2000 years can be totally abandoned in less than 100 years?

For answering that question, we have to face another question first: why such a complicated naming system exists at the very beginning? Obviously this system is not for efficient daily use, because nowadays China has more population than any other time in history, but the simplest two-name system (family name and given name) still works fine. The fact is after reviewed the general history of Chinese names, we find an interesting result, that except family names and given names, almost all the other Chinese names were invented to show someone's society status (Women's society position is very low in Chinese history, that's why they have very few type of names). Based on that, I think I can assume that one ultimate motive behind the development of naming system is the need of dividing different social classes. That explained why the old Chinese naming system was abandoned shortly after the privileged class of feudal government was gone.

⁷³ New Culture Movement, or *xīn Wénhuà Yùndòng* 新文化運動 in Chinese, is a movement of the mid 1910s and 1920s . In this movement Chinese scholars began to lead a revolt against Confucianism.

⁷⁴ Nowadays some Chinese still use courtesy names to show their classical education background, but these courtesy names were not admitted officially.

But my theory is only an assumption; I still need evidence to prove it. That is why I want to analyze names from East Zhou Dynasty, the first peak of development of Chinese naming system. That is also why I will use *Zuǒ Zhuàn* as my main research material. In the following chapter I will talk about more details about this book.

Chapter 3. Research material review

Zuǒ Zhuàn, or *Chūn qiū zuǒ zhuàn* 春秋左傳, was commonly translated as *The Commentary of Zuo* in English. It is among the earliest Chinese narrative history records. This book covers a wide range of time from 722 BC to 468 BC, and it records hundreds of history events and thousands of people in a lively way. In this chapter, I will try to explain why *Zuǒ Zhuàn* is a good research material for studying names by introducing its background and basic structure.

In order to have a general idea about what kind of book *Zuǒ Zhuàn* is and why I choose it as my main research material, a lot of things need to be explained. Fortunately, as one of the most over studied classic works in Chinese history, I do not lack of resources about *Zuǒ Zhuàn* itself. In the following section I will introduce some background information about *Zuǒ Zhuàn*, and they will be set into four parts: sources, time, author, structure and style.

3.1 Sources of *Zuǒ Zhuàn*

As we mentioned before, *Zuǒ Zhuàn* is a history work from more than two thousand years ago, it is almost important for us to find the original copy of it. (However it does not necessary mean there is no hope to find one, it is highly possible that the original copy of *Zuǒ Zhuàn* was written on inscribed bamboo-slips, which can be preserved for thousands of years.) The earliest copy of *Zuǒ Zhuàn* we have today is from Song Dynasty, and in fact, nowadays, the common used source of *Zuǒ Zhuàn* is actually from copies of Qing Dynasty, which is very recent. Under this situation we cannot help but to ask: is that possible that the original book of *Zuǒ Zhuàn* was changed a lot during the process of passing on? After all, two thousand years is quite a long time, no

one can guarantee that the book we used haven't change a little. If what we used is not the original resources, any research about that book can be misleading.

Fortunately, about this problem, I think there are at least three facts that can make us feel better. Firstly, as one of the greatest classic work, *Zuǒ Zhuàn* was studied and rechecked by Chinese scholars several thousand times in history, almost like it is sacred.⁷⁵ With that spirit in mind, I believe the chance of misrepresenting this book is relatively lower than other books, as Chinese scholars really spent a lot of time on it. Secondly, *Zuǒ Zhuàn* is not the only ancient Chinese book that lack of original resources. In fact, many Chinese classic works, especially those before Qin Dynasty, do not have original resources, and because of that, textual research is an endless topic in relative field. Even these professional researchers cannot provide the original sources of *Zuǒ Zhuàn*; I think we should not waste too much time on it. Thirdly, our research topic is mainly about names of real people, even if *Zuǒ Zhuàn* was misrepresented, there are still many other materials which recorded the same people from the same era (for example, *Guó yǔ* 國語) ; we can use them as reference and compare the names form *Zuǒ Zhuàn* with them, and make sure the names we have the correct names of that time.

But lacking of original source is not the only problem we need to face, another question is equally important. In this thesis, we will use *Zuǒ Zhuàn* as main research material to study how names were used and mentioned in Western Zhou Dynasty, and in order to proof we got the correct and universal result, we will have to use the theory we summarized to analyze names from the same period of time. However, if *Zuǒ Zhuàn* was not written in Western Zhou Dynasty, our research will be a misleading one. We are not the only one who worry about that problem, there used to be a heated debate about if *Zuǒ Zhuàn* was written in Western Zhou Dynasty. Many scholars,

⁷⁵ One piece of evidence of that is in *Sì kù quán shū* 四庫全書 (*Imperial Collection of Four*), which is the largest collection of books in Chinese history, there are more than 40 books were written for studying *Zuǒ Zhuàn*.

including some very famous one like Kāng Yǒuwei 康有為⁷⁶, believed that *Zuǒ Zhuàn* was actually written in Han Dynasty, which is several hundred years behind Western Zhou Dynasty. However, in recent decades, most scholars tend to reach the agreement that *Zuǒ Zhuàn* is written in Western Zhou Dynasty, especially after Professor Klas Bernhard proved that point by using linguistic analysis method.⁷⁷ I think it is safe for us to believe *Zuǒ Zhuàn* is a Warring States work.

3.2 Time of *Zuǒ Zhuàn*

Some people might have questions about why Chinese scholars care so much about the time of *Zuǒ Zhuàn*. The fact is when *Zuǒ Zhuàn* was written is an important issue that makes things all difference. As we mentioned before, Western Zhou Dynasty is the first golden age of Chinese culture, its legacies (for example, Confucianism) influencing China up until today. Paper materials from that period are extremely important and precious for understanding this golden age of Chinese history, and will help us understand the entire Chinese history. What is more, all those classic works from Western Zhou Dynasty created a category called "Literature Before Qin's Unification", or *xiān qín wén xué* 先秦文學 in Chinese. All those books verified each other and provide us lots of information about that period of time. If any of them is fake or from other time in Chinese history, it will mislead the entire system.

There is another important reason which makes the time of *Zuǒ Zhuàn* very important. After Qin's unification, the first emperor of Qin Dynasty published a policy to unify political thought of that time, and he started a sequence of events called *fén shū kēng rú* 焚書坑儒⁷⁸, or "Burning of books and burying of scholars" in English. Propose

⁷⁶ Kāng Yǒuwei 康有為 (1858 - 1927) was a Chinese scholar and prominent political thinker and reformer of the late Qing Dynasty.

⁷⁷ Klas Bernhard Johannes Karlgren, *On the Authenticity and Nature of the Tso Chuan*, Gothenburg, University of Gothenburg Press, 1926.

⁷⁸ This event happened between the period of 213 and 206 BC. During these events, the Hundred

of this event is to unify all thoughts and political opinions, and in order to achieve that goal, many books were burned and a great number of scholars were killed or banished. As a result, many great works and ideas from Western Zhou Dynasty were disappeared in the river of history, leading those surviving books ever more precious.

3.2.1 The importance of Zhou Dynasty for naming study

In Chinese history, it is not difficult to find dynasties that mainland China was separate into several independent states, and Western Zhou Dynasty is one of them. Like many other similar eras, Western Zhou Dynasty has a nominal emperor with hardly any power, together with several war lords who actually ruled China.

However, there is another special phenomenon that makes Western Zhou Dynasty very special, known as “Contention of a Hundred Schools of Thought”. Although in most time of Chinese history Confucianism is the ruling idea of politics, back to Western Zhou Dynasty, there is no such a universal political idea. Confucius and his Confucianism is nothing but one of many flourished philosophers and schools known as “Hundred Schools of Thought” . Under this circumstance, on one hand, the old tradition of Zhou Dynasty still exists and has its influence; on the other hand, the new political ideas were developed in each independent state freely. Conflict between these different ideas makes culture of that period of time extremely colorful.

Because of that, we have to ask ourselves one question: does the flourished naming system of Western Zhou Dynasty have any connection with the flourishing philosophy and political thought? If yes, we will be happy to reach the conclusion that to a certain extent; Chinese naming system was pushed by the development of new philosophy and political ideas (which I assume is correct). If not, we need to

Schools of Thought were pruned; legalism survived. One side effect was the marginalization of the thoughts of the school of Mò Zi 墨子 and the survival of the thoughts of Confucius.

rethink about what is the ultimate power behind the development of naming system, and if old traditions stands a more important role than the policies. No matter what is the answer, it is very important for us to understand Chinese naming system.

“Honeyed words, an insinuating appearance, and excessive respect; -- Zuǒ Qiū Míng was ashamed of them. I also am ashamed of them. To conceal resentment against a person, and appear friendly with him; -- Zuǒ Qiū Míng was ashamed of such conduct. I also am ashamed of it.” – Confucius. ⁷⁹

3.3 Basic structure and style of *Zuǒ Zhuàn*

After talking about sources, time and author, let's back to the book itself. *Zuǒ Zhuàn* was commonly translated as “*Commentary of Zuǒ*” in English, which is because theoretically speaking, it is a commentary rather than an independent history book. Ancient scholars regarded *Zuǒ Zhuàn* as one of the surviving three commentaries on *Chūn qiū* 春秋 (*the Spring and Autumn Annals*), a history book written by Confucius himself. Connection with Confucianism makes *Chūn qiū* 春秋 extremely important in history, and *Zuǒ Zhuàn* was raised to the same level, and became a compulsory book for the imperial examination ⁸⁰. That explains why Chinese scholars pay a lot of attention on *Zuǒ Zhuàn*: it is a book that can open the door to real power .

⁷⁹ This statement was recorded in *Lún yǔ* 論語 (*the Analects of Confucius*), chapter 5, No. 15.

⁸⁰ The imperial examination, or widely known as *kē jǔ* 科舉 in Chinese , was an examination system in Imperial China designed to select the best administrative officials for the state's bureaucracy. For most original people, this examination is the only to become officials.

Each chapter of *Zuǒ Zhuàn* begins with original text from *the Spring and Autumn Annals*, namely *jīng* 經, literally means “classic”; following this part, it is the content of *Zuǒ Zhuàn* itself, namely *zhuàn* 傳, literally means “biography”. However, nowadays most scholars believe that *Zuǒ Zhuàn* is an independent work rather than commentary. That is because compare to the original text of the Spring and Autumn Annals, the text of *Zuǒ Zhuàn* contains much more information. This fact can be proved by simply compare the length of them, text from *the Spring and Autumn Annals* has 16,000 characters, yet the original text of *Zuǒ Zhuàn* contains more than 150,000 characters.

Similar to *the Spring and Autumn Annals*, *Zuǒ Zhuàn* follows the sequence of 12 dukes of the State of Lǔ⁸¹, and using their names as titles of each chapter. The catalog of *Zuǒ Zhuàn* is as follows:

Ruler of the State of Lǔ	Reign Duration (Years)	Period of Coverage
Duke Yǐn of Lǔ 魯 隱 公 <small>lǔ yǐn gōng</small>	11	722 – 712 BCE
Duke Huán of Lǔ 魯 桓 公 <small>lǔ huán gōng</small>	18	711 – 694 BCE
Duke Zhuāng of Lǔ 魯 庄 公 <small>lǔ zhuāng gōng</small>	32	693 – 662 BCE

⁸¹ Although this book used rulers of State of Lǔ as catalog, it does not only focus on the State of Lǔ, instead, *Zuǒ Zhuàn* recorded history events of various vassal states of the Western Zhou Dynasty over a period of 254 years.

Duke Mǐn of Lǔ 鲁 闵 公 lǔ mǐn gōng	2	661 – 660 BCE
Duke Xǐ of Lǔ 鲁 僖 公 lǔ xǐ gōng	33	659 – 627 BCE
Duke Wén of Lǔ 鲁 文 公 lǔ wén gōng	18	626 – 609 BCE
Duke Xuán of Lǔ 鲁 宣 公 lǔ xuān gōng	18	608 – 591 BCE
Duke Chéng of Lǔ 鲁 成 公 lǔ chéng gōng	18	590 – 573 BCE
Duke Xiāng of Lǔ 鲁 襄 公 lǔ xiāng gōng	31	572 – 542 BCE
Duke Zhāo of Lǔ 鲁 昭 公 lǔ zhāo gōng	32	541 – 510 BCE
Duke Dìng of Lǔ 鲁 定 公 lǔ dìng gōng	15	509 – 495 BCE
Duke Āi of Lǔ 鲁 哀 公 lǔ āi gōng	27	494 – 468 BCE

What makes *Zuǒ Zhuàn* really unique is not its structure, but its style. Before *Zuǒ Zhuàn*, most Chinese history record is annals, which recorded only very important events of each year by using very simple language. However, *Zuǒ Zhuàn* recorded a wide range of social events from politics to folktales, and it also contains a great

number of conversations. That is why it is regarded as the earliest Chinese works of narrative history. This narrative style is extremely useful for our naming study, because we can analyze not only the different types of names, but also how they were used in daily conversations.

Chapter 4 Euphony in Personals names

The first and most important task of names is to be called, and we can find proof directly from the Chinese character *míng* 名, which means "name". In one of the earliest Chinese dictionaries *Shuō wén jiě zì* 說文解字⁸² ("Explaining Simple and Analyzing Compound Characters"), the character *míng* 名 was explained in this way:

" The character *míng* 名 (which means name) has two parts, *xī* 夕 (which means evening) and *kǒu* 口 (which means mouth), and *xī* 夕 (which represents night.) The character *míng* 名 was combined by these two parts because during night, - people cannot see each other so they use their mouth to call each other's names naturally. "(But specialists in the Chinese writing system writing system certainly do not believe in this kind of explanation.)

cóng kǒu cóng xī xī zhě míng yě míng bù xiāngjiàn gù yǐ kǒu zì míng
从口从夕。夕者，冥也。冥不相见，故以口自名。⁸³

míng *xī* *kǒu*
名 = 夕 + 口

Although this origin of Chinese names is less than convincing, we cannot deny that the first and most important function of name is to allow one to refer to or to address a person. Pronunciation of names should be very important, as people need to use their names almost every day, it is very logical to make a harmonious names rather than a

⁸² *Shuō wén jiě zì* 說文解字 an early 2nd century Chinese dictionary from the Han Dynasty, written by Xǔ Shèn 許慎 (58 AD).

⁸³ From volume 2, radicals of *kǒu* 口字部.

harsh one.

But how can we define whether a name sounds harmonious? In fact even though the phonology of Chinese is extremely detailed and complicated, we can hardly find any phonology theories about making name, as most Chinese phonology works are mainly about rhyme known as *yùn* 韻, which was used for writing poetry or other genres. I don't think this is necessary means that Chinese people do not care about the pronunciation of names. In my opinion, there is no special phonology works about making names in Chinese history, that is mainly because compare to poetry, names are too short: as people cannot choose their family name, when making a given name, people only have the freedom to choose up to two characters, which left very few room to make it harmonious.

However, recent research suggested that there are some phonetics disciplines for short terms in Chinese, even as short as a name. Dīng Bāngxīn 丁邦新 argued that there is some kind of phonetics disciplines about tones for disyllable words⁸⁴ in Chinese, and personal name is not an exception. In his book *Zhōng guó yǔ yán xué lùn wén jí* 中國語言學論文集 (*Collection of papers about Chinese linguistics*)⁸⁵, with the help of statistics methods, he proved that disyllable words has a very obvious favor for certain combination of tones.⁸⁶ In his article he analyzed more than 3000 Chinese disyllable words which were combined by two characters with parallel meanings like *fù mǔ* 父母⁸⁷, *duō shǎo* 多少⁸⁸ and *mǎi mài* 買賣⁸⁹, and find out there are obvious tonal

⁸⁴ In Chinese one character always has only one syllable, so a disyllable words always contain two characters.

⁸⁵ Dīng Bāngxīn 丁邦新, *Zhōng guó yǔ yán xué lùn wén jí* 中國語言學論文集, Shanghai 上海: Zhōng huá shū jú 中華書局, 2008.

⁸⁶ *Zhōng guó yǔ yán xué lùn wén jí* 中國語言學論文集, p. 299-314.

⁸⁷ *Fù* 父 means "father" and *mǔ* 母 means "mother", together this term means "parents".

⁸⁸ *Duō* 多 means "more" and *shǎo* 少 means "less", together this term means "more or less".

⁸⁹ *Mǎi* 買 means "buy" and *mài* 賣 means "sell", together this term means "business".

disciplines when making those terms, that some specific combinations are far more favored than others. But as this article is mainly about names not linguistics, we are not going to introduce the detailed process of Dīng Bāngxīn's analysis, so let's jump to his result directly:

"Among the two characters of a dissyllable word, if one of them is level tone, this one must be the first character of this word (common structures including "level tone - rising tone", level tone - falling tone" and "level tone - entering tone); If one of the two characters is entering tone, this character must be the last one of this word (Common structures including "level tone - entering tone", "rising tone - entering tone" and "falling tone - entering tone") ; When a word did not contain level-tone or entering tone character, the rising tone character must be the first one of the word. (Common structure is "raising tone - falling tone"). "

"兩成分中如果有一個是平聲字，它一定在前（包括平-上，平-去，平-入）；如果有一個是入聲字，它一定在後（包括平-入，上-入，去-入）；沒有平、入聲字時，上聲字在前（包括上-去）。"

Besides Dīng Bāngxīn's study, Ulrich Unger also discussed the same rules of antecedence in detail and adds two more euphonic rules for coordinate structures which we may want to take into account: ⁹⁰

- Syllables with unvoiced initials (u-) precede syllables with voiced initials (v-).
- Syllables with nasal finals -n precede syllables with open vowel finals -o

From this point we cannot help but wondering, do those rules also work when it comes to personal names? Although it is a little bit pointless to use these rules to

⁹⁰ Christoph Harbsmeier: Cao Pi's 曹丕 (187 AD) letter to his friend the magistrate Wu Ji Zhong 吳季重 according to *Wén xuǎn* 文選

discuss single character names (because theoretically speaking a Chinese name can contain almost any character), how about disyllable names? It is very easy to understand that people want their name have harmonious sound, if there are certain principles about making disyllable terms, no matter it is conscious or unconscious, I believe there should be similar rules for making names as well.

Compare to whole number of names in *Zuǒ Zhuàn* (more than 2000), the number of disyllabic given names are very few (about 100). There are three facts that can help us understanding this phenomenon. Firstly, the names we are going to list were all given names, which were recorded in *Zuǒ Zhuàn* clearly, while the other 2000 personal names including all different kinds of names, not only given names. If we only consider given names of people, the gap of number between single character names and disyllabic names will not be so huge. Secondly, all the names we listed are males' names, while names for females in Eastern Zhou Dynasty used an absolutely different system (which we will discuss later in this article), that means all female names from *Zuǒ Zhuàn* were excluded from our list⁹¹, which makes the list shorter. Thirdly, in Eastern Zhou Dynasty, common people do not even have given names, and only nobles (their amount is pretty small) have given names, it is understandable that those names do not need to be very complicated, most likely a single character given name is enough to show they are nobilities.

In order to analyze the tones of disyllabic given names from *Zuǒ Zhuàn*, as the third chapter of this article, I will discuss the pronunciation of disyllable names. In the following section, I listed all the disyllable names from *Zuǒ Zhuàn*, and labeled them with tones by using the ancient rhyming dictionary *Guǎng Yùn* 廣韻⁹², together

⁹¹ In fact the given names of females are commonly unknown in *Zuǒ Zhuàn*.

⁹² *Guǎng Yùn* 廣韻 is a Chinese rhyming dictionary that was compiled from 1007 to 1008 under the auspices of Emperor Zhēn Zōng of Song 宋真宗. Chén Péngniǎn 陳彭年,(961) and Qiū Yōng 邱雍 were chief editors of this book.

with their pronunciations by using the *fǎn qiē* 反切 system.⁹³ In order to make it easy to read, I will also mark these names with phonetic symbols based on the book of Wáng Lì 王力⁹⁴.

I will use different marks to label different tones, antecedence:

Píng shēng 平聲, or level tone in English : ●

Shǎng shēng 上聲, or rising tone in English : ▲

Qù shēng 去聲, or falling tone in English : ▼

Rù shēng 入聲, or entering tone in English : ■

Disyllabic names from *Zuǒ Zhuàn*:

1. Kings of Eastern Zhou Dynasty 周天子, their family name are Ji 姬⁹⁵

King Ping of Zhou 周平王: 宜(yí 魚羈切) 臼 (jiù 其九切)

● ▲

King Heng of Zhou 周恒王: 林(lín 力尋切) 平 (píng 房連切)

● ●

⁹³ In Chinese phonology *fǎn qiē* 反切 is a method to indicate the pronunciation of a character by using two other characters, the pronunciation of the "target character" was given as the onset of the first character with the rhyme of the second character. At the end of those two character *Qiē* 切 was added to indicates that this is a fanqie spelling.

⁹⁴ Wáng lì 王力, *Hàn yǔ yīn yùn xué* 漢語音韻學, Shanghai 上海: Zhōng huá shū jú 中華書局, 1999.

⁹⁵ Although theoretically speaking Kings of Eastern Zhou Dynasty are the top rulers of China, they only claimed themselves as "king" instead of "emperor", that is because the concept of emperor did not exist before the unification of Qin 秦 (221 BC).

King Xi of Zhou周僖王: 胡 (ya 户吴切) 齐 (dzyei 徂奚切)



King Qing of Zhou周顷王: 壬 (thyen 他鼎切) 臣 (zien 植邻切)



King Ding of Zhou周定王: 瑜 (yio 羊朱切) 匡 (khiua 去王切)



King Ling of Zhou周灵王: 泄 (xiap 余制切) 心 (siat 私列切)



2. Dukes of the State of Lǔ 魯國, their family name are Ji 姬⁹⁶

King Yin of Lǔ 魯隱公: 息 (siək 相即切) 姑 (ka 古胡切)



King Cheng of Lu 魯成公: 黑 (xək 呼北切) 肱 (kuəŋ 古弘切)⁹⁷



3. Kings of the State of Wu 吳王⁹⁸, their family names are Ji 姬

King of Wu 吳王: 寿 (ziu 殖酉切) 梦 (miəŋ 莫中切)⁹⁹

⁹⁶ Although it is called "state", the State of Lǔ was rather a independent kingdom than a state (situation of most states in Eastern Zhou Dynasty is similar.). The rulers of the State of Lǔ had a noble title of Duke, which was called *gōng*"公" in Chinese.

⁹⁸ At the later part of Zhou Dynasty, many states claimed them as independent kingdom, and their rulers were claimed as kings, the State of Wu is one of them.

⁹⁹ Literally his name manes " Dream of a long life "(*shòu* 壽 means "a long life" and *mèng* 夢 means dream), again we do not know if his father had a dream about a long life and given him this

▲	●
King of Wu 吴王: 诸 (tɛya 正奢切)	樊 (bian 附袁切)
●	●
King of Wu 吴王: 夷 (ɣiei 以脂切)	末 (mat 莫拔切)
●	■
King of Wu 吴王: 闾 (ɣap 胡腊切)	闾 (lia 力居切)
■	●
King of Wu 吴王: 夫 (pia 甫无切)	差 (tʃhea 初牙切)
●	●

4. Rulers of the State of Cai 蔡国 their family names are Ji 姬¹⁰⁰

Duke Xuan of Cai 蔡宣公: 措 (tʃhak 仓故切)	父 (pia 方矩切)
▼	▲
Marquis Heng of Cai 蔡桓侯: 封 (pion 府容切)	人 (nɛn 如邻切)
●	●
Marquis Ai of Cai 蔡哀侯: 献 (sai 素何切)	舞 (mia 文甫切)
●	▲
Marquis Zhuang of Cai 蔡庄侯: 甲 (keap 古狎切)	午 (nɔ 疑古切)
■	▲
Marquis Dao of Cai 蔡悼侯: 东 (ton 德红切)	国 (kuək 古或切) ¹⁰¹

name because of that, but to name baby by using dream is a very common phenomenon in Chinese, lasted until today.

¹⁰⁰ Some rulers in the State of Cai 蔡国 only have the noble title of marquis, so they can only call themselves as *hóu* 侯 in Chinese.

¹⁰¹ This name literally means "East Kingdom" (*dōng* 東 means east and *guó* 国 means kingdom), his state Cai was located in the mid of He Nan province, which is the east part of Eastern Zhou

● ●

Duke Yin of Teng 滕隱公: 虞 (yüa 遇俱切) 毋 (mia 武夫切)

● ●

8. Dukes from the State of Jin 晉國, their family names are Ji 姬

Duke Xian of Jin 晉獻公: 詭 (kiuai 过委切) 诸 (teya 正奢切)

▲ ●

Duke Hui of Jin 晉惠公: 夷 (kiei 以脂切) 吾 (wea 五加切)

● ●

Duke Wen of Jin 晉文公: 重 (dion 直容切) 耳 (er 而止切)

● ▲

Duke Ling of Jin 晉靈公: 夷 (kiei 以脂切), 皋 (ku 古劳切)

● ●

Duke Cheng of Jin 晉成公: 黑 (kuu 古劳切) 臀 (tun 徒浑切)¹⁰³

● ●

Duke Li of Jin 晉厲公: 州 (teiu 职流切) 蒲 (ba 薄胡切)

● ●

Duke Qing of Jin 晉頃公: 弃 (khiet 诘利切) 疾 (dziet 秦悉切)

▼ ■

9. Rulers from the State of Zheng 鄭國, their family names are Ji 姬

¹⁰³ Literally this name means "black buttocks" (*hēi* 黑 means black and *tún* 臀 means buttocks), again this could be an example of using special feature of body to make names.

Duke Zhuang of Zheng 郑庄公: 寤 (wù 五故切) 生 (shēng 所庚切)¹⁰⁴



Son of Duke of Zhuang 庄公子¹⁰⁵: 子 (zǐ 即里切) 寤 (wù 无匪切)



Duke Xi of Zheng 郑僖公: 髡 (kūn 莫奔切) 顽 (wán 无匪切)



10. Dukes from the State of Song 宋国, their family names are Zi 子

Duke Shang of Song 宋殇公: 与 (yǔ 余吕切) 夷 (yí 以脂切)



Duke Huan of Song 宋桓公: 御 (yù 鱼巨切) 说 (shuō 舒芮切)



Duke Xiang of Song 宋襄公: 兹 (zī 胡涓切) 甫 (fǔ 方矩切)



Duke Cheng of Song 宋成公: 王 (wáng 雨方切) 臣 (chén 植邻切)



¹⁰⁴ Wù Shēng 寤生 literally means "born in waking" (wù 寤 means wake and shēng 生 means born), and there are very clear evidence to show the name owner was born while his mother is waking:

莊公寤生，驚薑氏，故名曰寤生。

"Duke Zhuāng was born as his mother was waking from sleep, which frightened the lady so that she named him Wu Sheng ("born in waking"), and dislike him" - from the first year of the Duke Yin

It is an example of using events happened when the baby was born to make a name, which is a very common naming method and can be found in many Chinese names.

¹⁰⁵ The son of Duke was called *gōng zǐ* 公子 in Chinese.

Duke Zhao of Song 宋昭公: 杵(^{sòngzhāogōng} ^{chǔ} ^{chāng yǔ qiè} ^{jiù} ^{qí jiǔ qiè} 杵白(^{giu}其九切)¹⁰⁶



11. Dukes from the State of Chen 陈国, their family names are Gui 媯

Duke Xuan of Chen 陈宣公: 杵(^{chénxuāngōng} ^{chǔ} ^{chāng yǔ qiè} ^{jiù} ^{qí jiǔ qiè} 杵白(^{giu}其九切)¹⁰⁷



Duke Ling of Chen 陈灵公: 平(^{chénlíngōng} ^{píng} ^{fáng lián qiè} ^{guó} ^{gǔ huò qiè} 平(bian 房连切) 国 (^{kuək}古或切)



12. Dukes from the State of Qi 杞国, their family names are Si 姒

Duke Huan of Qi 杞桓公: 姑(^{qǐ huángōng} ^{gū} ^{gǔ hú qiè} ^{róng} ^{yú fēng qiè} 姑(ka古胡切) 容(^{rong} ^{yú fēng qiè} 容(ion余封切)



Duke Wen of Qi 杞文公: 益(^{qǐ wén gōng} ^{yì} ^{yī xī qiè} ^{gū} ^{gǔ hú qiè} 益(iek伊昔切) 姑(^{ka}古胡切)



13. Dukes from the State of Qi 齐国, their family names are Jiang 姜

Duke Xi of Qi 齐僖公: 禄(^{qí xī gōng} ^{lù} ^{lú gǔ qiè} ^{fǔ} ^{fāng jǔ qiè} 禄(lok 卢谷切) 甫(^{pia}方矩切)



¹⁰⁶ Chǔ Jiū 杵臼 means "mortar and pestle" (*chǔ* 杵 means mortar and *jiū* 臼 means pestle), it sounds very strange that a ruler of a state was named like that. But the fact is it is very common to use daily used articles to name a baby in Eastern Zhou Dynasty, and in this list of name we will find several people were named in this way.

¹⁰⁷ The second person in our list whose name is Chǔ Jiū 杵臼, as I said before using daily used articles to name baby is a very common naming method.

Duke Xiang of Qi 齐襄公: 诸(^{qí xiānggōng} ^{zhū} ^{zhèng shè qiè} 正奢切) 儿 (^{ér} ^{wǔ jī qiè} 五稽切)

● ●

Duke Huan of Qi 齐桓公: 小(^{qí huángōng} ^{xiǎo} ^{sī zhāo qiè} 私兆切) 白(^{bái} ^{bàng mò qiè} 傍陌切)

▲ ■

Duke Yi of Qi 齐懿公: 商(^{qí yì gōng} ^{shāng} ^{shì yáng qiè} 式羊切) 人 (^{rén} ^{rú lín qiè} 如邻切)

● ●

Duke Qing of Qi 齐顷公: 无(^{qí qǐngōng} ^{wú} ^{mò hú qiè} 莫胡切) 野(^{yě} ^{yáng zhě qiè} 羊者切)

● ▲

Duke Jing of Qi 齐景公: 杵(^{qí jǐngōng} ^{chǔ} ^{chāng yǔ qiè} 昌与切) 臼(^{jiù} ^{qí jiǔ qiè} 其九切)¹⁰⁸

▲ ▲

Duke Dao of Qi 齐悼公: 阳 (^{qí dào gōng} ^{yáng} ^{yǔ zhāng qiè} 与章切) 生 (^{shēng} ^{suǒ gēng qiè} 所庚切)¹⁰⁹

● ●

14. King from the State of Chu 楚国, his family name is Mi 𠄎

King Mu of Chu 楚穆王: 商 (^{chǔ mù wáng} ^{shāng} ^{shì yáng qiè} 式羊切) 臣 (^{chén} ^{zhí lín qiè} 植邻切)

● ●

15. Duke from the State of Qin 秦国, his family name is Ying 嬴

Duke Mu of Qin 秦穆公: 任 (^{qín mù gōng} ^{rèn} ^{rú lín qiè} 如林切) 好(^{hǎo} ^{hū qiè} 呼皓切)

● ▲

¹⁰⁸ The third person whose name is Chǔ Jiū 杵臼 in the list.

¹⁰⁹ Yáng Shēng 陽生 means "winter solstice", one of the eight solar terms in Eastern Zhou Dynasty. We do not have any evidence if the name owner was born at winter solstice, but I think it is highly possible.

16. Ducks from the State of Xu , theri family names are Jiang 姜

Duke Mu of Xu 许穆公: 新(xien息邻切) 臣(zien植邻切)

● ●

Duke Zhao of Xu 许昭公: 锡(syek先击切) 我 (ηai五可切)

■ ▲

17. Dukes from the State of Ju 莒國,their family names are Ji 己

Duke Ji of Ju 莒纪公: 庶 (ciak商署切) 其(kiə居之切)

▼ ●

Duke Li Bi of Ju 莒犁比公: 密(met美毕切) 州(zhou职流切)

■ ●

Duke Zhu Qiu of Ju 莒着丘公: 去(khia羌举切) 疾(dziet秦悉切)¹¹⁰

▲ ■

Duke Gong of Ju 莒共公: 庚(kean古行切) 與 (xia以诸切)

● ●

18. Dukes from the State of Zhu 邾国, their family names are Cao 曹

Duke Wen of Zhu 邾文公: 蘧(gia强鱼切) 蔭(dia直鱼切)¹¹¹

¹¹⁰ Literally this name manes "remove disease" (*qu* 去 means remove and *ji* 疾 means disease), this kind of names which indicate the desire of health is also very common to find in Chinese history.

¹¹¹ Qú Chū 蘧蔭 is a kind of bamboo mat, this is another example of using daily used articles to name people.

● ●

Duke Ding of Zhu 邾定公: 夔(zhuāng居缚切) 且(qiě七也切)

■ ▲

18. Kings from the State of Yue 越国, their family names are Si 姒

King of Yue 越王: 允(yǔn余准切) 常(cháng市羊切)

▲ ●

King of Yue 越王: 勾(gōu古侯切) 踐(jiàn慈演切)

● ▲

19. Nobles from other small states

Duke of Guo 虢公: 忌(jì渠记切) 父(fù方矩切)

▼ ▲

Duke of Guo 虢公: 林(lín力寻切) 父(fù方矩切)

● ▲

Marquis of Deng 邓侯: 吾(wú五加切) 离(lí郎计切)

● ▼

Xiao Shu 萧叔: 大(dà唐佐切) 心(xīn息林切)

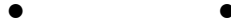
▼ ●

20. Courtiers of different states

Duke Huan of Zhou周桓公¹¹²: 黑(xək呼北切) 肩(jiān 古贤切)¹¹³



Duke Mu of Shan单穆公: 旗(qiā渠之切) 成(chéng 是征切)



Son of Duke of Lü鲁公子: 益(iek伊昔切) 师(shī 疏夷切)



Son of Duke of Lü鲁公子: 庆(qiāng丘敬切) 父(fù 方矩切)



Son of Duke of Wei卫公子: 州(zhōu职流切) 吁(xū况于切)



Son of Duke of Wei卫公子: 黔(qián巨淹切) 牟(móu莫浮切)



Meng Yi Zi孟懿子: 何(hé胡歌切) 忌(jì渠记切)



Sun Shu Zhuang Shu叔孙庄叔: 得(dé多则切) 臣(chén 植邻切)



Sun Shu Xuan Bo孙叔宣伯: 侨(qiáo 巨娇切) 如(rú 人诸切)



Sun Shu Wu Shu孙叔武叔: 州(zhōu 职流切) 仇(chóu 巨鸠切)



Ji Wen Zi季文子: 行(xíng 胡郎切) 父(fù 方矩切)

¹¹² Some relatives of state owners were given a noble title without feudal estates, so they were considered as courtiers.

¹¹³ This name literally means "black shoulder" (*hēi* 黑 means black and *jiān* 肩 means shoulder), another example of using special features of body to make name.

● ▲

Ji Ping Zi 季平子: 意(iə̀k于记切) 如 (ŋia人诸切)

▼ ●

Sun Shu Hui Bo 叔仲惠伯: 彭(bean薄庚切) 生 (ʃeŋ所庚切)

● ●

Sun Shu Mu 叔仲穆子: 小(sio私兆切) 昭(ɬeio止遥切)

▲ ●

The statistics in our list are as follows (the whole number is 81):

- Level tone + level tone ●● : 28
- Level tone + rising tone ●▲ : 10
- Level tone + falling tone ●▼ : 2
- Level tone + entering tone ●■ : 3
- Rising tone + level tone ▲● : 7
- Rising tone + rising tone ▲▲ : 4
- Rising tone + falling tone ▲▼ : 1
- Rising tone + entering tone ▲■ : 2
- Falling tone + level tone ▼● : 5
- Falling tone + rising tone ▼▲ : 3
- Falling tone + falling tone ▼▼ : 1
- Falling tone + entering tone ▼■ : 2
- Entering tone + level tone ■● : 9
- Entering tone + rising tone ■▲ : 4
- Entering tone + falling tone ■▼ : 0
- Entering tone + entering tone ■■ : 0

To summarize: It seems that level tone characters are extremely popular when

making disyllabic names, about 75% of names on our list contain level tone characters.(61 out of 81) However, the principles of making harmonious disyllabic terms we introduced before do not work well when it comes to the names. Unlike the principle¹¹⁴, when a level tone character combines with another character with different tones, the level tone character is not always be the first character of the name.¹¹⁵ Similar to that, when an entering tone character combines with another different tone character, the entering tone character is not always be the last character,¹¹⁶ and this does not fit the principles of Ding Bang Xin as well.¹¹⁷ And for the rule about names combined by rising tone character and falling tone character ¹¹⁸, as there are only 4 of them in our list , I think it is not enough to proof anything. What is more, we can hardly find any cases of compensate for tonal dissonance through homorganic linkage between the syllables¹¹⁹ .

The principles of making harmonious terms do not work pretty well when it comes to personal names. This is a very clear preference for ●●, and dislike for certain structures like ■■, ■▼, ▲▼ and ▼▼. However, it is pretty difficult to find any other regular pattern of the usage of different tones. This can be a piece of evidence to prove that compare to harmonious sounds, people care more about the meanings of

¹¹⁴ "Among the two characters of a disyllable word, if one of them is level tone, this one must be the first character of this word (common structures including "level tone - rising tone", level tone - falling tone" and "level tone - entering tone);

¹¹⁵ 10 ●▲ versus 5 ▼●, 2 ●▼ versus 5 ▼● and 3 ●■ versus 9 ■●.

¹¹⁶ 9 ■● versus 3 ●■, 4 ■▲ versus 2 ▲■ and 0 ■▼ versus 2 ▼■.

¹¹⁷ "If one of the two characters is entering tone, this character must be the last one of this word (common structures including "level tone - entering tone", "rising tone - entering tone" and "falling tone - entering tone") "

¹¹⁸ "When a word did not contain level-tone or entering tone character, the rising tone character must be the first one of the word. (Common structure is "raising tone - falling tone"). "

¹¹⁹ Euphonic sequence of syllables with voiced or unvoiced initial consonants (voiced proceeds unvoiced), or through euphonic sequence of syllables with or without nasal finals (syllables with nasal finals precede syllables ending in a vowel). - Christoph Harbsmeier: *Cao Pi's 曹丕 (187 AD) letter to his friend the magistrate Wú Jì zhòng 吳季重 according to Wén xuǎn 文選*

names. Or maybe the principles we have about using tones did not exist in Eastern Zhou Dynasty. For understanding what the reason is, we will have to study the entire euphonic systems of Chinese personal names, and find more samples of names from both Eastern Zhou Dynasty and other period of time in Chinese history. This is no more an exploratory little exercise in rhetorical appreciation of tonality in Chinese names.

Chapter 5. Analysis about surnames

As a book of narrative history, *Zuǒ Zhuàn* mentions 2455 different persons, and altogether they have 3454 names. Obviously it is inefficiency to analyze each one of them. Fortunately, although the number of names is great, there are not so many surnames in this book (many people in *Zuǒ Zhuàn* used the same family names or clan names). In this chapter, we will focus on surnames from *Zuǒ Zhuàn*, and try to summarize the usage of them.

5.1 The relationship between family names and clan names

Nowadays the Chinese term for “surname” is *xìng shì* 姓氏, it literally means “family name and clan name”¹²⁰. In modern society, this two terms (*xìng* 姓 and *shì* 氏) are exactly the same thing, but back to the era of *Zuǒ Zhuàn*, there are very clear differences between them. In Eastern Zhou Dynasty, family names and clan names existed and be used at the same time. A family name represents a huge kindred or patriarchy, and branches of this patriarchy were "clans", and their surnames were called "clan names". It is very clear that family names are the source of clan names, and *Zī zhì tōng jiàn* 資治通鑒¹²¹ (*"Comprehensive Mirror to Aid in Government"*) summarized the relationship between them as follows:

“Family name occurred in order to unify people’s ancestor naturally, and family name was separated into clan names naturally in order to identify different offspring.”

¹²⁰ *Xìng* 姓 means family names and *shì* 氏 means clan names.

¹²¹ *Zī zhì tōng jiàn* 資治通鑒 (*"Comprehensive Mirror to Aid in Government"*) was a pioneering reference work in Chinese historiography, published in 1084, under the form of a chronicles.

"姓者統其祖考之所自出，氏者別其子孫之所自分" ¹²²

Another noticeable difference between clan names and family names in *Zuǒ Zhuàn* is their number. The number of family names is extremely small, and there are only 22 family names ,¹²³ however, there are more than 100 different clan names in *Zuǒ Zhuàn* . These 22 family names are the very root of Chinese surnames¹²⁴, and the appearance of clan names is the very beginning of its development. Both of them deeply influenced Chinese naming system in the future, especially the development of Chinese surnames , and as the very source of Chinese names, both of them need to be explained.

5.2 Family names from *Zuǒ Zhuàn*

Unlike today, back to Eastern Zhou Dynasty, family names were real luxuries, and only nobles have access to them. Common people did not have their own family names. When reading books from that era, it is a common mistake to misunderstand the term *bǎi xìng* 百姓¹²⁵ as a synonym of “common people”, which is widely used today. The fact is , back to Eastern Zhou Dynasty, this term represents "nobles", (as only nobles had family names) and in that period of time the term for “common people” is actually *lí mín* 黎民 ¹²⁶.

¹²² This statement comes from *Zī zhì tōng jiàn* 資治通鑒, chapter *wài jì* 外紀

¹²³ This number is based on *Chūnqiū Zuǒzhuàn Shìrén* 春秋左傳釋人, page 562 - 564 , this book was recorded in *Xù xiū sì kù quán shū* 續修四庫全書, volume 124 ,Shanghai 上海: Shanghai Classics Publishing House 上海古籍出版社, 2008 . This number of surnames only included the family names of main states of that time. There are 46 barbarian states known as " *róng dí mán yí* 戎狄蠻夷" in *Zuǒ Zhuàn*, and family names from these states were not included.

¹²⁴ There were other family names which existed earlier, but most of them disappeared before Eastern Zhou Dynasty.

¹²⁵ *Bǎi xìng* 百姓 term literally means “one hundred family names”.

¹²⁶ Later in Chinese history, the term *lí míng* 黎民 and *bǎi xìng* 百姓 combined as one idiom,

What is more, family name is not only symbol of nobles; it is also a emblem of states. Back to Eastern Zhou Dynasty, each state has only one family name, and this name was owed by the state ruler, and can only be inherited by his successor.¹²⁷ Other nobles of this state had only clan names. Because of that, we can simply list all the states together with their rulers' family names, and then we are going to have a full list of family names from *Zuǒ Zhuàn*¹²⁸ :

Name of the state	Family names	Peerage
State of Lǔ 魯	Jī 姬	Marquis 侯爵
State of Yú 虞	Jī 姬	Duke 公爵
State of Guō 虢	Jī 姬	Duke 公爵
State of Jì 祭	Jī 姬	Duke 公爵
State of Cài 蔡	Jī 姬	Marquis 侯爵
State of Téng 滕	Jī 姬	Marquis 侯爵
State of Jìn 晉	Jī 姬	Marquis 侯爵
State of Xī 息	Jī 姬	Marquis 侯爵
State of Suí 隨	Jī 姬	Marquis 侯爵
State of Xún 荀	Jī 姬	Marquis 侯爵
State of Jiǎ 賈	Jī 姬	Marquis 侯爵
State of Xíng 邢	Jī 姬	Marquis 侯爵
State of Cáo 曹	Jī 姬	Count 伯爵
State of Yān 燕	Jī 姬	Count 伯爵
State of Ruì 芮	Jī 姬	Count 伯爵
State of Fán 凡	Jī 姬	Count 伯爵

namely *Lí mín bǔ xìng* 黎民百姓 , which means "the common people" .

¹²⁷ In most cases the successor was first son of the ruler , but there are some exceptions.

¹²⁸ This list is based on data from *Chūn qiū zuǒ zhuàn shì rén* 春秋左傳釋人, an ancient classic work about people in *Zuǒ zhuàn* .

State of Yuán 原	Jī 姬	Count 伯爵
State of Huá 滑	Jī 姬	Count 伯爵
State of Chéng 郕	Jī 姬	Count 伯爵
State of Zhèng 鄭	Jī 姬	Count 伯爵
State of Wú 吳	Jī 姬	Viscount 子爵
State of Bā 巴	Jī 姬	Viscount 子爵
State of Gǎo 郛	Jī 姬	Viscount 子爵
State of Sòng 宋	Zǐ 子	Duke 公爵
State of Zhōu 州	Jiāng 薑	Duke 公爵
State of Chén 陳	Guī 媯	Marquis 侯爵
State of Qí 齊	Jiāng 薑	Marquis 侯爵
State of Dèng 鄧	Màn 曼	Marquis 侯爵
State of Jì 紀	Jiāng 薑	Marquis 侯爵
State of Xuē 薛	Rèn 任	Marquis 侯爵
State of Qǐ 杞	Sì 姒	Count 伯爵
State of South Yān 南燕	Jī 姑	Count 伯爵
State of Liáng 梁	Yíng 嬴	Count 伯爵
State of Wēn 溫	Sū 蘇	Viscount 子爵
State of Qín 秦	Yíng 嬴	Count 伯爵
State of Chǔ 楚	Mì 芊	Viscount 子爵
State of Jù 莒	Yǐ 己	Viscount 子爵
State of Zhū 邾	Cáo 曹	Viscount 子爵
State of Xiǎo Zhū 小邾	Cáo 曹	Viscount 子爵
State of Yuè 越	Sì 姒	Viscount 子爵
State of Xú 徐	Yíng 嬴	Viscount 子爵
State of Zēng 鄆	Sì 姒	Viscount 子爵
State of Líng 菱	Mì 芊	Viscount 子爵
State of Lái 萊	Jiāng 薑	Viscount 子爵
State of Tán 邾	Yíng 嬴	Viscount 子爵

State of Hú 胡	Guī 歸	Viscount 子爵
State of Yǔ 郟	Yún 妘	Viscount 子爵
State of Shū Jiū 舒鳩	Yàn 偃	Viscount 子爵
State of Xǔ 許	Jiāng 薑	Baron 男爵
State of Sù 宿	Fēng 風	Not mentioned
State of Shēn 申	Jiāng 薑	Not mentioned
State of Xiàng 向	Jiāng 薑	Not mentioned
State of Huáng 黃	Yíng 嬴	Not mentioned
State of Luó 羅	Xióng 熊	Not mentioned
State of Yí 夷	Yún 妘	Not mentioned
State of Rèn 任	Fēng 風	Not mentioned
State of Dài 戴	Zǐ 子	Not mentioned
State of Xián 弦	Weì 隗	Not mentioned
State of Shěn 沈	Yíng 嬴	Not mentioned
State of Xiàng 項	Jí 姁	Not mentioned

There are two things need to be explained about this list: First of all , not all the states from *Zuǒ Zhuàn* were mentioned in this list. Family names of some states were not recorded in this book; these states were excluded from this list. Secondly, there are four family names were not included in this list, as they were mentioned in *Zuǒ Zhuàn* but we do not know which state they belong to .¹²⁹

Compare to the number of people mentioned in *Zuǒ Zhuàn* (2455), the number of family names is extremely small. I think the reason behind this phenomenon is the special status of family names. On one hand, family names were used only by a small amount of people (state owners), so not all these 2455 people had family names. On the other hand, there was very strict limit of creating new family names, in fact in the

¹²⁹ These four family names are :Téng 滕, Dǒng 董 , Qī 漆 and Xūn 薛.

entire Eastern Zhou Dynasty, not a single new family name was created. ¹³⁰ As Gù Yánwǔ 顧炎武¹³¹ summarized: "Clan names can be changed when passing; family names remain unchanged for thousands of years."¹³²I think that explained why there are so few family names in *Zuǒ Zhuàn*.

About this list, there is another interesting fact. As we mentioned before, these 22 family names in *Zuǒ Zhuàn* are the very root of Chinese family names, however, if we compare this list with the family names we used today, we will find none of them were included in the top 20 common used Chinese names. ¹³³ In fact, some of these family names were extremely rare today, and be used by only very few people. (Some family names like Mì 芈, Sì 姒 and Guī 媯 were almost disappeared today.) This fact suggests that the oldest Chinese family names are not necessary the most popular ones. It seems like these sacred family names were not well spread after Eastern Zhou Dynasty, and the reason behind this phenomenon was deeply rooted in the rules of using family names: there are too few people to use them or share them.

In the list of family names, one family name has the largest number and also extremely important : Jī 姬. This family name is important not only because it is the most common used family name in *Zuǒ Zhuàn*, but also because it is the family name of the emperor. As a royal family name, owners of this name were relatives of the emperor, which makes their social status theoretically higher than other nobles¹³⁴. In

¹³⁰ *Tōng zhì* 通志, chapter *Shì zú luè xù* 氏族略續, written by Zhēng Qiáo 鄭樵 (1103 - 1162)

¹³¹ Gù Yánwǔ 顧炎武 (1613– 1682), also known as Gù Tínglín 顧亭林, was a Chinese philologist and geographer.

¹³² The original Chinese text is "氏一再傳而可變，姓千萬年而不變", this statement came from *Rì zhī lù* 日知錄 written by Gù Yánwǔ 顧炎武, chapter 22 .

¹³³ The top 20 common used Chinese names were based on the statistics of 6th national census, you can find detailed number about these common used family names here :

<http://wenku.baidu.com/view/f5a43a2ab4daa58da0114a89.html>

¹³⁴ In fact in the later part of Eastern Zhou Dynasty, the emperor had barely any power, so at that time, be a relative of the emperor had nothing to be proud.

Zuǒ Zhuàn, we can find very clear records said that the family name Ji was used by 40 states owners, and all of them were relatives of the emperor:

“There are 40 states owned by the Ji people, these rulers were elected from relatives of the emperor.”

姬姓之國者四十人，皆舉親也。 ¹³⁵

What is more, it seems that this family name have some kind of power to connect different states together. In *Zuǒ Zhuàn*, the term *zhū jī* 諸姬 was used more than once, this term literally means "these Ji people ", and in *Zuǒ Zhuàn* it represents all the states with the family names Ji. This is a special phenomenon, and all the other family names were not mentioned in this way in *Zuǒ Zhuàn*. Although there was not other clear evidence, I think I can assume that the family name Ji made these states linked together.

In *Zuǒ Zhuàn*, it is very clear that the author think Ji is more important than other family names. (That might because the author came from State of Lǚ, one of the oldest state with the family Jī) About the relationship between Ji and other family names, we can find a comment from *Zuǒ Zhuàn*:

“The family name of Ji is the sun, while other family names are the moon.”

姬姓，日也。異姓，月也。 ¹³⁶

This metaphor gives us a clear idea about the differences between Ji and other family names, that Ji should be more honorable than others. Nevertheless, no matter what

¹³⁵ *Zuǒ Zhuàn* 左傳 , chapter Duke Zhāo 昭公 , year 28.

¹³⁶ *Zuǒ Zhuàn* 左傳 , chapter Duke Chéng 成公 , year 16 .

the theory is, the fact is that few state rulers really care about the special status of this family name. One sarcastic fact is that the state of Chu, which family name is *mí* 芈, invaded and occupied more than 20 states with the family Ji . It seems like in the troubled times only power matters.

Some family names in *Zuò Zhuàn* were considered as vulgar ones, and sometimes bring some side effects to the owners. Here is a very obvious example:

“Marquis Téng and Marquis Xuē came to see the Duke of State of Lǚ ; Marquis Xuē said : 'I will meet the Duke first.' Marquis Téng replied: ' I am the official augur of Zhou Dynasty, and your family name Xuē is a vulgar family name, because of these two reasons I cannot behind you. ' ”

滕侯、薛侯来朝，争长。薛侯曰：“我先封。”滕侯曰：“我，周之卜正也。薛，庶姓也，我不可以后之。”¹³⁷

In this little story two marquises had an argument about who should meet the Duke first.¹³⁸ Marquis Teng's point is that his opponent had a vulgar family name, which was called *shù xìng* 庶姓¹³⁹, and people with such a bad family name should not meet the Duke first. Later in this story, Marquis Xue had to agree to meet the Duke after Marquis Teng because of the family name issue. This little story showed us there was some kind of ranking system of family names, but there were very few clues we can find from *Zuǒ Zhuàn* to know why some names had a higher rank than others, so I am not going to discuss this topic in this article.

¹³⁷ *Zuǒ Zhuàn* 左傳 , chapter Duke Yǐn 隱, year 11.

¹³⁸ In Eastern Zhou Dynasty it was a honor to meet the Duke first.

¹³⁹ *Shù* 庶 literally means "ordinary", *xìng* 姓 literally means "family name "

5.3 Clan names from *Zuǒ Zhuàn*

Compare to the number of family names, there are much more clan names from *Zuǒ Zhuàn*. Theoretically speaking, clan names were branches of family names, and less important than family names. However, clan names from Eastern Zhou Dynasty were so important that influenced the development of Chinese surnames much more than family names.

As we mentioned before, family names can only be passed to the successor of the state owners, while clan names can be shared by any nobles, and sometimes clan names can also be used by people without noble titles. (Or instance, many chancellors had clan names in *Zuǒ Zhuàn*.) By the end of Eastern Zhou Dynasty, the number of clan names is much more than family names, and in fact clan names are the main source of Chinese surnames we used today instead of family names. That is why most of the top 100 common used Chinese names we have today can be found in the list of clan names from Eastern Zhou Dynasty. ¹⁴⁰

But there is one question we may ask, how exactly these clan names were made? Did people from that period time just pick their favorite Chinese characters to make clan names? We cannot find answer of this question from *Zuǒ Zhuàn* as it mentioned very few about clan names, but fortunately other documental materials can provide us some useful information. The book *Yi li* 儀禮 ¹⁴¹ recorded very detailed rulers about how to make clan names :

¹⁴⁰ By the end of Eastern Zhou Dynasty, the number of clan names is much more than several hundred, so I am not going to list all of them in this chapter.

¹⁴¹ *Yi li* 儀禮 is a book described the social forms, governmental system, and ceremonial rites of the Zhou Dynasty , The original text is believed to have been compiled by Confucius himself .

" State owners given their ministers¹⁴² clan names. ... The grand grandsons of state owners were not close relatives, so they cannot use the state owner's family names, instead they can only use the courtesy name (字) of their grandfather as their clan names. For those who are not offspring of the state owners, they can use the placename of their fiefdom as their clan names. "

諸侯賜卿大夫以氏. ... 公孫之子其親已遠，不得上連於公， 故以王父字為氏. 若異姓，則以父祖官所食邑為氏. ¹⁴³

What we should keep in mind is that this is only a rule recorded in books, in real practice, there are much more ways of making clan names .The book *Tōng zhì* 通志¹⁴⁴ surmised all the possible ways of making clan names in the chapter *Shì zú luè xù* 氏族略續 , and there are 7 major sources of clan names :

***Guó míng* 國名 , or state names :** In eastern Zhou Dynasty, there used to be 180 different states¹⁴⁵, although some of them were extremely small, all of these states had their own unique names. It was very popular to use state names as clan names in Eastern Zhou Dynasty. There are 108 clan names from that era were from clan names,¹⁴⁶ some of them are still very common until today, for instance , clan names like Zhào 趙, Chén 陳 and Zhū 朱 are both state names , and all of them are top 20 common used family names in China today. To a certain extent, names of states are

¹⁴² In Eastern Zhou Dynasty, all the brothers and sons of state owner were also considered as his "ministers".

¹⁴³ This statement came from *Yi lǐ dà zhuàn zhèng yì*, 儀禮大傳正義 .

¹⁴⁴ *Tōng zhì* 通志 was written by Zhēng Qiáo 鄭樵 (1103 - 1162)

¹⁴⁵ This number is based on the statistics of *Shǐ jì* 史記

¹⁴⁶ This number is based on *Tōng zhì* 通志. not all the 108 clan names were recorded in *Zuǒ Zhuàn*.

respectful as they were symbols of states , so this kind of clan names were mainly used by big nobles of each state (in most cases , the relatives of state rulers).

***Cǎi yì míng* 采邑名, or manor names** : Similar to state names, names of manors were also used as sources of clan names. This kind of clan names were mainly used by ministers of states, as they are not capable to use the state names. Some of these manor names became extremely common used family names , like *liú* 劉 and *bái* 白.

***Dì míng* 地名 or placename** : In Eastern Zhou Dynasty, wars were so common for everyone, and people, including nobles, sometimes had to move a lot because of wars. In order to show their original hometown, some nobles used placename as their clan names. One interesting phenomenon is that these place names sometimes are very general , for instance, *dōng guō* 東郭 is a clan name made by placename, while it literally means " Eastern town " , and theoretically speaking it can be any town at east. I think the reason for this phenomenon is that many small places did not have an official name at that time, and placename like "eastern town " were widely used and accepted by most people.

***Zǔ zì* 祖字 , or courtesy name of grandfather** : The rite of Eastern Zhou Dynasty had a very clear rule that the grand grandson of state rulers cannot inherit any special noble title ¹⁴⁷, instead, they can get clan names by using *zì* 字 (courtesy names)of their grandfather. In some very rare cases, people also used the family names of their grandfather as their clan names.

¹⁴⁷ The sons of state ruler had the special noble title *gōng zǐ* 公子, and the grandson of state rulers had the special noble title *gōng sūn* 公孫. Both of these two titles can be used as clan names.

Háng dì 行第, or ranking names : As we mentioned in chapter 2 ¹⁴⁸, there were a ranking system using different characters to identify the seniority. These ranking characters, namely *bó* 伯, *zhòng* 仲, *shū* 叔 and *jì* 季, were also used as clan names by many families.

Guān míng 官名, or official titles : In Eastern Zhou Dynasty, it is a great honor for common people to become officials. Some people think it is so honorable that they would like to use their official titles as clan names. (If they were allowed to have clan names.) Famous examples including *sī mǎ* 司馬, *sī tú* 司徒 and *sī kōng* 司空. All of them were official titles, and then became very common used double-character surnames.

Jì yì míng 技藝名, or profession names : At the last few decades of Eastern Zhou Dynasty, the limit of owning clan names was weaker and weaker, and some common people began to have their clan names. These earliest clan names of common people were mainly from their professions. For instance, butchers' clan names were *tú* 屠, which means "slaughter".

5.4 The development of family names and clan names

In the last century of Eastern Zhou Dynasty, countless wars made many nobles lost their lands and became common people. As a result, the limit of having family names and clan names became more and more meaningless. In the last few decades, as the state of Qin 秦 invaded and occupied almost all the other states, most nobles from Eastern Zhou Dynasty were disappeared in the river of history. The social structure of Qin Dynasty has some fundamental differences: power of the entire country was in the hand of emperor, and nobles did not own huge land and independent armies anymore. To a certain extent, in Qin Dynasty nobles were barely empty titles and only

¹⁴⁸ Page 21 of this article.

emperor had the real power. ¹⁴⁹Under this circumstances, owning clan names and family names are not special right of nobles, which is why after Qin's unification, almost every people had surnames.

Another noticeable fact is that after Qin's unification, the differences between family name and clan name disappeared very fast. When it comes to the Han Dynasty (about 50 years after Eastern Zhou Dynasty) , there was no difference between them at all . In articles from Han Dynasty, the term *xìng shì* 姓氏 , which is combined by *xìng* 姓 (family name) and *shì* 氏 (clan name) , was widely used as surnames. I think reason for this combination is very clear: at the very beginning, the functions of family names and clan names are the same, they had differences simply because the different social status of their owners. When there were no more state rulers and nobles , it is not surprise the differences between family names and clan names were gone.

¹⁴⁹ One example of this phenomenon is that in Qin Dynasty, the first emperor ordered his army to collect all the private weapons from the entire country and destroyed them all. The first emperor did that because he was afraid that one day people will use these weapons to against him.

Chapter 6. Noble titles and posthumous names from *Zuǒ Zhuàn*

In the entire book of *Zuǒ Zhuàn*, the most common seen names are not family name, clan name or given name; instead, there were noble titles and posthumous names everywhere in the book. We do not know if people of that time use noble titles and posthumous names so much in daily life or in conversations, but at least in writing, they were used much more than others. Unlike other types of personal names, noble titles and posthumous names are extremely systematic, and have very strict rules to follow. In Eastern Zhou Dynasty, they can only be owned by rulers of each state, and because of that, noble titles and posthumous names contain a lot of information of their owners, which were normally overlooked by readers. That is why I think it is important to write a chapter about noble titles and posthumous names. In this chapter, I am going to explain the system of noble titles and posthumous names, and analyze how they were used in *Zuǒ Zhuàn*.

6.1 Root of noble titles from *Zuǒ Zhuàn*

We do not know if it is a coincidence or not, but in Eastern Zhou Dynasty, similar to western society, nobles were divided into five different classes, namely *gōng jué* 公爵 (Duke), *hóu jué* 侯爵 (Marquess), *bó jué* 伯爵 (Count), *zǐ jué* 子爵 (Viscount) and *nán jué* 男爵 (Baron). In practice, these titles were called *gōng* 公 (duke), *hóu* 侯 (marquess), *bó* 伯 (count), *zǐ* 子 (viscount) and *nán* 男 (baron) for short. And noble titles are normally after state names and posthumous names when mentioned. For instance, Lǚ Yīn Gōng 魯隱公 is a name mixed with state name, posthumous name and noble title, *Lǚ* 魯 is the state name, *Yīn* 隱 is the posthumous name and *Gōng* 公 is noble title, which represents duke.

6.1.1 The root of noble titles of *Zuǒ Zhuàn*

Some scholars believed that the noble title system in *Zuǒ Zhuàn* was used since Xia Dynasty¹⁵⁰, which is the first Dynasty of China. However, there is no clear evidence to support this theory. However, we are quite sure that in Eastern Zhou Dynasty, these noble titles were already widely used, as there are plenty of evidences can prove that. The earliest record about this system we have was from *Mèng zǐ* 孟子 (*Mencius*)¹⁵¹:

“Son of Heaven¹⁵² is one class, duke is one class, marquess is one class, count is one class, viscount and baron are one class. There are five classes (of nobles).”

天子一位，公一位，侯一位，伯一位，子男同一位，凡五等也。¹⁵³

Theoretically speaking, we have very clear idea about when this system was used and how it was used. Nevertheless, about these noble titles, there is one mystery which I can hardly find answers from anywhere: Why people use these five characters as title of nobles? It seems that this question was overlooked by scholars for thousands of years. Most documental materials we can found about titles of nobles only told us this system was very old, and there are many evidences to prove it was used since Zhou Dynasty. However, none of them explained why ancient Chinese decided to use these

¹⁵⁰ Xia Dynasty 夏朝 (ca. 2070 – ca. 1600 BC) is the first dynasty in China to be described in ancient historical chronicles.

¹⁵¹ *Mèng Zǐ* 孟子 (*Mencius*) is a collection of anecdotes and conversations of the Confucian thinker and philosopher Mencius. The work dates from the second half of the 4th century BC.[1] It was ranked as a Confucian classic.

¹⁵² In ancient China, emperors claimed them as *tiān zǐ* 天子, which means "son of heaven", so this term is a specific names for emperors.

¹⁵³ This statement came from *Mèng Zǐ* 孟子 (*Mencius*), volume *wàng zhāng* 萬章篇, chapter 2, line 3.

five characters as titles of nobles, is there anything special about them? Do they have something in common that makes them suitable of becoming noble titles? If there questions remain unsolved, then I don't think our understanding about noble title system in *Zuǒ Zhuàn* is comprehensive. Nevertheless, as these noble titles are so ancient, there are no clear records about who made them and why these characters were chose. The only thing we can do is to analyze the very root of these characters, and try to assume why they were used as noble titles. In order to do that, I am going to use two ancient Chinese dictionaries , *Shuō wén jiě zì* 說文解字 ¹⁵⁴ ("*Explaining Simple and Analyzing Compound Characters*")and *Kāng xī zì diǎn* 康熙字典 (*Kangxi Dictionary*) ¹⁵⁵as my reference. Both of them have clear explanations of roots of these characters.

As this noble title system was used before Zhou Dynasty, we can only find the sources of these characters from *jiǎ gù wén* 甲骨文 (Oracle bone script) , one type of ancient Chinese characters found on oracle bones, which were animal bones or turtle shells used in divination before Eastern Zhou Dynasty . I will also put the oracle bone script of these noble titles as reference. Nevertheless, as oracle bone script is very pictographic and old, we are not sure about the real meanings or structures of them , so I will still use *Shuō wén jiě zì* 說文解字 and *Kāng xī zì diǎn* 康熙字典 as prime sources of this study.



Gōng 公 (duke) : As the highest noble title, gong was often applied to state rulers or close relatives of the emperors. In *Shuō wén jiě zì* 說

¹⁵⁴ *Shuō wén Jiě zì* 說文解字 (*Explaining Simple and Analyzing Compound Characters*) was a Chinese dictionary from the Han Dynasty. It was one of the earliest Chinese dictionaries to analyze the structures and sources of Chinese characters

¹⁵⁵ *Kāng xī zì diǎn* 康熙字典 (*Kangxi Dictionary*) was the standard Chinese dictionary during Qing Dynasty. This dictionary contains more than 47,000 characters (including obscure bone script) .

文解字 . This character was explained as “fairly divided”¹⁵⁶ , (The oracle bone script of this character looks like a square in the mid of two parallel lines, which I think to a certain extent can express this meaning.) And its core meaning "fair" was still used until today.¹⁵⁷ I think ancient Chinese used this character as a noble title might because they believe to be fair is the most important principle of rulers, as we can find relative statement from *Lǐ jì* 禮記 (*Book of Rites*)¹⁵⁸ : "A fair spirit ruled all under the sky, this is the great way."¹⁵⁹



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Hóu 侯 (marquess) : The oracle bone script of this character explained it quite well, as *Kāng xī zì diǎn* 康熙字典 said , *hóu* 侯 means "shot " , as its oracle bone script shows a arrow going to hit its target .¹⁶⁰ In the book *Hàn shū* 漢書 (*Book of Han*)¹⁶¹ , there is

record about why this character was used as a noble title : “In ancient time, people were judged by their shooting skills, these who can hit the target were given noble titles.”¹⁶² There is another theory said that *Hóu* 侯 is a kind of celebration namely *xiāng shè lǐ* 鄉射禮¹⁶³: in spring , emperors and nobles shot a piece of cloth drew with tigers and bears, in order to show their stateliness .¹⁶⁴ No matter which theory

¹⁵⁶ The Chinese text is "平分也" , this comment can be found in volume 2, section bā 八.

¹⁵⁷ For instance, in Chinese *gōng píng* 公平 means "fair" .

¹⁵⁸ *Lǐ jì* 禮記 (*Book of Rites*) is a book from Han Dynasty, it described the social forms, governmental system, and ceremonial rites of the Zhou Dynasty .

¹⁵⁹ The original Chinese text is "大道之行，天下为公" , this text can be found in Chapter *lǐ yùn* 禮運 of *Lǐ jì* 禮記.

¹⁶⁰ The original Chinese text is "從矢取射意" .

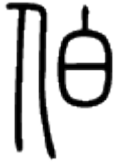
¹⁶¹ *Hàn shū* 漢書 (*Book of Han*) is a classical Chinese history finished in AD 111, covering the history of China under the Western Han from 206 BC to 25 AD.

¹⁶² The original Chinese text is " 古者以射選賢，射中者獲封爵" .

¹⁶³ Literally *xiang she li* 鄉射禮 means "rite of shooting in village " .

¹⁶⁴ More details about this celebration can be found from *Li ji* 禮記 (*Book of Rites*), chapter *Xiāng shè lǐ* 鄉射禮.

is right, I think there is enough reason to use this character as a noble title.



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Bó 伯 (count) : In *Shuō wén jiě zì* 說文解字 , the character Bo 伯 was simply explained as "chief" ¹⁶⁵. In Eastern Zhou Dynasty, this character was also used as a ranking character, which means "the oldest son". In *Zhōu lǐ* 周禮(*Rites of Zhou*) , there is a title called *zōng bó* 宗伯, which belongs to the chief of each tribe . ¹⁶⁶ I think it is reasonable to use the title of tribes' leaders as a noble title. (According to rites from that time , in most cases , these tribe leaders are also the oldest son of his family .) There is another theory from *Kāng xī zì diǎn* 康熙字典 , it is said in Eastern Zhou Dynasty , *bó* 伯 is a variant character, which is equal to *bà* 霸. *Bà* 霸 is the title for the chief of feudal lords, which is also suitable to be a noble title. The only question is , if Bo 伯 is title for the chief of feudal lords, why it is the third rank of noble titles ? So I still prefer the first theory that *bó* 伯 is title of tribes' leaders.



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Zǐ 子 (viscount) : *Zǐ* 子 is a character with various of meanings, in *Kāng xī zì diǎn* 康熙字典 it recorded more than 10 different meanings of this character. One of those explanations is that *zǐ* 子 is a title for people with good morality , for instance, Confucius was commonly called *Kǒng Zǐ* 孔子 , while *kǒng* 孔 is his clan name, and *zǐ* 子 is a respectful title, which suggests he is a man with good morality. (similar examples including *Mèng Zǐ* 孟子, *Xún Zǐ* 荀子, *Hán Fēi Zǐ* 韓非子 and so on.) I think this might be the reason of why this character was used as noble title, maybe in ancient time , this noble title were only given to these people with good morality.

¹⁶⁵ The original Chinese text is "伯, 長也".

¹⁶⁶ More details about this title can be found from *Zhōu lǐ* 周禮(*Rites of Zhou*) , chapter *Chūn guān* 春官.



Nán 男 (baron) : In *Shuō wén jiě zì 說文解字* , this character was explained in this way : *nán 男* means "men" , it suggests that a man should work in the field. ¹⁶⁷ The oracle bone script of this character looks like a hoe on the said of a field, and it also explained

this meaning quite well. As the lowest noble title, similar to *hóu 侯*, I think *Nán 男* suggests a man with good working ability , while in ancient time, it is reasonable that people who are good at shooting had a higher noble title than people who are good at farming .

6.2 The apparent chaos of noble titles in *Zuǒ Zhuàn*

The noble title system of Eastern Zhou Dynasty is old yet systemic, however, in real practice, this situation of those noble titles is entire a chaos, and *Zuǒ Zhuàn* is not an exception. I think there are two reasons behind this phenomenon: one is that every powerful state ruler of that time claimed that they had the highest noble title (some of them even claimed they are kings.); another one is these noble titles have several other meanings, and many of them can also be used in personal names , which may bring us a lot of difficulties to understand .

In Eastern Zhou Dynasty, it was not rare that a state ruler with lower noble titles claimed them as duke. In fact in *Zuǒ Zhuàn* , almost every stater rulers were called *gong 公*, which means duke. Theoretically speaking , noble titles should be inherited by offspring of state owners and remain unchanged, but if we look at the list from page 57 of this article, there were very few state rulers (less than 10) were given the title of duke. It seems that all the states rulers from Eastern Zhou Dynasty liked to claim themselves as dukes when their states were powerful enough. What is more,

¹⁶⁷ The original Chinese text is : *nán 男, zhàng fū yě 丈夫也, yán nán yòng lì yú tián yě 言男用力於田也.*

rulers from the state of Chǔ 楚 even claimed themselves as *wáng* 王¹⁶⁸, which means kings, and given noble titles to its internal nobles.

An interesting fact is that this chaos was widely accepted at that time. Although there should never be any Duke of Lǚ or Duke of Qín in Eastern Zhou Dynasty, the author of *Zuǒ Zhuàn*, who is a professional historian, recorded all of those "unofficial" noble titles of duke without any doubt. In *Lún Yǔ* 論語 (*the Analects of Confucius*), we will find that Confucius also call these state owners as duke, even though he is the one who emphasized that the rite and political system of Zhou Dynasty should be respected and remained.

Another thing makes us confused is the various meanings of these noble titles, especially *bó* 伯 and *zǐ* 子. As we mentioned before, *bó* 伯 is also a ranking character which suggests its owner is the oldest son of his family, and because of that, in *Zuǒ Zhuàn*, *sòng bó* 宋伯 means "Duke of the state of Song" as well as "the oldest son of Song family"¹⁶⁹. Similar to that, the noble title *zǐ* 子 can also be used as a title for people with good morality. For instance, Confucius' title is Kǒng Zǐ 孔子, but it does not necessarily mean he is a viscount. Under this circumstance, we can only use dictionaries of personal names in order to find the real meanings of these titles.

6.3 Posthumous names from *Zuǒ Zhuàn*

In *Zuǒ Zhuàn*, posthumous names were normally used by state rulers¹⁷⁰, and commonly given by offspring of their owners after death. Posthumous names were

¹⁶⁸ The ruler of the state of Chǔ 楚 only claimed them as *Wáng* 王 (king), but not *Tiān Zǐ* 天子 (son of heaven), as *Tiān Zǐ* 天子 is a title only used by the emperors.

¹⁶⁹ In *Zuǒ Zhuàn*, Song 宋 is both a state name and a clan name.

¹⁷⁰ Some nobles (not state rulers) also have posthumous, but the number is relatively small.

used together with other names, and a full title of state ruler was generally combined by the state name, which was at the beginning, the posthumous name, which was at the middle, and the noble title, which was at the end. For instance, Lǔ Yǐngōng 魯隱公, *lǔ* 魯 is the state name, *yǐn* 隱 is his posthumous name and *gōng* 公 is his noble title of duke. Between state names and noble titles might be the most noticeable features of posthumous titles, and by following this feature, we can find almost all the posthumous names from *Zuǒ Zhuàn* without any difficulties.

Unlike the state name or noble title, posthumous names will provide us more personal information about their owners, as a proper posthumous name should generalize the owner's entire life by using one (very occasionally two) Chinese character. It sounds like a joke to summarize one's life in one Chinese character, but ancient Chinese surely did it in Eastern Zhou Dynasty, and in fact they did it pretty well. The secret behind that is that there was a list of posthumous names in Eastern Zhou Dynasty, it recorded the meaning of each names, and it also explained under different situations which posthumous name should be use. This list can be found from *Yì zhōu shū* 逸周書 (*the lost books of Zhou*), a collection of documental materials from Zhou Dynasty.¹⁷¹ In this book, there was a chapter called *shì fǎ jiě* 諡法解, which literally means "the explanation of posthumous name system". In this chapter, about 100 possible posthumous names were recorded, together with several hundred cases of how they should be used. Surprisingly, unlike other naming system of the same era, the system of posthumous names is very comprehensive, in fact all the posthumous names from *Zuǒ Zhuàn* can be found from this list. That is really a good news for us, as we can simply find meanings of each posthumous names from *Zuǒ Zhuàn* in the list. Nevertheless, not all posthumous names in this list were widely used, in *Zuǒ Zhuàn*, some posthumous names were repeatedly used by rulers of various states. But within the same state, rulers cannot use the same posthumous names as their ancestors,

¹⁷¹ *Yì zhōu shū* 逸周書 (*the lost books of Zhou*) is a collection of documental materials from Zhou Dynasty, which was commonly regarded as a work of Confucians.

as that is considered as not respectful behavior.

There are too many posthumous names in *Zuǒ Zhuàn* , and I am not going to listed all of them in this article ,instead, I will explain those most common used ones, in order to show how how this list looks like :

Wén 文 : people who study hard and be inquisitive can be called Wen . ¹⁷²

Zhāo 昭 : people who work hard and have good moral character can be called Zhao.
¹⁷³

Huǎn 桓: people who conquer new land and make other states obey can be called Huan . ¹⁷⁴

Zhuāng 莊 : people who defeat their strong enemies can be called Zhuang . ¹⁷⁵

As we mentioned before, a proper Chinese posthumous name should be a Chinese character that can generalize its owner's entire life. Because of that ,not all the posthumous names contain good meanings, some of them were very normal, and some of them have even "bad meanings", and were given to those incompetent state rulers . Here are some examples:

Dào 悼 : people who dead at their mid age can be called Dao . ¹⁷⁶

¹⁷² The original Chinese text is : *xué qín hǎo wèn yuē wén* 學勤好問曰文 . People who used this posthumous name including Duke Wen of Jin 晉文公, Duke Wén of Lǔ 魯文公 and so on .

¹⁷³ The original Chinese text is : *zhāo dé yǒu láo yuē zhāo* 昭德有勞曰昭 . Famous owners of this posthumous including Duke Zhāo of Sòng 宋昭公, Duke Zhāo of Lǔ 魯昭公 and so on .

¹⁷⁴ The original Chinese text is : *pì tǔ fú yuǎn yuē huán* 辟土服遠曰桓 . Owners of this posthumous including Duke Huán of Qí 齊桓公, Duke Huán of Lǔ 魯桓公 and so on .

¹⁷⁵ The original Chinese text is : *shèng dí zhì qiáng yuē zhuāng* 勝敵志強曰莊 . This posthumous name was owned by people like Duke Zhuang of Lǔ 魯莊公, Duke Zhuāng of Zhū 邾莊公 and so on .

¹⁷⁶ The original Chinese text is : *nián zhōng zǎo yāo yuē dào* 年中早夭曰悼 . Owners of this

Ai 哀: people who are kind but dead earlier can be called Ai . ¹⁷⁷

Li 厲 : people who kill innocent people can be called Li . ¹⁷⁸

Theoretically speaking , posthumous names were given after death, although in the very end of Eastern Zhou Dynasty, there were some exceptions that people decided their posthumous names before death , in general, most rulers do not have the opportunity to choose which Chinese character they are going to use as their posthumous names. This is not necessary state rulers did not care about their posthumous names, just the reverse, in Eastern Zhou Dynasty people cared about their posthumous names a lot. For instance, in *Zuǒ Zhuàn*, there was a story about death of a king¹⁷⁹of the state of Chǔ 楚: In 626 BCE, there was an armed rebellion in the state of Chu, and the King of that time was forced to commit suicide after defeated. But before he hang himself, the king asked what posthumous name he will be given , and government official told him it will be líng 靈, which means "people with a bad ending"¹⁸⁰. The king refused to suicide after he heard this name, and at last he agreed to hang himself after be given a better posthumous name called Chéng 成, which means "people who have good achievements". The original text from *Zuǒ Zhuàn* is as follows:

"The king is going to hang himself, and before that he asked about his posthumous name. He was told it will be Líng 靈, but he refused to dead with that posthumous name. Posthumous names were normally given to rulers who died in their mid-age, including Duke Dào of Lǔ 魯悼公, Duke Dào of Qí 齊悼公 and so on .

¹⁷⁷ The original Chinese text is : *gōng rén duǎn shé yuē āi* 恭仁短折曰哀. Owners of this posthumous including Duke Ai of Lǔ 魯哀公, Duke Ai of Jin 晉哀公 and so on .

¹⁷⁸ The original Chinese text is : *shā lù wú gū yuē lì* 殺戮無辜曰厲 . Some state rulers were given this posthumous names, including Duke Li of Jin 晉厲公, Duke Li of Zhèng 鄭厲公 and so on .

¹⁷⁹ Rulers of state of Chǔ 楚 claim themselves as kings instead of nobles.

¹⁸⁰ The explanation of líng 靈 is *bù qín chéng míng yuē líng* "不勤成名曰靈".

name . Then people told his posthumous name will be Chéng 成, then the king died .
"

王縊。諡之曰：“靈”，不瞑；曰：“成”，乃瞑。¹⁸¹

It is a very interesting story about posthumous names, it seems like people can negotiate about what kind of posthumous names they will have. But cases like this king is not universal in *Zuǒ Zhuàn*. In general, most posthumous names contain good meanings; these names with bad meanings were used only by very few people. This system was shortly abandoned after the Qin unification, as the emperor of Qin thought this is a system is "sons judge their fathers, chancellors' judge their kings ", and it is meaningless.¹⁸² However, after Qin Dynasty, this system of posthumous names widely used by almost all the following dynasties in China, and it also became more and more complicated, when it comes to the Qing Dynasty, some longest posthumous names were as long as more than 20 characters. On the other hand , some common people were also given posthumous names by their relatives and friends, namely *sī shì* 私諡. But as they are not topics of this article, so I am not going to discuss them here.

¹⁸¹ This text can be found from the first year of Duke Wén of Lǔ 文西元年 in *Zuǒ Zhuàn*.

¹⁸² The original text of this statement was recorded in *Shi Ji* 史記 , *qín shǐ huáng běn jì* 秦始皇本紀: "*zǐ yì fù* 子議父, *chén yì jūn yě* 臣議君也, *shèn wú wèi* 甚無謂."

Chapter 7 Women's names in *Zuǒ Zhuàn*

In *Zuǒ Zhuàn*, names of women have fundamental differences compare to personal names of men. In general, names of women have very strict rulers to follow, and most of them did not contain any personalities, instead, they were rather like special designed labels for women.¹⁸³ Names of most women were only designed to show the differences between their families; that means in *Zuǒ Zhuàn*, a mother and her daughter will have the same name. What is more, after getting married, names of women will change, and the ways of changing them are various. Because of these special features, sometimes we are really confused about identities of different women in *Zuǒ Zhuàn*. In this chapter, I will try to explain how names of women were made and used in Eastern Zhou Dynasty.

7.1 The rules of making names for women

In Eastern Zhou Dynasty, women do have their own given names like men, but they were hardly mentioned in *Zuǒ Zhuàn*. We do not know if it is because those names were secrets of women and should only be known by their husbands, or maybe the author thought it is not necessary to mention given names of women. The fact is, in *Zuǒ Zhuàn*, women were addressed by special titles rather than "names". These titles were made by following very strict rulers and can be found in very chapter of *Zuǒ*

¹⁸³ For a discussion of women's given names, see Viviane Alleton, *Les Chinois et la passion des nom*, Aubier: 1993, 205-22. This fascinating study concentrates mainly on given names in Chinese society.

Zhuàn. In order to avoid misunderstandings, I will still call these titles as "women's names " in this section.

The basic structure of women's names from *Zuǒ Zhuàn* is very simple: a ranking character followed by family names. For instance, Bó Jī 伯姬 is woman's name from *Zuǒ Zhuàn*, bó 伯 is a ranking character which suggests that this woman is the eldest daughter of her names, and jī 姬 is her family name. Nevertheless, there were only five ranking characters to show seniority in the family : bó 伯, zhòng 仲, shū 叔 and jì 季, together with another character Mèng 孟, which represents the oldest daughter of concubines .But when a woman is the only daughter of her family, the ranking character will be omitted.

This system is very simple, but it also has great limitations: for women who use the same family name, there are only five possible names they can use. What is more, as I mentioned in chapter 5, in Eastern Zhou Dynasty, a lot of people were using the same family names (if they had one) , that leads to another unavoidable problem : a great number of women have to use the same names. In order to solve this problem, people (or the author , we do not know exactly who did that) had to add some additional parts on women's name, and this "additional part" together with the original women's names are what we have in *Zuǒ Zhuàn* . In general, I summarized 5 possible types of names that can be added on women's names:

State names: In *Zuǒ Zhuàn*, it is very common to add the name of states on women's name, in order to show where they came from. For instance, Jì Jì Jiāng 紀季薑 is a woman's name recorded in year 9 of Duke Huán 桓公九年 from *Zuǒ Zhuàn*,

jì 紀 is the name of her home state, *jì* 季 is a ranking character which represents that she was the youngest daughter in her family, and *jiāng* 薑 is her family name. ¹⁸⁴

Clan names of husbands: After married, some women add the clan names of their husbands on their names. One example is from year 25 of Duke Xi 僖公二十五年, a woman named Dàng Bó Jī 蕩伯姬 was recorded. In her case, *dàng* 蕩 is the clan name of her husband, *bó* 伯 is her ranking character, which means she was the oldest daughter of her family, and *jī* 姬 is her family name. ¹⁸⁵

The title "zǐ" 子 : Sometimes a Chinese character *zǐ* 子 was added on women's names, that means owners of these names were already get married. Example of this case can be found from Year 12 of Duke Wen 文公十二年 of *Zuǒ Zhuàn*, where a woman named Zǐ Shū Jī 子叔姬 was recorded. *Zǐ* 子 means she was a married woman, *shū* 叔 is a ranking character suggests that she is the third daughter of her family, and *jī* 姬 is her family name. ¹⁸⁶

The posthumous names of husbands: When women's husbands were dead, sometimes they added posthumous names on their names. For instance, Wǔ Jiāng 武薑 is a woman's name from first year of Duke Yīn 隱西元年 of *Zuǒ Zhuàn*, *wǔ* 武 is posthumous name of her husband Duke Wǔ of Zhèng 鄭武公, and *jiāng* 薑 is her

¹⁸⁴ This explanation came from *Cóng Chūnqiū Zuǒzhuàn kàn Xiānqín Shíqī Nùxìng de Míngzì Jíqí Wénhuà Nèihán* 從春秋左傳看先秦時期女性名字及其文化內涵, written by Tián Héngjīn 田恒金, *Shijiazhuang: Journal of Heibei Normal University*, July 1998, page 49 - 54.

¹⁸⁵ This explanation came from *Chūn qiū Zuǒ-shì jīng zhuàn jí jiě* 春秋左氏經傳集解, written by Dù Yù 杜預 (222-285)

¹⁸⁶ This explanation came from *Chūn qiū Zuǒ Zhuàn zhu* 春秋左傳注, written by Yáng Bójùn 楊伯峻, Shanghai: Zhonghua Book Co, 1990.

family name. Her names are without a ranking character, which suggests she might be the only daughter of her family. ¹⁸⁷ Sometimes, posthumous names were used together with stat names. For instance, the wife of Duke Mù of Qín 秦穆公 was called Qín Mù Jī 秦穆姬, as Qín 秦, and Mù 穆 is the state name and posthumous name of her husband, jī 姬 is her family name. Her name was recorded in year 15 of Duke Xī 僖公十五年. ¹⁸⁸

Clan names : In some cases, clan names of women's families were added on their names. For example, there is a woman called Yōng Jī 雍姑 from year 11 of Duke Huán 桓公十一年, Yōng 雍 is her clan name, and jī 姑 is her family name. Once again, her name is without a ranking character, which means she might be the only daughter of her family. ¹⁸⁹

Just because people can add other types of names on women's names, it is not difficult to notice that in different time life, a woman can have several different names: After married, a woman can add clan name of her husband or the title zǐ 子 (which represents "married") on her name, and after her husband was dead and given a posthumous, she can add this posthumous on her names. Another rare but existed situation is if a woman remarried, her name will also change because the different husband. One example is from year 23 of Duke Xī 僖公二十三年: Huái Yín 懷嬴 was the wife of Duke Huái of Jin 晉懷公, as huái 懷 is posthumous name of her

¹⁸⁷ Wáng lì 王力, *Gǔdài Hànyǔ* 古代漢語, Beijing 北京: Zhōnghuá Shūjú 中華書局, 1999.

¹⁸⁸ This explanation came from *Chūn qiū Zuǒ-shì jīng zhuàn jí jiě* 春秋左氏經傳集解, written by Dù Yù 杜預 (222–285)

¹⁸⁹ This explanation came from *Chūn qiū Zuǒ-shì jīng zhuàn jí jiě* 春秋左氏經傳集解, written by Dù Yù 杜預 (222–285)

husband and *yíng* 嬴 is her family name. Later in her life, she remarried with Duke Wén of Jin 晉文公 , and her name was also changed as Wén Yín 文嬴 .

7.2 Women with same names in *Zuǒ Zhuàn*

Although there were some methods to make women's names different, in *Zuǒ Zhuàn* , it is still not rare to find women who have the same name. However ,in this book there is no explanation to tell you that they were different people , and sometimes this will make us really confused when reading : A woman was dead and be recorded at first , you suddenly find out after several years , the book said that the same women (in fact it is a different women with the same name, but as there is no explanation in *Zuǒ Zhuàn* ,so one will never know) was going to marry a duke.

Fortunately, this kind of case is not too common in *Zuǒ Zhuàn*, so I think the last but not the least job I need to finish here, is to list all of them in order to prevent misunderstandings of other readers:

Two women named Mèng Zǐ 孟孺 : One was recorded in first year of Duke Yǐn 隱西元年, another one was recorded in year 12 of Duke Ai 哀公十二年.

Two women named Dìng Sì 定姒 : One was recorded in year 4 of Duke Xiāng 襄公四年 , another one was recorded in year 15 of Duke Dìng 定公十五年.

Two women named Yí Jiāng 宜薑 : One was recorded in year 16 of Duke Huán 桓公十六年, another one was recorded in year 20 of Duke Zhāo 昭公二十年.

Two women named Wáng Jī 王姬 : One was recorded in first year of Duke Zhuāng 莊西元年 , another one was recorded in year 11 of Duke Zhuāng 莊公十一年.

Three women named Wèi Jī 衛姬 : The first one was recorded in year 13 of Duke Zhāo 昭公十三年, the second one was recorded in year 26 of Duke Xiāng 襄公二十六年 , the last one was recorded in year 17 of Duke Xǐ 僖公十七年.

Two women named Zhòng Zǐ 仲子 : One was recorded in first year of Duke Yīn 隱西元年 , another one was recorded in year 19 of Duke Xiāng 襄公十九年.

Two women named Dèng Màn 鄧曼 : One was recorded in year 11 of Duke Huán 桓公十一年, another one was recorded in year 13 of Duke Huán 桓公十三年.

Two women named Qí Jiāng 齊薑 : One was recorded in year 28 of Duke Zhuāng 莊公二十八年, another one was recorded in year 12 of Duke Wén 文公十二年.

Two women named Zǐ Shū Jī 子叔姬 : One was recorded in year 12 of Duke Wén 文公十二年, another one was recorded in year 14 of Duke Wén 文公十四年 .

Chapter 8. Conclusion and topics for further study

In this thesis, I have discussed some diverse aspects of personal names from *Zuǒ Zhuàn*, and it is important to go through them as a whole, in order to summarize what I learned about Chinese personal names.

Unlike today, in the ear of *Zuǒ Zhuàn*, Chinese personal names were not barely family names and given names, instead, it is a concept includes all different kinds of titles used to address people. These names were given and used through different periods of people's life, as some of them were given after birth, some were given at the coming of age, and some were given after death. It is very common to think if so many different kinds of names are necessary for daily use, and in my opinion, based on what I learned during my study, the answer is negative. It is not difficult to find that in *Zuǒ Zhuàn*, most types of names were used to show their owners' social status, and that explained why most types of names were only used by nobles. This phenomenon provides us a possible way of explaining the power behind the development of Chinese names: at its early stage, the Chinese naming system was motivated by the needs of nobles, and when nobles needed new ways to show their power and special social status, new types of names were invented. One piece of evidence to support this assumption is the development of family names and clan names. Family names appeared much earlier than the ear of *Zuǒ Zhuàn*, and the number of them is very limited. When it comes to the Eastern Zhou Dynasty, people who had power were not satisfied about sharing family names with others, they need another kind of name to show their own power. The needs of nobles explain why clan names were widely used in that period of time, and this fact was also reflected by the ways of making clan names: nobles used names of their states, lands, or their official titles as clan names,

all these things have direct connections with their special social status. As a result, although clan names were developed for hundreds of years, when the old noble system of Zhou Dynasty collapsed after the foundation of a centralized empire, clan names totally disappeared in less than few decades. Again, the names of women also proved that nobles' need of showing power is the reason of development of naming system. As in Eastern Zhou Dynasty, most women were powerless, that is why most of them were nameless as well. Their so called "names" were combined by all kinds of elements to show the power of their families, their home states and their husbands. Instead of personalities, women's names in *Zuǒ Zhuàn* were full of strict rules to follow. (As a result, many women in *Zuǒ Zhuàn* used the same names.) To put it briefly, no power, no names.

Theoretically speaking, the entire naming system of *Zuǒ Zhuàn* is a system full of rulers, the rites of Zhou Dynasty explained how to make and use different kinds of names with particular details. However, in real practice, these rules were not be followed perfectly, especially when it comes to noble titles. In *Zuǒ Zhuàn*, Many nobles were called "Duke", while actually there were not so many dukes at that time. As almost every state owners of that time claimed themselves as duke, the rules of using noble titles of Zhou Dynasty was in fact quite pointless. We will not know if the situation of posthumous names is the same unless we study every single posthumous name from *Zuǒ Zhuàn*, and check if all of them were used in proper ways. But as I mentioned before, in *Zuǒ Zhuàn* we can find cases that the ruler of a state negotiated about his posthumous name before death, so I think it is highly possible that the rules of making and using posthumous names are also very flexible .

In *Zuǒ Zhuàn*, posthumous names and noble titles were used more often than given names, and this is also a very unique phenomenon, because naturally given names

should be used more often in daily life. We can also find that many disyllabic given names from *Zuǒ Zhuàn* did not follow the euphonic tonal rules of Chinese disyllabic vocabularies. In the ear of *Zuǒ Zhuàn*, given names might be more private than other types of names, and should only be used by relatives. But again, we need to do more study about that to prove this assumption.

In general , my study about personal names of *Zuǒ Zhuàn* covered several different aspects, but it is still very limited. As I mentioned in the first chapter, the Chinese naming system is a large and complicated topic, even the names from *Zuǒ Zhuàn* cannot be discussed comprehensively in one article. The main propose of my thesis is to show readers the multiformity of Chinese naming culture by discussing several topics about personal names from *Zuǒ Zhuàn*, and to open up a new study field for people who interested about Chinese names. But if any further studies will be done, I think there are two things need to be investigated. Firstly, the range of data need to be wider, only names from one book of one certain period of time is insufficient for having a history perspective of Chinese naming system. Secondly, the study should pay more attention on one kind of names instead of many. For instance, a comprehensive study about culture history of Chinese posthumous names can be a good topic for further study about Chinese names.

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