UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

Santa Barbara

Sacred Smells and Strange Scents:

Olfactory Imagination in Medieval Chinese Religions

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the

requirements for the degree Doctor of Philosophy

in Religious Studies

by

Peter Matthew Romaskiewicz

Committee in charge:

Professor Dominic Steavu, Chair

Professor Fabio Rambelli

Professor Vesna Wallace

December 2022

The dissertation of Peter Matthew Romaskiewicz is approved.

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Fabio Rambelli

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Vesna Wallace

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Dominic Steavu, Committee Chair

December 2022

Sacred Smells and Strange Scents: Olfactory Imagination in Medieval Chinese Religions

Acknowledgements

After writing a short paper on an incense smoke illustration in the Chinese Buddhist canon, my advisor, Dominic, encouraged me to explore the topic in more depth, suggesting it could turn into an interesting dissertation topic. I laughed it off, saying I did not want to be known as "the incense guy." Now years later, after writing a dissertation on incense, I cannot think of a better way to highlight how small seeds grow into big trees, and equally how so many people play small, yet pivotal, roles in such an endeavor as writing a dissertation.

It is hard to know where to start with acknowledgements for a work that has taken over a decade to complete, with numerous abandonments, resurrections, and long hiatuses. I have been supported by numerous individuals and institutional entities along the way and I would like to acknowledge them here; I apologize for any omissions.

My early graduate career was financially supported by a Foreign Language and Area Studies (FLAS) summer fellowship to study Japanese and numerous Teaching Assistant opportunities in the East Asian Studies, Asian American Studies, and Interdisciplinary Studies departments, to which I would like to thank Sameer Pandya and Xiaojian Zhao for giving me work. My home department of Religious Studies also provided several TA positions and fee remissions, the latter of which drew in part from the J. F. Rowny Fund. In addition, I was given the opportunity to teach for the department over the span of four highly enjoyable summers.

I also received two years of funding from the Graduate Division of UCSB, including the Dean's Fellowship and Graduate Humanities Research Fellowship which provided me the opportunity to start my research and draft early chapters of my dissertation. Ann Taves

was instrumental in encouraging me through the yearly application process and I thank her for her endless support in the early years of my career.

I would like to thank in particular the UCSB Writing Program who employed me as an instructor for four years and extend a debt of gratitude to Linda Adler-Kassner, Doug Bradly, Caren Converse, and Christopher Dean for providing critical insights into the art of teaching and their warm camaraderie during my time there. While employed at UCSB Instructional Development I am grateful to have worked with Mindy Colin and Lisa Berry both who are outstanding mentors with an infectious passions for education. While researching and writing I also had the privilege of teaching at Ventura County Community College, an experience I remember with great fondness.

Ultimately, I owe a great debt to my teachers. The start of this journey would have been inconceivable without the early encouragement of Chun-fang Yü whose warmth and wisdom has left an indelible mark on me while I was a student at Rutgers University and whose careful scholarship is a model to which I aspire. While attending Columbia University Wendi Adamek was an exemplary model of insight and compassion and the level of rigor in her research remains a personal guidepost. I could not have imagined a better introduction into the world of academia and the study of religion.

During the time between my Masters and Doctoral programs, I must express a special debt of gratitude to Venerable Yifa who took me under her wing, showing me the joys and rigors of translating Chinese Buddhist scriptures, and who is counted among my oldest mentors and friends. My time working with her on the Woodenfish Project allowed me to travel to many Buddhist temples in Taiwan, China, and Brazil and the opportunity to meet so many fascinating and talented people among our students and staff, some of whom remain

dear friends today. Among those with whom have I done several "tours" include Jason Clower, Matthew Orsborn, Karl-Stéphan Bouthillette, Guttorm Gundersen, Kim Dembrosky, Justin Whitaker, and Sean Conway; I cherish our unique summers together living a pseudo-monastic lifestyle, sharing in great fellowship and conversation. Unto you all, *amituofo*!

At UCSB, I must thank Dominic Steavu, first and foremost. His creative and broadminded approach to scholarship has formatively shaped my own approach to research. In these pursuits, he has offered unflagging support through difficult times and has demonstrated a kindness that knowns no bounds. I am appreciative for his eclectic, yet probing seminars that expanded my intellectual horizons as well as his guidance and friendship over the years. Fabio Rambelli has been a constant source of inspiration and brings a passion that is contagious; I have always left our meetings feeling invigorated. His intellectual fingerprints are deep and recurring throughout this work. Vesna Wallace has been a fount of support since I first arrived at UCSB and her seminars were always joyful and provocative, giving me a taste of the esoteric world of Buddhist practice. I am grateful to all three for taking on advisory roles and for their patience in a project that has taken far longer than expected.

My doctoral research has been nurtured by several scholars who I hold in high regard. John Kieschnick was an early supporter when I was unsure if a dissertation on olfaction and incense was feasible; his own work on Buddhist material culture was influential at almost every step. James Benn gave early encouragement and kind words at a time, unbeknownst to him, when I needed it most and his work on Buddhist immolation practice was critical for me thinking through some tough sections of my own writing. I am deeply thankful to them both for acting as external reviewers and, even after a very long lapse, were still gracious to read

through a draft under a tight deadline. Other valuable insights have come from conference presentations over the years and I am thankful for the many constructive comments offered by Natasha Heller, Thomas Wilson, Hank Glassman, and James McHugh.

I have also profited greatly from many other scholars at UCSB. Rudy Busto brought me into UCSB as an Americanist, but graciously supported my transition back to East Asia; I am forever thankful for a recommendation that afforded me my first TA gig and a seminar on race and religion that still provides much to ruminate upon. William Powell formally introduced me to the fascinating practices of early medieval Daoism, a tradition that ended up playing a significant role in my dissertation. José Cabezón offered a wonderful seminar on Mādhyamaka, the final paper for which was perhaps the most original assignment I received in graduate school and which has reverberations in all classes I have taught since. Greg Hillis guided me through two years of Sanskrit, but more importantly had always been a source of great moral support and a trusted confidant; I will always look forward to our next encounter.

There have been many peers who have provided stimulating conversation and fine fellowship over the years at UCSB and I thank Josh Harris, David Ellerton, Vikas Malhotra, and Caleb McCarthy for making this journey all the more enjoyable. The years have provided fond memories with many others, inclusive of my large incoming cohort class, and I am thankful for the shared insights and spirited debates of our seminars.

I would have never survived my first few years of my doctoral program without the guidance of Sally Lombrozo nor gotten over the final hump without the assistance of Andrea Johnson, you are cherished gems to the department.

A special mention is due to CAPS, Turi, Voss, and the gang who helped me through a difficult and prolonged mourning process and who set me on a path to better mental health.

In the late stages of this dissertation a truly wonderful cat named Tweed came into my life, opening my heart in a way I had not though possible and always kept my computer keyboard warm for me, he is missed.

Of treasured friends, there is Dave Mach, a source of eternal support and tough questions, and instigator of adventure for over twenty years. If he is not the model of a *kalyānamitra*, I am not sure what is.

Finally I want to express deep gratitude to my wife, Camille, for her support of my odd scholarly interests over these many years. I could not imagine how I would have lasted the vicissitudes of writing without her encouragement and companionship. There are not enough lifetimes to repay such debts.

This dissertation is dedicated to the memories of my mother, Susan M. Roma, and father, Peter V. Romaskiewicz. Their passions for the arts and curiosity for that which is strange animate the very heart of this work.

Any insights that may arise from this work are solely due to those who have supported me; may all merits be dispersed to all living beings in the four directions.

Curriculum Vitae

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❖ EDUCATION ❖

2022 Ph.D., Religious Studies, University of California, Santa Barbara

2005 M.A., Religious Studies, Columbia University

2003 B.A., *Summa cum laude*, Religious Studies, Rutgers College, Rutgers University

❖ DISSERTATION ❖

"Sacred Smells and Strange Scents: Olfactory Imagination in Medieval Chinese Religions,"

Committee members: Dominic Steavu (chair), Fabio Rambelli, Vesna Wallace

❖ FELLOWSHIPS & AWARDS ❖

2016-17 Graduate Humanities Research Fellowship, Central Campus Fellowship, Graduate Division, UCSB

2015 Graduate Students Association Excellence in Teaching Award, Nominated

2015 Visual, Performing, and Media Arts Award, Interdisciplinary Humanities Center

2014 The Professor Charles H. Long Award, nominated by Dominic Steavu,

Religious Studies Department

2013-14 Dean's Fellowship, Central Campus Fellowship, Graduate Division, UCSB

2012 Graduate Students Association Excellence in Teaching Award, Honorable Mention (top 8 finalists)

2011 The Professor R. Ninian Smart Memorial Award for the Comparative Study of Religion and Philosophy, nominated by José I. Cabezón, Religious Studies Department

2010 Foreign Language and Areas Studies Fellowship (FLAS) (Summer)

❖ CONFERENCE PAPERS ❖

2020 **"**Beware the Curse of the Buddha: Race, Gender, and Religious Xenophobia of Buddhism in Early Twentieth Century American Media," American Academy of Religion (Buddhism in the West & Buddhism Unit), November

2020 **"**New School Tech in the Old School Religious Studies Classroom: Thinking through Derek Bruff's *Intentional Tech,*" American Academy of Religion (Teaching Religion Unit), November

2020 "Varieties of Contemplative Pedagogy and their Relation to the Scholarship on Teaching and Learning," Western Commission for the Study of Religion/AAR, March 14

2019 "'Teaching about' and 'Teaching of' Meditation: The Legal Limits and Educational Prospects of a Contemplative Pedagogy," American Academy of Religion (Buddhist Pedagogy Seminar), November 24

2019 "The Early American Encounter with Buddhist Imagery in Silent Film," Expressions of the Dharma: Buddhist Art & Culture in Everyday Life, Apr.5

2019 "Meditation in the Classroom: A Pedagogical Defense for the Practice of Religious Ritual?" Western Commission for the Study of Religion/AAR, March 2

2019 "Food of the Spirits and the Odors of Meat: The Olfactory Logic of Food in Classical Chinese Religions," American Academy of Religion (Food Section), November 19

2018 "Rebuilding Religion: Threshold Knowledge and Its Value to Asian Survey Courses," Western Commission for the Study of Religion/AAR, March 24

2017 "Materializing the Smell of Religion: The Use of Incense in Medieval China," Association for Asian Studies, March 18

2016 "The Indelible Smell of Zhu Fonian's (fl. 379-413) "Apocryphal" Scriptures," American Academy of Religion (Buddhism Section), November 19

2014 "Lotus in the Mud, Incense in the Air: An Inquiry into the Chinese Olfactory Imagination." New Directions in Buddhist Studies, Graduate Student Conference for Berkeley, UCLA, UCSB, UCSC, and Stanford, March 9

2012 "Seeing Buddha, Selling Buddha: The Economy of Buddhist Imagery in the US." American Academy of Religion, November

2011 "The Making of an Oriental Icon: The Great Buddha of Kamakura and the Early Visual History of Buddhism in America." American Academy of Religion (Buddhism in the West), November 19

2009 "Strategies for Legitimation: A Punk Rebellion in American Buddhism" Western Commission for the Study of Religion/AAR, March 23

2008 "A Buddhist Veneer on American Pop Culture: Beyond the Canon of Buddhist Studies" Western Commission for the Study of Religion/AAR, March 31

❖ PUBLICATIONS ❖

Forthcoming "The Shifting Smellscape of Early Medieval China: Emperor Wu's Strange Aromatics," in *Aromas of Asia: Contacts Exchanges Histories*, eds. Hannah Gould and Gwyn McClelland

2021 'Teaching of' and 'Teaching about' Meditation: The Legal Limits and Educational Prospects of a Contemplative Pedagogy," *The Wabash Center Journal on Teaching*, Vol. 2, No. 1, pp. 85–94.

2012 "Chögyam Trungpa" (400 words); "Hsuan Hua 宣化" (400 words); "Maharishi Mahesh Yogi" (400 words); "Sokei-an Sasaki 曹渓庵(佐々木指月)" (400 words); "Suzuki Daisetz Teitarō 鈴木 大拙 貞太郎" (600 words); "Suzuki Shunryū 鈴木俊隆" (600 words); "Tenzin Gyatso, the 14th Dalai Lama" (400 words); "Thich Nhat Hanh 釋一行" (400 words); "Vivekananda" (600 words) in *Asian Americans: An Encyclopedia of Social, Cultural, and Political Change*, Xiaojian Zhao and Edward Park, eds., Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 2013.

❖ PUBLICATIONS - CO-AUTHORED BOOKS ❖

2008 *Yulan Bowl Sutra and Collection of Filial Piety Sutras* 盂蘭盆經, 父母恩難報經, 父母恩重經, 父母恩重難報經. Hacienda Heights, CA: Buddha's Light Publishing, 2008. (193 pp.), Co-authored with Ven. Yifa

2007 *Sutra on the Past Vows of Ksitigarbha Bodhisattva* 地藏菩薩本願經. Hacienda Heights, CA: Buddha's Light Publishing, 2007. (342 pp.), Co-authored with Ven. Yifa

2007 *Amitabha Sutra* 阿彌陀經. Hacienda Heights, CA: Buddha's Light Publishing, 2007. (78 pp.), Co-authored with Ven. Yifa

2006 *Vajraprajnaparamita Sutra* 金剛般若波羅蜜多經. Hacienda Heights, CA: Buddha's Light Publishing, 2006. (124 pp.), Co-authored with Ven. Yifa & Michael Owens

2006 *Prajnaparamita Heart Sutra* 般若波羅蜜多心經. Hacienda Heights, CA: Buddha's Light Publishing, 2006. (38 pp.), Co-authored with Ven. Yifa & Michael Owens

❖ TEACHING EXPERIENCE – COURSE INSTRUCTOR/TA ❖

Teaching Associate, University of California, Santa Barbara

2019 Zen Buddhism: Mind and Material Practices (Summer – Session B)

2018/19 Academic Writing (Fall 2018, Spring 2019)

2017/18 Academic Writing (Fall 2017, Spring 2018, Summer 2018)

2017 Asian Religious Traditions (Summer – Session B)

2016 Zen Buddhism (Summer – Session B)

2015/16 Academic Writing (Fall 2015, Winter 2016, Spring 2016)

2014 Introduction to Buddhism (Summer – Session B)

2012/13 Academic Writing (Fall 2012, Winter 2013, Spring 2013)

Adjunct, Ventura College, Ventura, CA

2019 East Asian Religions (Fall 2019 – upcoming)

2019 Zen Buddhism (Fall 2019 – upcoming)

2016 Zen Buddhism (Fall 2016)

2016 East Asian Religions (Fall 2016)

Adjunct, University of the West, Rosemead, CA

2008 Buddhism in China (Spring)

Teaching Assistant, University of California, Santa Barbara

2010-15 East Asian Religions (Winter 2015); Chinese Buddhism (Fall 2014); Zen Buddhism (Winter 2012); Asian American History (Fall 2011); Asian American Literature (Winter 2011, Spring 2011); Introduction to Buddhism (Winter 2010)

❖ TEACHING EXPERIENCE – SELECTED LECTURES ❖

Guest Lectures & Presentations – UCSB

2018 Lecture on Rinzai Kōan Practice (Zen Buddhism), Sep. 5

2016 Classes on Chan Buddhism (East Asian Buddhism), Feb. 29 & Mar. 1

2016 Class on 19th Century Yokohama Photography (Visualizing Asia), Feb. 4

2015 From Pagan Idol to Pop Icon: Buddha Comes to America (Grad Slam), April

2010 Class on Silk Road Buddhism and China (Introduction to Buddhism), Feb. 23

Woodenfish Buddhism Summer Program (various locations in Taiwan and China)

2013-19 Head Lecturer – Selected Classes (individual): Orienting the Buddha: Academic Study of Buddhism in the West (July 3), Buddhist Abhidharma (July 5), Buddhist Ethics (July 6), History of Buddhist Meditation (July 7), Chinese Religious Traditions (July 11), Early Chinese Buddhism: Missionaries, Merchants, and Early Controversy (July 12), Huayan Buddhism: Entering the Dharmadhatu (July 14), Chan Buddhism I & II (July 15–16); Temple tours

2007 Lecture Series: Diamond Sutra (July), Buddhist Iconography and Material Culture (July), *Prajñā* Philosophy (July)

2006 Lecture Series: Buddhist Iconography (July), *Prajñā* Philosophy (July), Buddhist Ethics (July)

2005 Lecture: Buddhist Ethics (July)

Hsi Lai Temple 西來寺, Hacienda Heights, CA

2009 Public Lecture: Cowboy Buddha: Buddhism in Western Context (May 3)

Whittier College/Inaugural Winter Woodenfish Program, Whittier, CA

2009 Lecture: Cultural Impact of the Heart Sutra in China & US (January)

Red Lotus Society, San Diego, CA

2008 Public Lecture: Icons & Artifacts: A Diversity of Buddhist Symbols (August 9), The Nature of Buddhist Consciousness (June 12 & 26, July 3 & 10)

Hsi Lai Temple 西來寺, Hacienda Heights, CA

2006 Public Tour: Temple Iconography (November 11)

Templo Zu Lai 如來寺, Sao Paulo, Brazil

2005 Lecture Series**:** Buddhist Ethics (October)

❖ OTHER PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE ❖

Researcher & Translator, Woodenfish Sutra Translation Project

2005-09 English translation of Chinese Buddhist texts (see publications)

2011 Buddhism in China Program: Chengdu 成都 (July 1-July 20): Participant

2009 Buddhism in China Program: Chang'an 長安 (July 20-August 9): Program Assistant

2005 Woodenfish Buddhist Monastic Life Program, Taiwan (Summer): Chief of Staff

2004 Woodenfish Buddhist Monastic Life Program, Taiwan (Summer): Participant

❖ PEDAGOGICAL TRAINING & CERTIFICATION ❖

2019 Facilitator in Humanities for Summer Teaching Institute for Associates [STIA] (Workshops offered: Asking Thought-Provoking Questions, Backwards Design and

Learning Outcomes, Lecturing as Oratory and Stage Acting, Handouts 101, Designing Non-Traditional Assignments)

2018/19 Pedagogical Advisor for UCSB Instructional Development (Workshops offered: Group Activities, Managing Teaching Anxiety, Lecturing and Active Learning, Efficient and Effective Grading of Exams, Efficient and Effective Grading of Writing)

2017 Certificate for the Summer Training Institute for Associates

2017 Online Teacher Training Course in Canvas

❖ SERVICE ❖

2019–2023 Co-Chair, Education and Pedagogy unit of the Western Region AAR

Abstract

Sacred Smells and Strange Scents: Olfactory Imagination in Medieval Chinese Religions

by

Peter M. Romaskiewicz

This study demonstrates how the sense of smell and scented substances were integral in shaping Chinese religious practice from the late Warring States through the early Six Dynasties. It challenges the prevailing assumption that the quintessential Chinese religious act always involved burning incense. To destabilize this view, this work examines the competing beliefs, attitudes, and practices that developed in the early medieval period regarding the use of smell to aid in the communication with spirits and other divine beings.

To set a comparative baseline, this study establishes that the dominant olfactory practice of ancient state sacrifice was the creation of food aromas to draw down and nourish the spirits. Against conventional belief, there is little evidence incense was used in sacrifice or as a tool to communicate with the divine until the Eastern Han. Furthermore, previous to this period, textual, archaeological, and art historical evidence supports a view that censers were primarily used to perfume and fumigate garments and thus employed as safeguards against foul odor and illness. Moreover, when incense was finally adopted into sacrificial and ritual settings, it was not a substitute for sacrificial blood offerings. Its use was motivated by different ritual logics no longer concerned with spiritual alimentation, but with a broader array of communicative acts, including signaling the presence of divine beings, symbolizing the purity of the adept, or functioning as a medium to carry messages heavenward.

In terms of the historical material culture of smell, this study further argues that there is no evidence of significant trade in supra-regional aromatics during the Western Han, in spite of common belief that the territorial conquests of Emperor Wu (r. 157–87 BCE) led to the reception of many diplomatic tributary gifts of incense. Such views are rooted in Six Dynasties "tales of the strange" about Emperor Wu and other cultural heroes who are portrayed as using incense or other scented materials. Subsequently, these stories are better read as reflecting the rapidly changing smellscape of early medieval China, not the past historical events of the Han.

As a result, this study establishes that the late Eastern Han and early Six Dynasties were critical in the development of a new medieval smell culture and shared cultural imagination around olfaction and religious practice. These periods were not only important for the introduction of Buddhism, a tradition guided by distinctive cultural ideas concerning fragrant smelling divinity and ritual logics regarding smell, but also for a quickly growing trade in supra-regional aromatics, especially tropical tree resins, gums, and scented woods, that were markedly different to the eye and nose of medieval Chinese consumers. These goods both stimulated a creative literary output about their strange properties and eventually became the primary objects of interest for elite perfuming arts during the Song.

Lastly, these external forces coincided with ongoing exchanges of ideas and practices across the northern and southern parts of Han China, regions with distinctive types of scented *flora* and different emphases on how to deploy them to commune with the divine. Notably, this includes the often-overlooked importance of shamanic adornment with scented plants and lustration with fragrant waters. When new autochthonous religious groups start to appear in the Eastern Han, they will be shown to embrace different beliefs and attitudes about the

use of incense and smell. This includes the southern alchemical tradition and the "nameless" religions of Jiangnan which emphasized bodily hygiene and ritual purity as well as Supreme Purity Daoists who valued incense's ability to function as a messenger to a bureaucratized world of spirits. All of these olfactory discourses intermingled during the first four centuries of the common era to create a complex tapestry of ritual practices around smell.

The end of this study offers a historical introduction to the genre of Chinese perfuming manuals and a translation of the earliest extant edition, the *Materia Aromatica*, compiled by the official Hong Chu (1066–c.1127) in the early twelfth century. Additional commentary has been added to selected entries focusing on the ancient and medieval history of the respective item, oftentimes drawing from a range of ancient and medieval poetry, medical texts, and regional gazetteers. I have also drawn extensively from the Chinese Buddhist and Daoist canons to help bridge the current divide between scholars of Chinese religion and scholars of Chinese scent culture.

Table of Contents

Abbreviations of Primary Sources

BCGM *Bencao gangmu* 本草綱目. Compiled by Li Shizhen 李時珍 (1518–1593), 2 vols. Beijing: Renmin weisheng chubanshe 人民衛生出版社, 1982. (Passages are cited by volume, followed page number of this modern edition. To expedite cross-referencing, I have also included the relevant entry name and subheading; this modifies the system used by Nappi, *Monkey and the Inkpot*, 159.)

BCXH *Baichuan xuehai* 百川學海. Compiled by Zuo Gui 左圭 (d.u.). Revised Huacheng 華珵 xylographic print published after 1501, held by the Harvard-Yenching Library at Harvard University.

BWJ *Bowu zhi jiaodeng* 博物志校證. Compiled by Zhang Hua 張華 (232–300), edited by Fan Ning 范寧. Beijing: Zhonghua shuju 中華書局, 2014.

CC *Chuci buzhu* 楚辭補注. Commentary by Hong Xingzu 洪興祖 (1090–1155), edited by Bai Huawen 白化文, et al. Beijing: Zhonghua shuju 中華書局, 1983.

CCJ *Cao Cao ji* 曹操集. Beijing: Zhonghua shuju 中華書局, 2013.

CQZZ *Chunqiu zuozhuan zhengyi* 春秋左傳正義. Commentary by Du Yu 杜預 (222–285), subcommentary by Kong Yingda 孔穎達 (574–648). In *Shisanjing zhushu* 十三經注疏, edited by Ruan Yuan 阮元 (1764–1849), Vol. 7, Beijing: Zhonghua shuju 中華書局, 2009.

DGHJ *Dongguan Han ji jiaozhu* 東觀漢記校注. Compiled by Liu Zhen 劉珍 (d. ca. 126), edited by Wu Shuping 吳樹平. Beijing: Zhonghua shuju 中華書局, 2008.

DTQL *Dongtian qinglu* 洞天清錄. Compiled by Zhao Xigu 趙希鵠 (ca. 1170–after 1242), edited by Zhong Chong 鍾翀. Zhengzhou: Daxiang chubanshe 大象出版社, 2019.

DYZB *Duyang zabian* 杜陽雜編. Compiled by Su E 蘇鶚 (fl. 886), edited by Feng Yi 馮翊. Shanghai: Shangwu yinshuguan 商務印書館, 1939.

DZ *Zhengtong daozang* 正統道藏. Shanghai: Hanfen lou 函芬樓 (reprint), 1924–1926. (Passages are cited by text number, followed by page and register; all text numbers are in accordance with Schipper and Verellen, *The Taoist Canon*)

EY *Er ya yishu* 爾雅義疏. Commentary by Guo Pu 郭璞 (267–364), subcommentary by Hao Yixing 郝懿行 (1757–1825), edited by Wu Qifeng 吳慶峰 et al. In *Hao Yi xingji* 郝懿行集, Jinan: Qilu shushe 齊魯書社, 2010.

FSTY *Fengsu tongyi jiaozhu* 風俗通義校注. Compiled by Ying Shao 應劭 (ca. 144–ca. 204), edited by Wang Liqi 王利器. Beijing: Zhonghua shuju 中華書局, 1981.

GY *Guangya shuzheng* 廣雅疏證. Commentary by Wang Niansun 王念孫 (1744–1832), edited by Zhang Qiyun 張其昀. Beijing: Zhonghua shuju 中華書局, 2019.

GYJX *Guoyu jixie* 國語集解. Compiled by Xu Yuangao 徐元誥 (1876–1955), edited by Wang Shumin 王樹民 and Shen Zhangyu 沈長雲. Beijing: Zhonghua shuju 中華書局, 2002.

GZ *Guanzi jiaozhu* 管子校注. Edited by Li Xiangfeng 黎翔鳳 and Liang Yunhua (梁運華). Beijing: Zhonghua shuju 中華書局, 2004.

HC Hong Chu 洪芻 (The "Hong Chu Number" is used to cross-reference entries in the translation of Hong Chu's *Materia Aromatica* [*Xiang pu* 香譜], e.g. HC#1 refers to the first entry of the translation)

HHS *Hou Han shu* 後漢書. Compiled by Fan Ye 范曄 (398–446) et al., Beijing: Zhonghua shuju 中華書局, 1965.

HGLZ *Hanguan liuzhong* 漢官六種. Compiled by Sun Xingyan 孫星衍 (1753–1818), edited by Zhou Tianyou 周天游. Beijing: Zhonghua shuju 中華書局, 1990.

HNZ *Huainanzi jishi* 淮南子集釋. Compiled by Liu An 劉安 (179–122 BCE), edited by He Ning 何寧. Beijing: Zhonghua shuju 中華書局, 1998.

HS *Han shu* 漢書. Compiled by Ban Gu 班固 (32–92) and Ban Zhao (45/49–ca.120). Beijing: Zhonghua shuju 中華書局, 1962.

HYBC *Haiyao bencao* 海藥本草. Compiled by Li Xun 李珣 (855?–930?), edited by Shang Zhijun 尚志鈞. Beijing: Renmin weisheng chubanshe 人民衛生出版社, 1997.

JS *Jin shu* 晉書. Compiled by Fan Xuanling 房玄齡 (579–648), et al. Beijing: Zhonghua shuju 中華書局, 1974.

KZJY *Kongzi jiayu shuzheng* 孔子家語疏證. Compiled by Chen Shike 陳士珂 (fl. 1818), edited by Cui Tao 崔濤. Fenghuan chubanshe 鳳凰出版社, 2017.

LHJS *Lunheng jiaoshi* 論衡校釋. Compiled by Wang Chong 王充 (27–97), commentary by Liu Pansui 劉盼遂 (1896–1966), edited by Huang Hui 黃暉. Beijing: Zhonghua shuju 中華書局, 1990.

LS *Liang shu* 梁書. Compiled by Yao Silain 姚思廉 (557–637). Beijing: Zhonghua shuju 中華書局, 1973.

LJZS *Liji zhushu* 禮記注疏. Commentary by Zheng Xuan 鄭玄 (127–200), subcommentary by Kong Yingda 孔穎達 (574–648). In *Shisanjing zhushu* 十三經注疏, edited by Ruan Yuan 阮元 (1764–1849), Vol. 6, Beijing: Zhonghua shuju 中華書局, 2009.

LS *Liang shu* 梁書. Compiled by Yao Silain 姚思廉 (557–637). Beijing: Zhonghua shuju 中華書局, 1973.

LXZ *Leixian zhuan jiaojian* 列仙傳校箋. Edited by Wang Shumin 王叔岷. Beijing: Zhonghua shuju 中華書局, 2007.

MSZY *Mao shi zhengyi* 毛詩正義. Edited by Mao Heng 毛亨 (2nd c. BCE), commentary by Zheng Xuan 鄭玄 (127–200), subcommentary by Kong Yingda 孔穎達 (574–648). In *Shisanjing zhushu* 十三經注疏, edited by Ruan Yuan 阮元 (1764–1849), Vol. 3, Beijing: Zhonghua shuju 中華書局, 2009.

MXBT *Mengxi bitan jiaozheng* 夢溪筆談校證. Compiled by Shen Kuo 沈括 (1031–1095), edited by Hu Daojing 胡道靜. Zhengzhou: Daxiang chubanshe 大象出版社, 2019.

NQS *Nan Qi shu* 南齊書. Compiled by Xiao Zixian 蕭子顯 (489–537). Beijing: Zhonghua shuju 中華書局, 1972.

NS *Nan shi* 南史. Compiled by Li Yanshou 李延壽 (fl. 659). Beijing: Zhonghua shuju 中華書局, 1975.

P Pelliot Collection, Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris.

QMYS *Qiming yaoshu jinshi* 齊民要術今釋. Compiled by Jia Sixie 賈思勰 (fl. 6th c.), edited by Shi Shenghan 石聲漢. Beijing: Zhonghua shuju 中華書局, 2009.

SFHT *Sanfu huangtu jiaozhu* 三輔黃圖校注. Edited by He Qinggu 何清谷. Xian: Sanqin chubanshe 三秦出版社, 2006.

SGZ *Sanguo zhi* 三國志. Compiled by Chen Shou 陳壽 (233–297), commentary by Pei Songzhi 裴松之 (372–451). Beijing: Zhonghua shuju 中華書局, 1982.

SHJ *Shanhai jing jianshu* 山海經箋疏. Compiled by Guo Pu 郭璞 (267–364), commentary by Hao Yixing 郝懿行 (1757–1825), edited by An Zuozhang 安作璋. In *Hao Yi xingji* 郝懿行集, Jinan: Qilu shushe 齊魯書社, 2010.

SJ *Shi ji* 史記. Compiled by Sima Tan 司馬談 (d. 112 BCE) and Sima Qian 司馬遷 (ca. 145–ca. 86 BCE). Beijing: Zhonghua shuju 中華書局, 1982.

SKQS *Siku quanshu* 四庫全書. Compiled by Ji Yun 紀昀 (1724–1805) et al. Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe 上海古籍出版社, 1987. (Passages are cited by volume number, followed by page and register)

SongS *Song shi* 宋史. Compiled by Tuo Tuo 脱脱 (1314–1356) et al. Beijing: Zhonghua shuju 中華書局, 1985.

SSJ *Soushen ji jijiao* 搜神記輯校. Compiled by Gan Bao 干寶 (d. 336), edited by Li Jianguo 李劍國. Beijing: Zhonghua shuju 中華書局, 2019.

SSQW *Song shi quanwen* 宋史全文. Edited by Wang Shengduo 汪聖鐸. Beijing: Zhonghua shuju 中華書局, 2016.

SShu *Song shu* 宋書. Compiled by Shen Yue 沈約 (441–513). Beijing: Zhonghua shuju 中華書局, 1974.

SSXY *Shishuo xinyu jianshu* 世説新語箋疏. Compiled by Liu Yiqing 劉義慶 (403–444), commentary by Liu Xiaobiao 劉孝標 (462–521), subcommentary by Yu Jiaxi 余嘉錫, edited by Zhou Zumo 周祖謨. Beijing: Zhonghua shuju 中華書局, 1973.

SSZS *Shangshu jin gu wen zhushu* 尚書今古文注疏, by Sun Xingyan 孫星衍 (1753–1818), edited by Chen Kang 陳抗 and Sheng Dongling 盛冬鈴. Beijing: Zhonghua shuju 中華書局, 2004.

SSZY *Shangshu zhengyi* 尚書正義. Commentary by Kong Anguo 孔安國 (ca. 156 BCE–74 BCE), subcommentary by Kong Yingda 孔穎達 (574–648). In *Shisanjing zhushu* 十三經注疏, edited by Ruan Yuan 阮元 (1764–1849), Vol. 2, Beijing: Zhonghua shuju 中華書局, 2009.

SuiS *Sui shu* 隋書. Compiled by Wei Zheng 魏徵 (580–643) and Linghu Defen 令狐德棻 (583–666). Beijing: Zhonghua shuju 中華書局, 1973.

SWJZ *Shuowen jiezi biaodian zhengli ben*《説文解字》標點整理本. Compiled by Xu Shen 許慎 (c. 55–c. 149), edited by Wang Ping 王平 and Li Jianting 李建廷.

SYJ *Shiyi ji jiaozhu* 拾遺記校注. Compiled by Wang Jia 王嘉 (d. before 393), edited by Qi Zhiping 齊治平 et al. Beijing: Zhonghua shuju 中華書局, 1981.

T *Taishō shinshū daizōkyō* 大正新修大藏經. Edited by Takakusu Junjirō 高楠順次朗 and Watanabe Kaigyoku 渡邊海旭. Tokyo: Taishō issaikyō kankōkai, 1924–1932. (Passages are cited by text number, followed by page, register, and line number)

TPYL *Taiping yulan* 太平預覽. Compiled by Li Fang 李昉 (925–996) et al., edited by Xia Jianqin 夏劍欽, 8 vols. Shijiazhuang: Hebei jiaoyu chubanshe 河北教育出版社, 1994. (Passages are cited by volume, followed by division number and page number of this modern edition)

XXBC *Tang xinxiu bencao jifuben* 唐新修本草辑复本. Compiled by Su Jing 蘇敬 [Su Gong 蘇恭] (fl. 656–660) et al., edited by Shang Zhijun 尚志鈞. Hefei: Anhui kexue jishu chubanshe 安徽科学技朮出版社, 1981.

XZ *Xunzi jijie* 荀子集解. Compiled by Xunzi 荀子 (3rd c. BCE), commentary by Wang Xianqian 王先謙 (1842–1917), edited by Shen Xiaohuan 沈嘯寰 and Wang Xingxian 王星賢. Beijing: Zhonghua shuju 中華書局, 1988.

YFL *Yanfa lu* 演繁露. Compiled by Cheng Dachang 程大昌 (1123–1195), edited by Xu Peizao 許沛藻 and Liu Yu 劉宇. Daxiang chubanshe 大象出版社, 2019.

YTXY *Yutai xinyong jianzhu* 玉臺新詠箋注. Compiled by Xu Ling 徐陵 (507–583), commentary by Wu Zhaoyi 吳兆宜 (fl. 1672), edited by Mu Kehong 穆克宏. Beijing: Zhonghua shuju 中華書局, 1985.

YYZZ *Youyang zazu jiaojian* 酉陽雜俎校箋. Compiled by Duan Changshi 段成式 (803–863), edited by Shu Yimin 許逸民. Beijing: Zhonghua shuju 中華書局, 2015.

ZuoZ *Zuozhuan kaojiao* 左傳考校. Edited by Wang Shumin 王叔岷. Beijing: Zhonghua shuju 中華書局, 2007.

ZLZY *Zhouli zhengyi* 周禮正義. Commentary by Zheng Xuan 鄭玄 (127–200), subcommentary by Sun Yirang 孫詒讓 (1848–1908), edited by Wang Shaohua 汪少華. Beijing: Zhonghua shuju 中華書局, 2015.

ZLZS *Zhouli zhushu* 周禮注疏. Commentary by Zheng Xuan 鄭玄 (127–200), subcommentary by Jia Gongyan 賈公彥 (fl. 650). In *Shisanjing zhushu* 十三經注疏, edited by Ruan Yuan 阮元 (1764–1849), Vol. 4, Beijing: Zhonghua shuju 中華書局, 2009.

ZZ *Zhuangzi jiaoquan* 莊子校詮. Compiled by Zhuangzi (4th c. BCE), edited by Wang Shumin 王叔岷. Beijing: Zhonghua shuju 中華書局, 2007.

Introduction

1. To Follow Our Noses

> "The gentleman who bathes and cleanses his body and who perfumes it with the Way of righteousness possess a boundlessness that will be recognized (*wen*)."
> Hong Chu, *Materia Aromatica*

Smells mattered in the medieval Chinese world. The aromas of food and alcohol were used to entice the spirits during state sacrifice, sweet incense was burned at Buddhist, Daoist, and family altars to open communication with heavenly beings, and perfumes were worn by the elite and commoners alike to scent the body and drive away malignant forces. If we look closely at our ancient and medieval sources, they repeatedly express concern over how people, places, and things smelled. The sensory domain of olfaction reveals an important realm of the shared imagination where phenomena critical to the welfare of people and society were otherwise portrayed as invisible, inaudible, and intangible – yet still sensible to the nose.

In the epigraph above, penned by the Northern Song official and poet Hong Chu 洪芻 (1066–c.1127), we are informed the body of the proper Confucian gentleman was not only cleansed and adorned with rich perfumes, but also imbued with virtue that was conceived, in part, as a scent that clung to his person. Throughout the medieval period there was a tacit and shared cultural belief that the immoral actions of a single official could corrupt the stainless virtue of those around him, just as the foul stench of a fish market could ruin a freshly cleaned garment. Consequently, as a sign of cultural sophistication, scholarly elegance, and political competence, the elite were expected to be both redolent of perfume and suffused with virtue, personal qualities that, in the poetic language of Hong Chu, could be *wen* 聞 – a

term that means both "smelled" and "heard" – which I render diplomatically as "recognized." Put more simply, the word of a gentlemen's reputation spread just as a perfume projected off his body. Because odors were perceived to have the ability to influence, transform, and secretly reveal, in addition to scenting the body and the environment, we find no shortage of works playing with the symbolic dimensions of smell. The medieval world was not only filled with smells, those smells reeked with meaning.

While olfaction may not garner the acclaim often afforded to vision or hearing, the act of smelling played an important, and often overlooked, role in the religious world of China. Temples, shrines, and imperial altars became places where aromatics were deployed during ritual or enjoyed for their olfactory aesthetic while other less pleasant substances (corpses, rotting food, feces) were shunned. Thus, odors, both fragrant and foul – or altogether strange – demanded interpretation, classification, and policing. An analysis of these discourses on the sense of smell and nature of odor reveals a shared cultural knowledge about olfaction, but one that was also built upon multiple, shifting layers of value and signification. This dissertation is a study of how smell and smelly things shaped the beliefs, practices, and experiences of medieval Chinese religious life and furthermore how these aspects interacted with the broader cultural imagination around olfaction. I pay particular attention to the discussions around smells that developed within the religious and cultural milieux of the late pre-imperial period and Western Han (202 BCE–8CE) and continue to chart the significant changes in beliefs, attitudes, and practices that start to appear in our sources during the Eastern Han (27–220) and early Six Dynasties (220–581) periods. Over time, these once radical shifts, arguably characterizing a veritable "scent revolution," will become naturalized within common Chinese religious practice, often anchored around the

burning of incense, and thus partly obscuring the dynamism of early medieval religious history.

There are two issues I should note at the outset. The first concerns what I intend by "Chinese religions" or "Chinese religious practice." The principal textual materials used in this study were composed in, or in some cases of Buddhist scripture, translated into, classical Chinese, and thus were intended for elite Chinese audiences.[1] These classical texts include ancient treatises on state sacrifice (and their later commentaries), shamanic poetry of the state of Chu, early translations of Buddhist scriptures, alchemical works of the Grand Purity lineage, and early liturgical texts of the Celestial Masters and Supreme Purity tradition. These sources represent an incredibly broad range of worldviews as well as both implicit and explicit prescriptions on how one "ought to be" in the world. Consequently, a single thematic throughline linking all of these sources can be difficult to define. Speaking to our focus on olfaction, this constellation of works present aromatics, incense, or other odorants as integral to establishing a conduit to the spirits, deities, or other types of "special" beings.[2] More specifically, in the emic terminology of our sources, various olfactory practices (e.g. offering sacrifices, burning incense, wearing scenting sachets, etc.) were claimed to have the power to draw down (*jiang* 降) the spirits, communicate (*da* 達) with divine beings, penetrate (*tong*

[1] The use of translated Buddhist materials poses a particular point of concern. At one level, these texts are still inscribed with a broadly "Indian" perspective on smell, and as such I treat the beliefs, practices, and lore contained within these sources as largely external forces that challenge or sometimes find affinity with native Chinese perspectives. At another level, at times, there are curious turns of phrase or what appear to be interlinear explanatory glosses that stick out from the rest of the translated material that attempt to further bridge the cultural divide and speak directly to a Chinese audience in a native idiom. I clearly signal in my discussion when such moments occur, and while rare, they tend to be particularly insightful because they can reveal distinctively Chinese perspectives on the Indian worldview of smell.

[2] There are plenty of broadly "religious" works among the Chinese classics where smell plays a minimal role. A very different study could be written exploring why some of the most famous classical Chinese treatises are, in effect, anosmic, including the *Analects* (*Lunyu* 論語), *Master Meng* (*Mengzi* 孟子), and the *Scripture of the Way and its Virtue* (*Daode jing* 道德經).

通) into the spiritual realm, beseech (*qiu* 求) or contact (*zhi* 致) the gods, or function as an emissary (*shi* 使) to the heavens. In short, smell was a bridge to a largely invisible world.

Ultimately, this list of actions and interactions forms a reasonable analogue, in the etic terminology of modern scholarship, to religious ritual. In citing such terminology as "religion" and "ritual" I do not imply such categories are universal or neutral, only that there exists a cluster of concepts in our primary sources built around a conduit metaphor that aligns with one modern, widely-held conceptual aspect of religious ritual.[3] Consequently, when this study talks about religious or ritual practice, it narrowly refers to actions that seek to communicate with the spirits and other divine beings. This includes activities such as sacrifice, spirit possession, devotional worship, and other forms of liturgical performance. At times, I will make distinctions between the end purpose of olfactory practices that I view as religious (i.e. attempts at communicating with spirits) and end goals where spiritual intercession is not necessarily implied (e.g. burning incense to fumigate a garment).

The second matter I should address relates to timeline. This study includes citations to a tenth century BCE inscription as well as a late sixteenth century treatise on pharmacology, but the focus remains on the medieval period, with a specific interest in the second through fourth centuries. For the sake of expediency, I will at times refer to the period from the beginning of the Eastern Han through the end of the Song Dynasty (960–1279) as the "long medieval period." This stipulative use foregoes the traditional parameters of the Chinese medieval period as typically defined by the fall of the Han Dynasty (after 220) and the

[3] For a thoughtful discussion on the value of second-order categories such as religion and the importance of identifying structural metaphors, both implicit in our sources and in the types of questions we ask about those sources, see Robert F. Campany, "On the Very Idea of Religions (In the Modern West and in Early Medieval China)," *History of Religions* 42, no. 4 (2003): 287–319.

establishment of the Song Dynasty (before 960).[4] On one hand, I prefer to privilege the notable economic, social, and religious changes that had already started to manifest at the turn of the common era in the middle of the Han Dynasty. As this study demonstrates, the sustained supra-regional trade in luxury exotica, especially foreign aromatics, and the introduction of Buddhism are two of the most significant external forces shaping changing Chinese attitudes and beliefs around smell and religious practice. Notably, we begin to see the effects of these influences during the Eastern Han, but *not* during the earlier Western Han, a point this study strives to highlight.[5] On the other hand, these changes that began at the start of the long medieval period were more-or-less formally ossified by the end of the Northern Song (960–1127) and in the decades afterwards. It was during this period when literati like Hong Chu started to compile comprehensive catalogues on perfumes and incense that prioritized foreign aromatics over native Chinese odorants as well as olfactory practices such as burning incense over ancient animal sacrifice. Moreover, the emergence and development of traditions like Chinese Buddhism and institutional Daoism between the Han

[4] Keith Knapp suggests defining the Chinese medieval period as approximately 200 to 1000 CE based on a number of characteristics that are shared by medieval Europe (500 to 1000 CE), including a high level of political decentralization, increasing cultural hybridity among the cultural elite, and a general militarization of society, see Keith N. Knapp, "Did the Middle Kingdom Have a Middle Period?: The Problem of 'Medieval' in China's History," *Education About Asia* 12, no. 3 (2007): 12–17. Other scholars have challenged the utility of adopting European historiographical ideas altogether for the analysis of East Asian history, see especially T.H. Barrett, "China and the Redundancy of the Medieval," *The Medieval History Journal* 1, no. 1 (1998): 73–89 and Timothy Brook, "Medievality and the Chinese Sense of History," *The Medieval History Journal* 1, no. 1 (1998): 145–64. I have chosen to modify the traditional temporal parameters of the Chinese medieval period as a heuristic to meet the needs of this study, instead of dispensing with it altogether.

[5] As to whether there was significant change in economic development between the Western and Eastern Han remains debated. Yü Ying-shih argues the laissez-faire policies of the Eastern Han were highly favorable to increased trade and the development of southern ports were conducive to the acquisition of considerable amounts of wealth, see Ying-shih Yü, *Trade and Expansion in Han China A Study in the Structure of Sino-Barbarian Economic Relations* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1967), 18–21, 172–87. To this point, Chapter 2, Section 4 shows that the Eastern Han trade in supra-regional aromatics rode on the back of different kinds of luxury goods (feathers, textiles, etc.) that first started circulating during the Western Han.

and the Song were accelerants in the widespread adoption of foreign aromatics and diffusion of incense burning practices.

To put a bit of a finer point on this later history, it was also during the Northern Song that the Buddhist monk Zanning (919–1001) successfully defended a sharp attack on the practice of offering incense at the imperial court against the charges that it was not part of ancient state protocol. By utilizing a bit of strategic obfuscation, Zanning was able to convince the court that the ancient Chinese reverence for aromas could be applied to burning incense.[6] The rhetorical efficacy of such a claim was emboldened by the simple fact that Chinese smell culture and religious practice had evolved over the centuries to the point where once novel practices, and specifically the act of burning incense to communicate with divine beings, were now normalized in all levels of Song society. This dissertation will focus on the early medieval period when these changes around smell and religious practice first start to appear in our sources, but will also at times take a step back to observe the lasting effects in the *longue durée*, typically as the introductory framework for each chapter.

Theoretically, this work draws upon the growing field of sensory studies, and most notably from the work of cultural historian Constance Classen and anthropologist David Howes who have pioneered the study of smell and the senses over the last three decades.[7] As they demonstrate, sensory perception is often naïvely understood as a private, neutral physiological act, i.e., one passively receives sensory information and responds instinctively to it. Yet, Classen and Howes endeavor to show the world around us is also actively created

[6] I discuss Zanning's apologia in Chapter 4, Section 1.
[7] While interest in the human body as a viable topic of scholarly research in humanities and social sciences was established in the 1970s and 1980s, a particular focus on the senses as the interface for the body has crystalized only more recently. This is reflected in the 2006 publication of the first peer-reviewed journal on the subject, *The Senses and Society*.

through the particular ways in which we use our senses, such that "perception is informed not only by the personal meaning a particular sensation has for us, but also the social values it carries."[8] Consequently, human perception is also motivated by cultural, political, and historical contexts. These aspects have been further explored by the sociologists Phillip Vannini, Dennis Waskul, and Simon Gottschalk, who speak of human sensation and the sensorium as socialized phenomena. According to their work, a naïve "receptacle theory" of the senses is predicated upon a dualist ontology such that it is believed the mind processes raw information received from the external world.[9] In contrast, a sociological approach envisions the senses as constructions, highlighting their quality "as products and practice, as action and interaction, as work and performance."[10] Notably, all of these scholars underscore various "ways of sensing" that are continuously negotiated, regulated, and controlled through a dynamic and interactive process between people and their environments. Consequently, by analyzing the ways people sense – identifying what they deem salient, how they name and categorize sensory phenomena, and how they promote or constrain certain responses to those phenomena – we can reveal insights into the shared values, beliefs, attitudes of a time and place.

In the recent work on smell in Indian culture and religion, James McHugh coins the term "period nose," in reference to Michael Baxandall's concept of the "period eye," in order to socially and historically contextualize different ways of smelling. Consequently, McHugh's project is an "examination of cognitive styles, mental habits, and educational

[8] David Howes and Constance Classen, *Ways of Sensing: Understanding the Senses in Society* (New York: Routledge, 2014), 1.
[9] Phillip Vannini, Dennis Waskul, and Simon Gottschalk, *The Senses in Self, Society, and Culture: A Sociology of the Senses* (New York: Routledge, 2011), 9.
[10] Vannini, Waskul, and Gottschalk, 6.

practices," that will ultimately "help us to understand better the meaning of smells in South Asian texts and consequently those texts themselves."[11] In a similar fashion, by following our noses, this study examines the various "ways of smelling" expressed in ancient and medieval Chinese sources, but with an eye to highlight synchronic diversity and diachronic change of the olfactory imagination of Chinese religions during the long medieval period.

To be sure, this study is interested in breadth, covering a large geographic terrain, a large time frame, and many kinds of religious texts to establish its arguments. This approach arose, in part, because no diachronic study of early medieval smell culture in China had yet been written, nor, outside of state sacrificial religion, was there sufficient research on the distinctive religious attitudes towards smell. To help flesh out a historical progression for a material culture of aromatics that also shaped religious practice, it was necessary to draw upon a second category of texts that includes official histories, court protocol manuals, poetry, materia medica, regional gazetteers, and tales of the strange literature.

As part of the investigation into smell and religion, it is important to point out that there is often very little direct access to the first-order material culture that actually supported it. Outside of excavated censers and other durable scenting equipment, as well as the extremely rare discovery of archaeobotanical remnants in those vessels, too often the only things that remain are second-order textual descriptions. In the same way that human perception is not neutral, texts are not neutral either; their authors often provide prescriptive accounts for an idealized world of odors and smell practices, but this is not necessarily a hindrance to our investigation.

[11] James McHugh, *Sandalwood and Carrion: Smell in Indian Religion and Culture* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 19.

One example to this point may prove instructive. There is one sacrificial hymn, likely composed in or around Chang'an in the second century BCE, that cites the use of a cassia bark infused ale, the aroma of which was part of the ritual apparatus to attract the spirits. Cassia trees only occur in the far south and the eastern seaboard, thus cassia bark would have been transported to the capital in the inland north, a distant, but still reasonable journey. Yet, the same cassia ale also appears in a shamanic poem from the south describing sacrifice, thus we cannot know if the northern hymn was simply borrowing an age-worn poetic trope of the south or articulating a real element of sacrifice in Chang'an employing imported aromatics. Importantly for our analysis, however, this does reveal useful insight into cassia ale: first, it was salient to both anonymous authors of our poems (and thus bears some symbolic weight); second, it was closely linked in their shared imagination to the act of sacrifice; and third, it was likely associated in that same shared imagination with the south. Consequently, this study sets out to examine what I call the medieval olfactory imagination, highlighting the attitudes, beliefs, and symbolic systems that developed in regards to olfaction and smelly things. Moreover, because the authors of our sources only rarely offer explicit theorization on the nature and purpose of smell in ritual contexts, part of this project is to tease out implicit or unelaborated theories of scent and the governing ritual logics of olfaction as well as identify the material culture supporting them.[12]

2. On the Scent Trail: The Study of the Senses, Smells, and Materiality

[12] Paul Copp has thoughtfully applied the ideas of governing logics and structural metaphors to the ritual use of medieval Buddhist incantations, revealing their sonic character was accompanied, and sometimes overshadowed, by the material practices of adornment and anointment, see Paul Copp, *The Body Incantatory: Spells and the Ritual Imagination in Medieval Chinese Buddhism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2014).

Throughout this study, I have relied on the historical and textual work of scholars who have wrestled with similar themes regarding the critical study of smell and the examination of material culture. This includes the meticulous work of identifying various Chinese materia medica and materia aromatica as well as the cultural material analysis of medieval Chinese religious practice. Due to the interdisciplinary nature of this dissertation, a review of the most important works that have shaped the direction of my thinking is warranted.

Just over a century ago, the study of smell was motivated by vastly different assumptions and scholarly concerns. Careful attention to the senses was initially important for anthropologists in the in late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, but these scholars were working under the impression that the "lower senses" of touch, taste, and smell were animalistic, and consequently of implicit importance to the "primitive" subjects they were studying. As demonstrated by David Howes, "many early anthropologists were more interested in measuring the bodies and sensory capacities of their informants than in learning how the latter used their bodies and senses to create meaningful worlds."[13] Therefore, backed by new theories of biological and social evolution, these studies helped deepen a perceived bifurcation between savage sensuality and European rationality. As racial typologies fell out of academic favor in the first half of the twentieth century, so did scholarly interest in sensuality and the sensorium.

Interest in the body and the senses began anew in the humanities in the 1980s, and a highly original study by Alain Corbin established smell in particular as valued topic of intellectual inquiry. Corbin's work, *Le miasme et la jonquille: l'odorat et l'imaginaire social, XVIIIe–XIXe siècles* (translated into English as *The Foul and the Fragrant*) was published in

[13] David Howes, *Sensual Relations: Engaging the Senses in Culture and Social Theory* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2003), 26.

1982 and is a meticulous social and intellectual history of smell in eighteenth and nineteenth century France. It details, among other aspects, the development of anxieties around the perceived pathogenic character of miasmic odors and the subsequent lowering of sensory thresholds for all things deemed malodorous. Following Corbin's work came the co-written volume, *Aroma: The Cultural History of Smell*, by Classen, Howes, and Anthony Synott in 1994. This book combines historical, anthropological, and sociological approaches to examine the cultural impact of smell, covering now seminal topics such as the "odor of sanctity" among Christian saints, the appearance of different cultural classifications and orderings of smells (termed "osmologies"), and the development of strongly held associations between certain odors and particular groups of people ("scent-typing"). While this work covers a broad range of sometimes disconnected topics and themes, it successfully demonstrated the potential for more theoretical approaches to the analysis of smell across cultures.

These treatments ultimately laid the groundwork for future research on odors and olfaction, including works in the field of religious studies. One early monograph was Susan Harvey's investigation into early Christianity, revealing the depth to which olfactory language and themes were hemmed into a large body of early Christian and late antiquity texts, but also highlighting the hesitancy of early Christian liturgists in adopting the practice of burning incense due to its close association with pagan ritual.[14] The subsequent work by Deborah Green adds further dimension to late Roman life by examining the *realia* of daily experience regarding the use of perfumes, incense, and other aromatics and ultimately shows how those olfactory practices motivated a rich exegetical vocabulary that was seeded

[14] Susan Ashbrook Harvey, *Scenting Salvation: Ancient Christianity and the Olfactory Imagination* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006).

throughout contemporary Rabbinical literature.[15] In shifting our attention to South Asia, the work by James McHugh has proven to be a sophisticated and thoughtful rumination on the pervasive references to smells and aromatics in Sanskrit texts. It explores the medieval growth of the arts of perfumery and the development of religious discourse where special kinds of scented offerings were sometimes designated for divine beings as part of a religious olfactory aesthetic.[16] A recent article by Gregory Schopen has further underscored the importance of smell in the Indian Buddhist tradition, showing that the Buddha's presence was coterminous with the presence of fragrant scents, whether they were portrayed as emanating from his body or from cultic sites that were ritually adorned with scented pastes, powders, and flower garlands by devoted supplicants.[17]

By turning our focus to East Asia and Chinese religions in particular, there have been several monographs in the past two decades that have foregrounded materiality, the body, and the senses. John Kieschnick and Fabio Rambelli have both published on Buddhist material culture in East Asia and these important works alert us to the numerous ways in which material objects have historically shaped, and have become the locus for, ritual practice, devotional piety, and salvation. Consequently, these volumes highlight the importance of materiality in the critical study of religion, placing the study of things on equal footing with the more traditional study of religious doctrine.[18] To this can be added examinations on various somatic practices of religion. This includes Robert Campany's

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[15] Deborah A. Green, *The Aroma of Righteousness: Scent and Seduction in Rabbinic Life and Literature* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2011).
[16] McHugh, *Sandalwood and Carrion*.
[17] Gregory Schopen, "The Fragrance of the Buddha, the Scent of Monuments, and the Odor of Images in Early India," *Bulletin de l'Ecole Française d'Extrême-Orient* 101, no. 1 (2015): 11–30.
[18] John Kieschnick, *The Impact of Buddhism on Chinese Material Culture* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2003); Fabio Rambelli, *Buddhist Materiality: A Cultural History of Objects in Japanese Buddhism* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2007).

analysis of the repertoire of esoteric arts of the body that when practiced by an adept could ultimately grant longevity and bodily immortality.[19] James Benn's work on medieval Buddhist auto-cremation shows how it was established through Chinese source materials as a valid path to Awakening, outside the established meditative practices regularly encountered in Indic scriptures.[20] Equally, Paul Copp's examination on Chinese Buddhist spells unscored the shift from the sonic recitation of *dhāraṇī* advocated in Indic texts to the use of inscribed charms worn on the body.[21] All of these works have advanced our understanding of the crucial role of the body in medieval Chinese ritual praxis, establishing that corporeality should not be treated as secondary to the more intellectual pursuits of religious practitioners.

Several recent works have explicitly addressed smell within the context of Chinese religion. Of particular significance is the work by Roel Sterckx on food and the notions of Chinese sagehood. Sterckx's work underscores the multisensorial aspect of Chinese religious practice, reminding us that senses rarely operate in isolation from one another. Moreover, building on the earlier insights of Gilles Boileau regarding food offerings during state sponsored banquets, Sterckx's work was among the first sustained treatments where olfaction is viewed as integral to the analysis of ancient Chinese sacrificial religion.[22] Gopal Sukhu has examined the extensive floral and scent imagery in the ancient poem of the south, "Encountering Sorrow" (*Lisao* 離騷), which reveals the close conceptual associations between the adornment of perfumes, the presence of the spirits, and the expression of inner

[19] Robert F. Campany, *Making Transcendents: Ascetics and Social Memory in Early Medieval China* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2009).
[20] James A. Benn, *Burning for the Buddha: Self-Immolation in Chinese Buddhism* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2007).
[21] Copp, *Body Incantatory*.
[22] Roel Sterckx, *Food, Sacrifice, and Sagehood in Early China* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2011) and Gilles Boileau, "Some Ritual Elaborations on Cooking and Sacrifice in Late Zhou and Western Han Texts," *Early China* 23/24 (1998–1999): 89–123.

virtue. This establishes an important foothold in the beliefs and practices of the south in the state of Chu that were increasingly folded into the Chinese empire in the north during the Western Han. Moreover, Olivia Milburn has provided an initial foray into the different cultures of smell between the pre-Buddhist Chinese world oriented around native plants and aromatics and the later medieval world shaped by foreign imports. According to Milburn, the changes in material culture had a direct impact on olfactory practices, including the adoption of personal perfuming practices.[23]

A lot more could be said in regards to the use of scented plants in ancient and early medieval medical literature, but the work of Di Lu and Vivienne Lo deserves recognition for its focused study scenting sachets, items which are not only frequently encountered in our ancient textual sources, but have also been recovered in a pair of second century BCE tombs at Mawangdui in Hunan.[24] To this we can added the scholarship of Donald Harper on the medical manuscripts found at the same site and note his helpful focus on a handful of aromatics, including ginger, cassia, and Sichuan peppercorns, a trifecta that regularly appeared together in prescribed treatments for medical ailments.[25]

Another critical aspect of my research has profited from the meticulous research on medieval Chinese commerce and state tributary systems that drew in large amounts of foreign luxury goods – especially aromatics. These studies were inaugurated over a century ago through the scholarship of Friedrich Hirth, William Woodville Rockhill, Paul Pelliot, and

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[23] Olivia Milburn, "Aromas, Scents, and Spices: Olfactory Culture in China before the Arrival of Buddhism," *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 136, no. 3 (2016): 441–64.
[24] Di Lu and Vivienne Lo, "Scent and Synaesthesia: The Medical Use of Spice Bags in Early China," *Journal of Ethnopharmacology* 167 (2015): 38–46.
[25] Donald Harper, *Early Chinese Medical Literature: The Mawangdui Medical Manuscripts* (London: Kegan Paul International, 1998).

Berthold Laufer.[26] A second wave of scholarship that further explored these issues arrived in the late 1950s and 1960s, led by the efforts of Wang Gungwu, Paul Wheatly, Edward Schafer, Lin Tianwei 林天蔚, O.W. Wolters, and Ying-shi Yü.[27] The further exploration of foreign and indigenous types of incense was notably revisited a decade later by Joseph Needham and Lu Gewi-djen [Lu Guizhen 魯桂珍] in the monumental *Science and Civilisation in China* series.[28] Additionally, there are many scholars today who continue to work on the topics of maritime trade and tribute during the very active Song period, but the work of Tansen Sen, Chen Ming, and Angela Schottenhammer have proven especially useful.[29] Lastly, while the individual scholars are too numerous to list here, many articles and

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[26] See Friedrich Hirth and W.W. Rockhill, *Chau Ju-Kua: His Work on the Chinese and Arab Trade in the Twelfth and Thirteenth Centuries, Entitled Chu-Fan-Chï* (St. Petersburg: Printing Office of the Imperial Academy of Science, 1911). The relevant works of Pelliot and Laufer are numerous, but include Paul Pelliot, "Le Fou-nan," *Bulletin de l'Ecole française d'Extrême-Orient* 3, no. 1 (1903): 248–303; Paul Pelliot, "Deux itinéraires de Chine en Inde à la fin du VIIIe siècle," *Bulletin de l'Ecole française d'Extrême-Orient* 4, no. 1 (1904): 131–413; Paul Pelliot, "Book Review: Chau Ju-Kua: His Work on the Chinese and Arab Trade in the Twelfth and Thirteenth Centuries, Entitled Chu-Fan-Chï," *T'oung Pao*, Second Series, 13, no. 3 (1912): 446–81; Berthold Laufer, "Malabathron," *Journal Asiatique* 12 (1918): 5–49; and Berthold Laufer, *Sino-Iranica: Chinese Contributions to the History of Civilization in Ancient Iran* (Chicago: Field Museum of Natural History, 1919).

[27] Edward H. Schafer, "The Development of Bathing Customs in Ancient and Medieval China and the History of the Floriate Clear Palace," *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 76, no. 2 (1956): 57–82; Edward H. Schafer, "Rosewood, Dragon's Blood, and Lac," *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 77, no. 2 (1957): 129–136; Gungwu Wang, "The Nanhai Trade: A Study of the Early History of Chinese Trade in the South China Sea," *Journal of the Malayan Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society* 31, no. 2 (1958): 1–135; Paul Wheatley, "Geographical Notes on Some Commodities Involved in Sung Maritime Trade," *Journal of the Malayan Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society* 32, no. 2 (1959): 3–140; Lin Tianwei, *Songdai xiangyao maoyi shigao* (Jiulong: Zhongguo xueshe, [1960] 1986); Edward H. Schafer, *The Golden Peaches of Samarkand: A Study of T'ang Exotics* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1963); Edward H. Schafer, *The Vermilion Bird: T'ang Images of the South* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1967); O. W. Wolters, *Early Indonesian Commerce: A Study of the Origins of Śrīvijaya* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1967); and Yü, *Trade*.

[28] Joseph Needham and Gwei-Djen Lu, *Science and Civilisation in China Vol. 5, Chemistry and Chemical Technology. Part II: Spagyrical Discovery and Invention: Magisteries of Gold and Immortality* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1974), 128–154.

[29] Tansen Sen, *Buddhism, Diplomacy and Trade: The Realignment of Sino-Indian Relations, 600–1400* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2003); Ming Chen, "The Transmission of Foreign Medicine via the Silk Roads in Medieval China: A Case Study of *Haiyao Bencao* 海藥本草," *Asian Medicine* 3, no. 2 (2007): 241–64; Angela Schottenhammer, "Transfer of Xiangyao from Iran and Arabia to China: A Reinvestigation of Entries in the Youyang Zazu (863)," in *Aspects of the Maritime Silk Road: From the Persian Gulf to the East China Sea*, ed. Ralph Kauz (Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 2010), 117–49; Angela Schottenhammer, "China's Emergence as a Maritime Power," in *Cambridge History of China, Vol. 5, Part Two: Sung China, 960–1279*,

book chapters have appeared on selected aromatic substances, including, but not limited to, aloeswood, camphor, lakawood, musk, cassia, cloves, and patchouli.

There are two final scholars who deserve special recognition regarding their research on the smell culture of East Asia. The first is Liu Jingmin 劉靜敏, whose research on Song-era catalogues of incense and perfumes was the first of its kind. Her work examines the long cultural history of smell in China and identifies many literary precursors that shaped the creation of the materia aromatica genre at the end of the Northern Song. Liu also carefully analyzes the authorship and contents of several of the earliest extant treatises, laying much of the groundwork for my introduction and translation of Hong Chu's *Materia Aromatica* at the end of this study.[30]

The final scholar who deserves special acknowledgement is Yamada Kentarō 山田憲太郎 (1907–1983), a pioneer in the study of East Asian perfumery. His early work propelled what I referred to above as the second wave of scholarship on foreign aromatics and in many ways his later body of work in the 1970s has not yet been surpassed and remains a key starting point into many topics related to the material history of East Asian smell culture. A brief excursus into his background will prove helpful in understanding the unique qualities of his scholarship.

As a young adult, Yamada attended *Kōbe shōgyō daigaku* 神戸商業大学, present-day Kobe University, a vocational school at the time with a focus on international commerce

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ed. John W. Chaffee and Denis Twitchett, 1st ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 437–525; and Tansen Sen, "Buddhism and the Maritime Crossings," in *Early Global Interconnectivity across the Indian Ocean World, Volume II: Exchange of Ideas, Religions, and Technologies*, ed. Angela Schottenhammer (Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2019), 17–50.

[30] Liu Jingmin, "Ding Wei *Tianxiang zhuan* kaoshu," *Fengjia renwen shehui xuebao* 9 (2004): 145–74; Liu Jingmin, "Song Hong Chu ji qi *Xiangpu* yanjiu," *Fengjia renwen shehui xuebao* 12 (2006): 59–102; Liu Jingmin, "Chen shi *Xiangpu* banben kaoshu," *Fengjia renwen shehui xuebao* 13 (2006): 45–78; Liu Jingmin, *Songdai Xiangpu zhi yanjiu* (Taibei: Wenshi zhe chubanshe, 2007).

and communication. After graduating around the year 1932, Yamada found employment with a major perfume company, Ogawa Perfumes (Ogawa kōryō 小川香料), and managed to gain a professional working knowledge of the industry which included the cultivation of plants and the manufacturing of essential oils. While employed, it appears Yamada was part of a small research arm of the company, publishing intermittent short pieces on the history of aromatics that appeared as part of the *Ogawa Perfumes Journal* (*Ogawa kōryō shinbun* 小川香料時報). As editor and author, this position afforded Yamada the opportunity to research the history of incense, spice, and perfumes, and the initial culmination of these efforts came in 1942 when he published his first monograph, *A History of Perfumes in East Asia* (*Tōa kōryō shi* 東亜香料史). This was arguably the first detailed history of aromatics in East Asia.[31] This led to a subsequent volume in 1948 with a narrower focus on Japan, entitled *A History of Perfume in Japan* (*Nippon kōryōshi* 日本香料史). Two years later Yamada was awarded a doctorate from Kokugakuin Daigaku 國學院大學 for his dissertation on the early transmission of amber and jasmine into East Asia by Dashi Arab merchants. In 1956 Yamada revised and expanded his 1942 publication, now entitled *A History of Aromatics in the East and West* (*Tōzai kōyakushi* 東西香薬史). Over the next three decades Yamada continued to publish on the history of European, Middle Eastern, and East Asian perfumes as well as preparing focused treatments on individual aromatics, probing into vexing questions of obscure nomenclature, precise botanical identification, and the history of commercial trade.

[31] Another pioneering effort to trace the history of aromatics in East Asia was that of Okamoto Ryōchu 岡本良知, who published *A History of Perfumes of the Malacca Islands in the Middle Ages* (*Chūsei Marukka shotō no kōryō* 中世モルッカ諸島の香料) in 1944. Lin Tianwei notes that Okamoto was influential in directing Yamada's early interest to the historical study of perfumery, see Tian-wai Lin, "Kentaro Yamada, 'A Study of the History of Perfumery and Spices in the Far East' (Book Review)," *T'oung Pao*, Second Series, 64, no. 4/5 (1978): 269.

Several of his later articles comprised part of his 1976 work, *A Study on the History of Perfumery and Spices in the Far East* (*Tōa kōryō shi kenkyū* 東亜香料史研究). This monograph was in many ways a distillation of over forty years of practical and historical knowledge on scent in East Asia.

As insightful as the works of Liu, Yamada, and many others remain, there are plenty of questions left to be explored regarding the medieval history of aromatics and smell culture. This is especially the case for Chinese religious history. On one hand, rarely have scholars of smell critically utilized Buddhist or Daoist sources to help build their cultural and intellectual histories of olfaction. This also leaves a gamut of questions regarding how these traditions, both with deep connections to vernacular and elite religious practice, impacted broader social patterns in terms of the use of specific aromatics or the development of particular attitudes and beliefs about them. On the other hand, rarely have religious studies scholars systematically mined ritual and scriptural sources for references to aromatics or attempted to analyze how these traditions were shaped by larger cultural forces around smell. This study hopes to bring several fields, including religious studies, material culture studies, and smell culture studies, into conversation with one another and outline the historical contours of sacred smells and strange scents during the long medieval period.

3. Chapter Summary: The Reek of Religion

The argument at the heart of this study scrutinizes the implicit assumption, and sometimes explicit assertion, that incense burning formed a core of Chinese religious practice for well over two millennia. This belief is rooted in a naïve view, articulated at times in both pre-

modern sources and modern scholarship, that the broad contours of religious praxis and Chinese smell culture have remained remarkably stable. As we will examine, there were several competing views on how smell could be utilized in ritual contexts to communicate with the spirits, and moreover, the adoption of incense for this purpose was the outcome of the confluence of internal cultural dynamics and external forces in the second and third centuries.

Chapter 1 enters into the world of Chinese smell through arguably it most important lexical expression, *xiang*, variously understood as perfume, spice, drug, and most characteristically, incense. Song connoisseurs of incense understood the ambiguity of this term, as have modern scholars, but neither has fully investigated the semantic dimensions of this word nor adequately expressed its significance for ancient Chinese ritual sacrifice. Some scholars have suggested looking for the origins of Chinese olfactory culture in ancient rites focused on burning oblations atop large bonfires, but as our sources reveal smell was never a salient sensory component of these activities in antiquity. The only sacrificial domain where smell mattered was in the offerings of flesh, grain, and ale to the ancestors and spirits. This was predicated on a structural logic whereby the aromas of food sacrifice – the proper understanding of ancient *xiang* – were responsible for attracting the spirits and providing them with spiritual nourishment. In other words, spiritual smelling was conceived as a higher form of eating. This particular spiritual activity is noted in our texts as *xin*, which covers the sensorial terrain of olfaction, the alimentary aspect of eating, and the affective quality of enjoyment. The use of incense is entirely absent in our early ritual sources; the principal olfactory practice was the creation of food aromas during sacrifice.

Chapter 2 challenges what I frame as the "Emperor Wu hypothesis." This is the belief that the territorial conquests of Emperor Wu invited trade and tributary exchanges of a wide assortment of supra-regional aromatics throughout the Western Han. While the empire building efforts of Emperor Wu certainly brought foreign exotica to the court, official histories do not attest to the arrival of aromatics of any kind. This discussion will be held against the backdrop of the ongoing developments of smell culture during the late Warring States and Western Han, of which were entirely tied to endemic Chinese plants. The temperate north and the subtropical south produced different kinds of fragrant *flora* and while northern ritualists focused on the generation of sacrificial food aromas, southern *wu*-shamans emphasized the adornment of scented plants, typically worn on a belt-sash to attract spirits and signify divine presence. Notably, the undergirding logics of nourishment and ornamentation were combined into a Western Han sacrificial program – still absent the use of incense. In contrast to prevailing belief, the earliest signs of fragrant foreign exotica appear only during the first century, initially with Mediterranean storax, and then rapidly expanding in variety over the next two centuries. This study argues that the historical contexts of the Six Dynasties are the appropriate social, political, economic lenses through which to read numerous tales of the strange that anachronistically represent Emperor Wu as gathering a collection of foreign aromatics.

Chapter 3 grapples with a tension created by the arguments of the first two chapters: if incense was not utilized in sacrificial rites in the north, nor by shamans in the south, how are we to understand the widespread appearance of incense burners during the Han, including the famed mountain-shaped *boshan* censer? By focusing on the archaeological record to gain perspective on the regional origins of the Chinese censer, as well as analyzing often

neglected auxiliary scenting equipment and the materiality of early incense, we will see that early censers were not used as tools of spiritual communication, but were chiefly used as perfuming and fumigation devices for clothing and other fabrics. This rather mundane purpose is suggested by their placement in tombs separate from ritual vessels and unanimously supported by textual references up through the Eastern Han, just previous to the earliest Buddhist activities. This reframed telos for incense burning further allows us to critically reanalyze the *boshan* censer, often viewed as an instrument for vivifying or actualizing the pursuit of immortality. Instead, through the novel use of curling swirls of smoke, the *boshan* censer was deployed as a potent symbol of political legitimacy by virtue of adopting two of the most common Han artistic motifs of auspiciousness: mountains and clouds. After the Eastern Han, the *boshan* censer form will accrue new meaning once it is adopted into the visual program of Daoist steles, objects themselves directly influenced by Gandhāran Buddhist votive arts. Within this new context, the censer is transformed into a tool of religious devotionalism.

Chapter 4 focuses on the important innovations in the deployment of smell by Buddhists in China. Unlike the dominant paradigm of state sacrifice, early Buddhists in China needed to define *pūjā*-style worship in a bloodless fashion and thus adopted the language of "providing sustenance" (*gongyang*), after rejecting the term sacrifice (*ci*), to describe the relationship between the devoted supplicant and the Buddha. Moreover, many of Buddhist practices based on deploying smell were novel to the Chinese of the Eastern Han, including the use of scented powders and fragrant pastes to dress the altar. Importantly, these distinctive olfactory practices were motivated by a very different conception of the divine; the primary recipient of these offerings, the Buddha, was conceived as functionally

equivalent to fragrant scents and subsequently his presence was ritually evoked through the aspersion of fragrant materials.

Equally notable, early Buddhist scriptural sources characterize incense as less desirable than offering fragrant pastes, but immigrant Han Buddhists, possibly under the more recent influence of Zoroastrianism, still define basic worship as burning incense for their Chinese audiences. In spite of this, and against expectation, incense burning appears to be treated as a novel activity for the Eastern Han elite living in the capital, with some evidence pointing to a conceptual affinity with the far south, a contact zone of thriving international trade and home to many practitioners of the occult arts.

Chapter 5 turns to the autochthonous Chinese use of incense to communicate with the spirits. This chapter first looks at the career of the enigmatic healer Yu Ji (also known as Gan Ji) of the southern coast, whose biography conspicuously contains a reference to burning incense (*shao xiang*), the earliest individual noted in extant sources as engaging in this activity. Focus then shifts to the second century healing cult of the Celestial Masters, whose early rites of expiation and healing curiously contain no reference to incense, in spite of the fact that incense smoke, and specifically its perceived ability to send messages to a bureaucratic world of spirits, becomes essential to those same rituals in the early fourth century when Celestial Masters priests move to Jiangnan in the coastal south. Subsequently, this turns our attention to the smell culture of Jiangnan, where we find the bureaucratic paradigm did not inform all aspects of local religious tradition. For example, we find evidence for the use of smoke scrying to read messages coming back from the spirits and the adoption of smell taboos and lustration rites to ensure the success of alchemical experiments and the safe transmission of arcane knowledge. The governing logic is not built around

feeding the spirits or rendering the space fragrant in accord with the divine, but the expression of olfactory hygiene and ritual purity that attracts other pure beings.

Lastly, the second part of this study includes an introduction to and translation of Hong Chu's 洪芻 (1066–c.1127) *Materia Aromatica* (*Xiang pu* 香譜), the oldest extant Chinese perfuming manual dating to the Northern Song. This work contains a digest of citations to older medieval works that pertain to native and foreign aromatics, different kinds of scenting equipment, lore related to Chinese scent culture, and more than two dozen blending recipes. Consequently, the *Materia Aromatica* is an invaluable repository of information for medieval material culture and olfactory culture. The translation is accompanied by my commentarial notes for selected entries that outline the early medieval history of the item or concept, especially in regards to how it was used in religious practice. In this process, I have drawn inspiration from Edward Schafer's chapter on aromatics in *The Golden Peaches of Samarkand: A Study of Tang Exotics* and intend the translation of the *Materia Aromatica* to also function as a kind of handbook for medieval Chinese smell culture.

Because many of the more technical arguments regarding the identification of ancient and medieval aromatics are outlined in these commentarial entries, I will frequently refer the reader to specific entries in the footnotes of this study, using the shorthand abbreviation HC (for Hong Chu) followed by the number of the entry, e.g., HC#1 (which refers to the first entry in the *Materia Aromatica* on camphor).

Chapter One – Ritual Scents and the Sense of Sacrifice

1. Introduction: A Prolegomenon to Chinese Smell Culture

The specialized study of perfuming arts reached new intellectual heights during the Northern Song. A detailed knowledge of aromatics – incense in particular – and a sophisticated olfactory connoisseurship was developing through a new genre of literature that came to be known as "aromatics registers" (*xiangpu* 香譜), which I translate throughout as materia aromatica.[32] In the prefaces to several of these studies we find attempts to position the contemporary Song fascination with incense within the landscape of odors and aromas in China's distant past. Combing through the literary classics, these late medieval scholars discovered a starkly different world of smell in early antiquity, one that did not approach the cultural refinement of the Song period nose. For example, the *Preface to Mr. Ye's Record of Aromatics* (*Ye min xianglu xu* 葉民香錄序), by the eclectic scholar and incense aficionado Ye Tinggui 葉庭珪 (*jinshi* 1115), outlined the historical situation as follows:

> In antiquity there was no incense, [people] just lit firewood and burned southernwood and simply valued [those] odors. Therefore, although the word for "fragrance" is recorded in the classics, it is not what we would call "incense" nowadays.
> 古者無香。燔柴焫蕭。尚氣臭而已。故香之字雖載於經。而非今之所謂香也。[33]

[32] The comparison to published materia medica ("medical materials") is not a strict parallel, but both types of literature contain lists of substances with descriptions of their properties and usages. Chinese materia aromatica also included recipes for compounding aromatics, and as such also straddle the closely related genre of pharmacopeia ("drug making"). Ultimately, however, unlike the term "materia medica" which can be traced to *De Materia Medica* of Dioscorides (ca. 40–90), I am coining the term "materia aromatica" to approximate the Chinese *xiangpu*. I return to the history of early materia aromatica literature in the introduction to Hong Chu's *Materia Aromatica* at the end of this study.

[33] SKQS:844.579b. Ye Tinggui's preface, dated to 1151, is preserved in Zhou Jiazhou's 周嘉胄 (1582–1658) *Cart of Aromatics* (*Xiang cheng* 香乘). For a slightly different reading of this passage, albeit with the same overarching interpretation, see Milburn, "Aromas," 458. For more on Ye Tinggui's life and writings, see Liu, *Songdai Xiangpu*, 167–73, 234–39.

Ye Tinggui highlights the distinctive character of the ancient Chinese smellscape by pitting it against the elite consumption of incense during his time. In his view, the smells of burnt firewood and shrubby southernwood (a kind of *Artemisia*) could not compare to the exquisite plumes of fragrant smoke that filled the temple shrines, imperial halls, and scholarly studios of his Song contemporaries. Consequently, he reasons, there was no such thing as true incense in antiquity. To fend off any potential criticism of such a bold claim – a simple perusal of the classics would easily reveal the graph *xiang* 香, "incense" – Ye Tinggui's felicitous wording underscores the inherent ambiguity of that term. *Xiang* could also be aptly read as "fragrance" or "aroma," renderings that do not necessarily carry the same connotations of cultural refinement and scholarly elegance as evoked by "incense." Even though the singular term *xiang* has been used in Chinese documents for over two millennia, its distinctive referents were worlds apart.

The polysemous nature of the term *xiang* is well known. Writing in 1963, sinologist Edward Schafer made this important point regarding the great variety of aromatic exotica circulating during the Tang dynasty (618–907):

> It is worth saying again that in the medieval world of the Far East there was little clear-cut distinction among drugs, spices, perfumes, and incenses—that is, among substances which nourish the body and those which nourish the spirit, those which attract a lover and those which attract a divinity.[34]

For Schafer, *xiang* was a sign with too many referents; a term for which there was "little clear-cut distinction" between its numerous meanings. Yet, at the same time, when we encounter *xiang* in our ancient and medieval sources we need not see outright confusion;

[34] Schafer, *Golden* Peaches, 155.

context always matters. One analytical framework rooted in the materiality of smell culture was proposed by the pioneering scholar of East Asian olfactory culture, Yamada Kentarō. He adopted three categories based upon the principal uses of things called *xiang*: aromatics that were burned, aromatics that adorned the body, and aromatics ingested with food or drink. In other words, Yamada identifies the categories of incense (*funkō* 焚香), cosmetics (*keshō* 化粧), and spices (*chōmi* 調味).[35] To add further nuance, and based on his experience as a historian and professional perfumer, Yamada identified the substances that typically fall under each of these categories, for example: aloeswood, frankincense, myrrh are often burned as incense; sandalwood, camphor, and spikenard are used in cosmetics; and peppercorns, cloves, and cinnamon are used as spices.[36]

Importantly, I would add that each of these three material applications of *xiang* can also be distinguished by their end purpose, or telos. For example, Yamada acknowledges that in addition to aesthetic values, aromatics were also conceived as having potent therapeutic effects in their use as drugs.[37] This particular end purpose is made explicit in the early medieval binomial *xiangyao* 香藥, "aromatic-drug," a term which became increasingly

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[35] Yamada Kentarō, *Tōzai kōyaku shi* (Tokyo: Fukumura Shoten, 1956), 16–24; Yamada Kentarō, *Tōa kōryō shi kenkyū* (Tokyo: Chūō Kōron Bijutsu Shuppan, 1976): 344–48. The English terms are noted in Yamada's original work. English speakers might find it more natural to speak of scented cosmetics as perfumes, as Schafer does in his passage above, but Yamada discusses the idea of perfuming under the category of incense, a precedent I mostly follow. Curiously, Yamada claims there was not a rich history of using scented cosmetics in East Asia due to a natural lack of body odor from people native to that region. In spite of Yamada's claim, a complex olfactory culture around adorning the body and perfuming garments did develop in China, some of which were critical to religious practice. Whether East Asian perfuming culture was equally comparable to that of other cultures, a question that Yamada seems to want to highlight, is beyond the scope of our concerns here.

[36] Yamada, *Tōzai kōyaku shi*, 24–25. Yamada also distinguishes between the generic types of materials used for each application: tree gums and balsams are used for incense; oleoresins, roots, flowers, and leaves are used for cosmetics; and flowers, fruits, seeds, leaves and bark are used for spices.

[37] Yamada, *Tōzai kōyaku shi*, 25–26. Lin Tianwei distinguishes between two principal uses of *xiang*, first in its practical applications as medicine and spice, and second in its aesthetic applications as incense, bodily perfume, and sacrificial offerings, see Lin, *Songdai xiangyao*, 301–17. In addition to treating aesthetic uses as merely derivative of practical uses, this type of analysis also tends to conflate the material use of an aromatic with its end purpose. For example, burning scented plant matter was considered eminently practical in the ancient and medieval periods for health and hygiene, it was not merely ornamental.

common throughout the medieval period and during the rise of Song maritime commerce.[38] It should be underscored that the epistemic frame shaping the telos of *xiang* as a drug is independent from its materiality. Consequently, drugs can be burned as a fumigant, applied to the body as ointment, or ingested as a pill, all applications that are well documented in ancient and medieval pharmacological literature.

Moreover, central to our concerns, aromatics can also have an end purpose that is broadly religious in orientation.[39] While burning incense already tends to be viewed as a fundamental religious activity in China, medieval Buddhists and Daoists both ingested aromatics for their soteriological effects and adorned their bodies and ritual spaces with fragrant substances to render them sacred. Because of the manifold social and material uses of aromatics during the long medieval period, it was not uncommon for an individual substance to bridge many or all of these functional divisions. To give just one example, imported Indian sandalwood could be burned as part of an incense blend to worship a deity, ground into a paste to scent the skin or made into a salve to soothe a fever, or ingested as medicine for abdominal pains, cholera, and edema. Attempts to clearly distinguish between some of these uses was also important at times, for example, while Buddhists allowed the application of sandalwood paste to the body as a medicinal ointment, it was disallowed if

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[38] *Xiangyao* first appears in a memorial preserved in *Record of the Three Kingdoms* (*Sanguo zhi* 三國志) and dates to around 231. Xue Zong 薛綜 (d. 243), an official under the Eastern Wu, describes aromatic-drugs as one among the many exotica, or "oddities" (*qiwu* 奇物), procured in Jiaozhi, present-day central and northern Vietnam, see SGZ:53.1252. This region was closely associated with the harvesting and exportation of the famed aromatic aloeswood during this time, but *xiangyao* appears to have always been treated as a generic category of scented materials.

[39] There are many additional social functions of aromatics I do not address here, including their use as valued commodities, personal gifts, and inter-state tributes, or as markers of social identity, including class, gender, and religious affiliation. For a discussion on the construction of social categories based on olfactory codes, see Constance Classen, "The Odor of the Other: Olfactory Symbolism and Cultural Categories," *Ethos* 20, no. 2 (1992): 133–66; also see discussion on scent-typing in Classen, Howes, and Synott, *Aroma: The Cultural History of Smell*, 161–179.

used to simply perfume the body in contravention of the precepts.

Like a palimpsest, or a manuscript written upon multiple times with varying levels of erasure and legibility, different semantic shadings of *xiang* come into focus depending on numerous contextualizing factors. In terms of translation, when a fragrant substance is burned, or when the context strongly infers such a practice, I treat *xiang* as "incense."[40] At times I will also refer to *xiang* as "perfume," but cautiously remind the reader this rarely referred to the use of essential oils or other aromatic compounds suspended in a liquid during the long medieval period.[41] "Perfume" derives from the Latin, *per fumum*, "through smoke," and this is often the meaning that I intend, but at times *xiang* was meant to adorn the body without the use of smoke, such as with the use of scenting sachets (*xiang nang* 香囊) or charms (*pei* 佩) of braided plants tied to a belt-sash. As such, my rendering of *xiang* as perfume remains in the realm of cosmetics and bodily adornment, but not necessarily as *eau*

[40] In the context of this study, I use the following stipulative definition for "incense": a material used to produce a fragrant and generally pleasing smell when burned and, as a raw material, is generally unrelated to nutritive substances i.e. food or drink. While this is not explicitly clarified in our historical sources, such a definition corresponds to the types of materials and ingredients incorporated into medieval materia aromatica. Consequently, I do not treat burning sacrificial food as analogous to burning incense, nor do I treat burning non-odorous, malodorous, or noxious substances as burning incense.

[41] While rudimentary distillation stills seem to have been in use by the Han, there is no Chinese record of distilled essential oils until the tenth century when rose water arrives as tribute from Champa, see Joseph Needham et al., *Science and Civilisation in China, Vol. 5, Chemistry and Chemical Technology, Part IV: Spagyrical Discovery and Invention: Apparatus, Theories and Gifts* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980), 158–62. It was more common in the medieval period to extract volatile oils by steeping plants in hot water or oil, such as we see with thoroughwort infused baths, known as thoroughwort decoctions (*lantang* 蘭湯), or thoroughwort infused hair oils, known as thoroughwort lotion (*lanze* 蘭澤). I do not mean to imply that scented cosmetics were not commonplace in the medieval period – there were plenty of bathing decoctions (*tang* 湯), lotions (*ze* 澤), pastes (*gao* 膏), and so forth – only that *xiang* seemingly never referred to them throughout the early medieval period as a distinctive class in the same way English speakers use "perfume." Recently, Franciscus Verellen has suggested, with caution, that a fifth century Daoist text, the *Writ on the Five Sentiments* (*Wugan wen* 五感文; DZ1278), speaks of using steam-distillation to produce essential oil, see Franciscus Verellen, *Imperiled Destinies: The Daoist Quest for Deliverance in Medieval China* (Cambridge: Harvard University Asia Center, 2019), 165n.79. The text is likely corrupt, as *qianyou* 前油, which Verellen translates as "prior [essential?] oil," should likely be read as *jianyou* 煎油, "simmering in oil." Based on the context of the passage this would refer to the preparation of scented lamp oil, a olfactory practice which has its origins in antiquity. For more on the history of sublimating and distilling aromatics in China, see my comments to camphor at HC#1 and ngai camphor at HC#18.

de toilette. In many situations, however, the nature of *xiang* remains indeterminate. In the face of ambiguity, I will render *xiang* as "aromatics," a second order taxon intended to covey a similar polyvalence as the underlying Chinese term.

Additionally, at times, I will refer to "odorants" to address a broader taxon of smelly objects – ones that are not necessarily fragrant, but which connote negative or neutral valences, including various plants or animal flesh. As noted in the discussion of Ye Tinggui's comments above, *xiang* could be read qualitatively, as the pleasing fragrant property of an object or phenomenon, such as fragrant wisps of hair, a scented gust of wind, or a sweet-smelling fruit. Importantly, as established by long-standing convention, *xiang* connotes a favorable scent or aroma, consequently, not all odorants necessarily possess *xiang*.[42]

Related to this point is the fact that I have rarely found treating *xiang* as "spice" to be helpful in examining medieval Chinese religions. For example, in the many cases where *xiang* is ingested, it was almost always contextualized as a drug, not merely used in service to adding flavor to food. Additionally, the rare occasions when spicing food is relevant, such as spicing sacrificial ale with wild turmeric root, *xiang* pointed not to the turmeric itself, but the pleasing aroma the spiced ale emits, i.e., its fragrant property. As we will see, this qualitative aspect of *xiang* appears earliest in Chinese historical records, and only later, in a period of increasing international and supra-regional exchange of goods during the Eastern Han (27–220), do we find unambiguous textual evidence of *xiang* being deployed nominally as

[42] There are many additional Chinese terms that convey the sense of a pleasing odor, including *xiang* 薌 (considered to be an orthographic variant of *xiang*), *fen* 芬, *fang* 芳, and *xin* 馨, among numerous others (a small sampling can be found at HC#82d). Notably, while *chou* 臭 mostly carries a negative valence as "foul" today, it could refer to a neutral "odor" in classical works, such as with the Five Odors (*wuchou* 五臭) of traditional Five Phase theory, or in rare circumstances a positive fragrance, see e.g., Milburn, "Aromas," 455n.64. In one instance, it also appears to have denoted a class of fragrant objects, specifically fragrant plants, see footnote 192.

"aromatics" or more narrowly as "incense." In other words, *xiang* originally denoted a pleasing fragrance, and specifically the pleasing fragrance of sacrificial offerings, and only over time came to refer to a second-order class of aromatics inclusive of incense, cosmetics, and spices. This is a critical issue that is sometimes noted by scholars, but never to my knowledge fully analyzed for its impact on our understanding of ancient and medieval Chinese religion.[43]

The particular intersection of burned aromatics, i.e. incense, with a ritual or religious telos deserves special note and, ultimately, a nuanced analysis. "The burning of incense," as Barend Ter Haar succinctly states, "is truly the most fundamental religious act in Chinese culture."[44] This is certainly true in the contemporary period as much as it was in the later medieval period as countenanced by troves of medieval documents and numerous modern anthropological studies.[45] Such a special relationship is not limited to China. As noted in Margaret Kenna's "Why Does Incense Smell Religious?: Greek Orthodoxy and the Anthropology of Smell," incense operates not only on a metaphorical level pointing to the beyond or to the sacred, but also as a metonym, as part of an expression of religious praxis

[43] For example, Barend Ter Haar astutely notes that "the word *xiang* in older sources refers to the fragrance of sacrificial food and liquor, which was consumed by the deities." Ter Haar then connects this meaning to its later understanding as incense, saying "this would suggest the use of incense as the cheapest king of offering," see Bahrend J. Ter Haar, "Jinxiang, Offering Incense," in *The Encyclopedia of Taoism*, ed. Fabrizio Pregadio, 1st ed. (New York: Routledge, 2008): 585–86. This reading suggests incense was viewed in antiquity as an inexpensive substitute for food and liquor offerings, but this occludes the different ritual logics at play when such substitutions occur. In its most simple formulation, incense was used to send messages to the spirits while sacrificial food and liquor were used to feed them. Consequently, incense cannot be used as a substitute for food offerings without a significant conceptual change in the purpose of the ritual act.

[44] Bahrend J. Ter Haar, "Teaching with Incense," *Studies in Central and East Asian Religions* 11, no. 1 (2000): 5.

[45] The importance of burning incense as part of contemporary Chinese religious practice is discussed, for example, in Zhang Xun, "Xiang zhi wei wu: jinxiang yishi zhong xianghuo guannian de wuzhi jichu," *Taiwan renleixue kan* 4, no. 2 (2006): 37–73; Zhang Xun, "Wu yu shenti gan lilun: yi xiang wei li," in *Shenti Gan de Zhuanxing*, ed. Yu Shunde (Taibei: Guoli Taiwan daxue chuban zhongxin, 2015), 63–101; Scott Habkirk and Hsun Chang, "Scents, Community, and Incense in Traditional Chinese Religion," *Material Religion* 13, no. 2 (2017): 156–74.

bridging the heavens and the earth. This analysis can be extended to the case of medieval China because incense is often conceived through the lens of a singular ritual logic: as a bridge to the spiritual realm. In the emic terminology of medieval ritual and scriptural works, incense has the power to draw down (*jiang* 降) the spirits, communicate (*da* 達) with divine beings, or to penetrate (*tong* 通) into the spiritual realm. In the particular case of Buddhist sutras, incense acts as the "emissary to the Buddha" (*foshi* 佛使). Consequently, as Kenna argues, fragrant smoke "is both a medium of inter-connectedness with the transcendent world and a symbol of it, a symbol of the underlying unity of what westerners would separate as the natural and the supernatural worlds."[46]

In the context of Chinese history, because burning incense is so often perceived as a basic religious act it can be difficult to imagine a different purpose for incense or imagine religious practice absent its use. Furthermore, these deep impressions can also breathe life into tacit assumptions that the religious use of incense is timeless, ubiquitous, and necessary. Consequently, these assumptions blind us from investigating the historical and social developments in the culture of smell, its associated olfactory practices, and concomitant ritual logics.

For some perspective on this point, we can identify at least four competing modern hypotheses regarding the origin of Chinese incense culture, some of which implicitly treat the use of incense as a natural and necessary development of Chinese proto-religion. For example, according to some scholars, the origins of incense should be traced to approximately six thousand years ago based upon the earliest archaeological evidence of

[46] Margaret E. Kenna, "Why Does Incense Smell Religious?: Greek Orthodoxy and the Anthropology of Smell," *Journal of Mediterranean Studies* 15, no. 1 (2005): 15.

burning offerings on sacrificial altars during the late Neolithic period, such as discovered at the Chengtoushan 成頭山 site in present-day Hunan. This pre-historical origin point can be further supported by the excavation of objects believed by some to be incense burners dated to ancient Hongshan 紅山 culture (ca. 4700–2900 BCE) in northeastern China, Liangzhu良渚 culture (ca. 3400–2250 BCE) from the Yangzi River delta, and the Longshan 龍山 culture (ca. 3000–1900 BCE) located around the fertile regions of the Yellow River.[47] From this perspective, material artifacts (stone altars or durable vessels) attesting to a technical knowledge of fire craft are treated as a sufficient condition for asserting the origin of incense culture.

Other scholars prefer to trace the origins of incense burning to a later period of antiquity, between the start of the Eastern Zhou (770–256 BCE) and imperial unification under the Qin (221–226 BCE). This view, for example, is espoused in Joseph Needham's widely read *Science and Civilisation in China* and has been frequently relied upon by later generations of scholars.[48] This claim is supported by the archaeological recovery of bronze and ceramic vessels with more definitive structural similarities to later chalice-shaped incense burners popular during the Han. Both this hypothesis and the one noted above are

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[47] Those who implicitly presume or explicitly make such arguments include Fu Jingliang, *Zhongguo xiang wenhua* (Qinan: Qilu shushe, 2008): 3–5; Yang Gang, "Xian Qin yizhi Qin-Han de xunxiang xisu wenhua," *Xibei nonglin keji daxue xuebao (shehui kexue ban)* 11, no. 4 (2011): 174, 178; Wang Yingzhu, Ma Qinglin, and Li Yanxiang, "Zhongguo gudai xiangliao shihua: Liyi zhi bang, xiangyun liuchang," *Wenming* 3 (2014): 62; Wu Qing, "Shanggu zhi liang Han jian de xunlu jiantan," *Zhongguo jiti jingji* 14 (2015): 36–37; Shao Xiaolong, "Zailun boshan lu de qiyuan ji xiangguan wenti," *Zhongguo guojia bowuguan guankan* 5 (2016): 53–54. We will turn to the complexities of identifying archaeologically recovered vessels as incense burners in Chapter 3, Section 2. In lieu of material artifacts, Fu Jiangliang highlights an oracle bone inscription, dating to the Yin Shang dynasty (ca. 1300–1046 BCE), containing the graph *chai* 柴, which he deciphers as a hand grasping and burning wood, see Fu, *Xiang wenhua*, 4.

[48] Needham and Lu, *Science and Civilisation in China,* Vol. 5, Part 2, 132. For scholars who cite Needham directly, see, *inter alia*, Silvio Bedini, *The Trail of Time: Time Measurement with Incense in East Asia Shih-Chien Ti Tsu-Chi* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 25–26; Habkirk and Chang, "Scents, Community, and Incense," 160.

implicitly tied to beliefs that incense burning formed an integral part of ancient state sacrifice which has been maintained, albeit under different religious guises (Daoist liturgies, Buddhist ritual, mourning rites, etc.) until the modern day. Consequently, there is often a focus placed on cultural continuity over the *longue durée*.

There is a third perspective that emphasizes the arrival of novel foreign aromatics, especially non-native tree resins, gums, and scented woods during a process of increasing inter-cultural contact.[49] This is often said to have occurred during the Western Han (202 BCE–8 CE) or, more specifically, as the direct result of territorial expansion under Emperor Wu 武帝 (r. 157–87 BCE).[50] This perspective loosely echoes the sentiment of Ye Tinggui who envisioned true incense as representative of the foreign goods arriving at Song ports, such as aloeswood and frankincense, not the inferior sacrificial "fragrances" and shrubby plants of distant Chinese antiquity.[51] This stance acknowledges a material change in the

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[49] Resins and gums are both considered tree exudates distinct from other tree liquids like sap. The latter is necessary for water transpiration and nutrient absorption and is thus considered a primary metabolite. Resinous exudates are also liquid compounds, but are produced to protect the tree from injury or fungal infestation and thus are often treated as secondary metabolites. There are two further important points worth noting. First, resiniferous tree species occur with greatest diversity in warmer, tropical zones and only very rarely occur in temperate zones (and are restricted to coniferous trees). Second, not all resins and gums contain fragrant essential oils. Thus, when tree exudates are highly fragrant, they are typically called oleoresins and oleogums to distinguish them from non-scented exudates. I use resin/oleoresin and gum/oleogum interchangeably, but the focus remains on scented exudates in this study. To these we can also add strongly scented woods which are most typically dead heartwoods that have absorbed high concentrations of essential oils. The classic study on resins and gums is F. N. Howes, *Vegetable Gums and Resins* (Waltham, MA: Chronica Botanica Company, 1949); the most recent general study is Jean H. Langenheim, *Plant Resins: Chemistry, Evolution, Ecology, and Ethnobotany* (Portland: Timber Press, 2003).

[50] Such an emphasis placed on non-native aromatics can be found in Yamada, *Tōzai kōyaku shi*, 319–20; Nakamura Shingo, "Hakusanro no keisei katei ni okeru hoppō kōro no tanjō to saiiki kōro to no yūgō," *Ajia no rekishi to bunka* 12 (2008): 67–88; Sun Ji, *Handai wuzhi wenhua ziliao tushuo*, 2nd ed. (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1991), 413–19. The particular importance of Emperor Wu is oftentimes due to the uncritical reading of later medieval lore that describe gifts of foreign aromatics as state tribute. This will be discussed in Chapter 2, Section 5. Some scholars point to a time previous to Emperor Wu, with the introduction of incense due to the intermediary activities of the northwestern tribes of the Altai Krai, see Nakamura, "Hakusanro no keisei," 74.

[51] Ye Tinggui traced the origins of incense more broadly to the Han dynasty: "From the Han dynasty onwards, foreign countries presented [aromatics] as tribute and therefore the names of incense begin to appear in scholarly writings." 至漢以來外域入貢，香之名始見於百家傳記。SKQS:844.579b. Other late medieval scholars of incense shared a similar belief. For example, Yan Bowen's 顏博文 (fl. 1118) *Preface to Mr. Yan's*

Chinese smellscape where non-native materials emerged as highly prized commodities, thus leading to a sophisticated medieval connoisseurship of incense. Typically, such a view underplays the socio-religious impact of such a change in the material culture of aromatics and presumes the older olfactory practice of burning scented plant matter continued without significant alteration.

Lastly, there is a small coterie of scholars who point to the Eastern Han as a potential origin for Chinese incense culture, at least for the elements that are most evidently "religious" in their expression. The Eastern Han is when the novel influences of Indian Buddhist ritual first impacted Chinese religious praxis and, potentially, olfactory customs.[52] For example, this is when we have the earliest unambiguous textual evidence of named individuals "burning incense" (*shao xiang* 燒香) in what we might deem ritual contexts. Buddhologist Wu Chao was the first to point to the peculiar practices of incense burning in the Chinese far south, a region not only where we find an early Buddhist presence, but also

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History of Aromatics (*Yan shi xiangshi xu* 顏氏香史序) claims that, "the methods for burning incense were not seen in the Three Dynasties [of Xia, Shang, and Zhou]. Confucian scholars who held official positions under the Han and Tang dynasties gradually began to use it." 焚香之法，不見於三代。 漢唐衣冠之儒，稍稍用之。 SKQS:844.579b. See also the translation in Milburn, "Aromas," 459; for more on the life of Yan Bowen, Liu, *Songdai Xiangpu*, 239–49. Likewise, the *Preface to Mr. Chen's Materia Aromatica* (*Chen shi xiangpu xu* 陳氏香譜序), a product of the end of the Northern Song, comments that "when the [*Book of*] *Poetry* and the [*Book of*] *Documents* spoke of fragrances, they did not go beyond glutinous millet, panicled millet, southernwood, and [sacrificial] fat. […] Since the Han and Tang, those who speak of incense must include the products of the Southern Seas." 詩書言香，不過黍稷蕭脂。[…] 漢唐以來，言香者必南海之產。SKQS:844.580a-b. For more on this work, see Liu, "Chen shi Xiangpu"; Liu, *Songdai Xiangpu*, 205–221. A modern expression of such a view can be found in the work of Yamada Kentarō. He highlights the fact that the distinctive phytogeography of the lower and middle reaches of the Yellow River Basin failed to produce the tree resins and gums that came to dominate later medieval olfactory culture, including most of medieval Europe, such as frankincense and myrrh; see Yamada, *Tōzai kōyaku shi*, 319.

[52] The most articulate version of this view can be found in Wu Chao, "Han dai ren fenxiang wei fojiao liyi shuo–jianlun fojiao zai Zhongguo nanfang de zaoqi chuanbo," *Beifang minzu daxue xuebao* 3 (1999): 23–28; a less formulated view of this sort can be found in Barbara Hendrischke, "Early Daoist Movements," in *Daoism Handbook*, ed. Livia Kohn (Leiden: Brill, 2000), 154; Hubert Seiwert, *Popular Religious Movements and Heterodox Sects in Chinese History* (Leiden: Brill, 2003), 70, 96. Silvio Bedini also comments on the significance of Buddhism on Chinese olfactory culture, which led to the "development of new customs which supplemented the old traditions," see Bedini, *The Trail of Time*, 44;

major maritime ports where foreign incense was traded.[53] This perspective tends to underscore discontinuity, especially in regard to the socio-religious motivations for burning scented plant matter.

On the whole, this study does not attempt to provide an answer to the origin of incense burning, but instead endeavors to interrogate our sources for when smells are deemed important, analyzing the contexts when they are deployed, and determining the ends for which they are utilized. This socio-historical approach is less interested in "origins" and more interested in the beliefs, attitudes, and practices that motivated the use of certain objects and materials, inclusive of incense burners and incense as well as other kinds of aromatics and related scenting equipment. Consequently, this methodological framing accomplishes two important things. One on hand, it disjoins the act of burning incense from being inherently religious. It invites us to actively look for the diverse contexts in which incense was deployed and locate where we might see changes in purpose (aesthetic, therapeutic, ritualistic, etc.) and, when relevant, shifts in governing ritual logics across time.

On the other hand, this socio-historical approach moves us beyond a focus on just incense since a wide variety of scented materials and odorous objects were utilized in sacrifice, worship, or the occult arts. For example, this study will examine the importance of wearing scented plants to symbolize one's moral virtue and signal divine presence. Ultimately, by focusing on the complexity of fragrant smells (*xiang*), this study aims to destabilize our understanding of incense (*xiang*) in Chinese history. Below is a table reflecting the different lines of inquiry outlined above.

[53] Chao, "Han dai ren fenxiang wei fojiao liyi shuo," 25–27. I explore these issues in depth in Chapter 4, Section 10.

Table 1.1: Framework for a Study of *Xiang* and Religious Aspects of Early Chinese Olfactory Culture

olfactory quality (*xiang* as scent)	pleasing olfactory property of a substance (fragrance, aroma, etc.)		
This property can be assigned to a variety of material objects or phenomena.			
material application (*xiang* as aromatics)	burn (e.g. incense)	adorn (e.g. cosmetics)	ingest (e.g. spice)
The material application of aromatics can have one or several end purposes (see below).			
end purpose or telos[54]	religious	therapeutic	aesthetic, etc.
ritual logics[55]	• spiritual alimentation • divine presence • summoning/ communication • etc.		

The first step of this process is to chart a genealogy for the word *xiang* in documents from the Warring States and Han. Overall, this chapter sets the stage for the further examination of early medieval smell culture and establishes a jumping off point for which we can measure the later shifts in attitudes towards the efficacy of rendering ritual smelly. The first two sections below will look at pre-imperial Chinese texts and mine them for salient

[54] A clear and principled distinction between final aims would be impossible to characterize for the period under consideration. Religion, science, and art are modern conceptual categories often viewed as mutually exclusive. Such framings are not elaborated in our ancient or medieval sources and the modern scholarly use of compound terms such as "religio-medical" to highlight such ambiguities are warranted. As I note in the introductory chapter, I instead choose to focus on when our sources tell us (or strongly infer) that smell or aromatics are critical to communication with spirits or other divine beings, a necessary and sufficient criterion for what I consider a "religious" telos; as to whether there are mutually established therapeutic or aesthetic goals is moot in terms of my principal analysis. This is not a solution for all methodological pitfalls because it only speaks to my narrow focus: when was burning incense first cited in our sources as a tool for communicating with spirits? This question is apropos because medieval Chinese sources explicitly proclaim divine communication as the purpose for burning incense. Ultimately, I contend both medieval audiences and modern scholarship mistakenly presume this "religious" purpose of incense can be situated in antiquity.

[55] There are, to be certain, different therapeutic logics that I do not seek to elaborate. For example, effective medical treatments could vary if illness is conceived along different lines of demonic, astral, wind, or bug etiologies, or even more "naturalistic" views around pathogenic *qi* or vessel theory.

odors. This will lead us directly into the world of early sacrificial religion as practiced in the Zhou (1046–256 BCE) through the Han. According to a wide assortment of royal oracle bone records, bronze vessel inscriptions, and transmitted texts, the ancient Chinese state was characterized by highly routinized ritual activities, an idea encapsulated by a frequently cited passage of the *Zuo Commentary* (*Zuozhuan* 左傳): "the great affairs of the state are sacrifice and warfare."[56] As two arms of national security, these state sponsored activities were not categorically distinct from one another; warfare granted protection against one's bitter enemies while sacrifice granted protection from the uncanny and unknown. Undoubtedly, both activities were also highly odorous affairs, marked by the acrid scents of freshly-spilled blood and rotting flesh.[57] While the lavish displays of meats, foods, and alcohol during state mortuary feasts have been analyzed and discussed thoroughly elsewhere, I am interested in the particular representation of odorants and the ritual logic upon which they rest.

The remnants of Zhou sacrificial religion have been preserved, albeit imperfectly, in the received transmission of the *Book of Odes* (*Shi jing* 詩經) and a group of texts known collectively during the Han as the Three Ritual Canons (*sanli* 三禮), including the *Ceremonies and Rites* (*Yili* 儀禮), also known as the *Canon of Rites* (*Lijing* 禮經), the *Rites of Zhou* (*Zhouli* 周禮), originally transmitted as the *Offices of Zhou* (*Zhouguan* 周官), and

[56] 國之大事，在祀與戎。The Chinese text is found in Stephen W. Durrant, Wai-yee Li, and David Schaberg, *Zuo Tradition, Zuozhuan 左傳: Commentary on the Spring and Autumn Annals* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2016), 802.

[57] The *Zuo Commentary* continues: "At sacrifices one receives cooked meat, and in war one receives raw flesh. These are the great ceremonies of the spirits." 祀有孰膰，戎有受脤，神之大節也。Durrant, Li, and Schaberg, *Zuo Tradition*, 802. Robin Yates argues that in the context of this passage warfare is not separate from sacrifice, but subsumed under a ritual discourse, see Robin D.S. Yates, "The History of Military Divination in China," *East Asian Science, Technology, and Medicine* 24, no. 1 (2005): 18–19. Notably, "raw flesh" (*shen* 脤) was also used as a raw meat offering during ritual sacrifice, to which it was a complement to the "cooked meat" (*fan* 膰) offering provided to the royal ancestors, see Thomas A. Wilson, "Sacrifice and the Imperial Cult of Confucius," *History of Religions* 41, no. 3 (2002): 255n10.

the *Record of Rites* (*Liji* 禮記).[58] These texts will form the core of my analysis on sacrificial scents in the pre-imperial and early Han periods. Often, commentaries composed during the Han (and later) established critical intertextual networks of meanings and subsequently offer insightful interpretations of abstruse passages. As such, they will be heavily relied upon in my analysis.[59]

Moreover, when applicable, I also avail myself of secondary studies on Shang and Zhou inscriptional record to more faithfully locate my claims concerning the earliest expression of Chinese sacrificial practice and to corroborate the details of the textual tradition. A fully detailed and diachronic account of the ancient olfactory imagination of sacrificial religion will, unfortunately, require more space than I can devote here.

Since the act of smelling is a socialized practice, it is axiomatic that we pay critical attention to when certain domains of the sensorium are highlighted in our sources. The first two sections will reveal, contrary to many conceptions about the ancient Chinese world, the domain of smell was not dominated by plumes of fragrant incense smoke, but by the aromas of sacrificial foods cooked and displayed during mortuary feasts. The last section will

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[58] The Three Ritual Canons were compiled and edited throughout the Warring States and early Han period, albeit based on much older materials. Martin Kern summarily describes them as a great commentary, reflecting "not only ancient knowledge but, and perhaps primarily, an idealizing and systematizing Eastern Zhou imagination of the early Western Zhou as the fountainhead of classical Chinese religion," see Martin Kern, "Bronze Inscriptions, the Shijing and the Shangshu: The Evolution of the Ancestral Sacrifice During the Western Zhou," in *Early Chinese Religion, Part One: Shang through Han (1250 BC-220 AD)*, ed. John Lagerwey and Marc Kalinowski, vol. 1 (Leiden: Brill, 2009), 145. While rules of ritual etiquette were sometimes detailed, many descriptions remained schematic and subsequently engendered much controversy through the Han and later. My understanding of ancient sacrifice has been greatly aided by the analyses given in Terry F. Kleeman, "Licentious Cults and Bloody Victuals: Sacrifice, Reciprocity, and Violence in Traditional China," *Asia Major*, Third Series, 7, no. 1 (1994): 185–211; Boileau, "Ritual Elaborations"; Martin Kern, "*Shi jing* Songs as Performance Texts: A Case Study of '*Chu ci*' (Thorny Caltrop)," *Early China* 25 (2000): 49–111; Wilson, "Imperial Cult"; Shu-hui Wu, "On Chinese Sacrificial Orations Chi Wen," *Monumenta Serica* 50 (2002): 1–33; and the invaluable collection of essays in Roel Sterckx, ed., *Of Tripod and Palate: Food, Politics, and Religion in Traditional China*, New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005).

[59] I am aware of the issues this methodology raises when trying to recreate historical developments, so I try to make the reader aware of the moments when I feel the later commentarial tradition reflects a divergent view of the root texts, although this is not always ascertainable.

dovetail into a discussion about three concepts that are interwoven into the fabric of ancient sacrificial religion, namely, food fragrances, nutritive smells, and a type of divine smelling that sustained the spirits.

2. The Scents of Sacrifice – Burnt Offerings

To start our investigation into ancient sacrificial odorants, let us return to another Song dynasty scholar, it will set the course for our inquiry. The once renowned official and belated specialist in Hainanese aloeswood, Ding Wei 丁謂 (966–1037), makes a strikingly similar observation to that of Ye Tinggui concerning the shifting smellscape of Chinese history. His *Traditions of Heavenly Aromatics* (*Tianxiang zhuan* 天香傳), a progenitor of the materia aromatica genre, explains his position as thus:

> The use of fragrances goes back to distant antiquity where they were used as offerings to spirits and could be used to attain purity.[60] The *yin*-sacrifice during the Three Dynasties [of Xia, Shang, and Zhou] was chiefly an offering of fragrances, and yet aloeswood and frankincense were not yet known.[61] Scholars have transmitted, recorded, and compiled the praise of a multitude of fragrances, yet southernwood, millet, and *yu*-spiced *chang*-ale have not been so honored.[62]
> 香之為用，從上古矣，所以奉神明，可以達蠲潔。三代禋享，首惟馨之薦，而沉水薰陸無聞焉。百家傳記萃眾芳之美，而蕭蒿[63]鬱鬯不尊焉。

The significance of this passage is twofold. First, Ding Wei's analysis reveals two distinctive classes of aromatics, those that are associated with the ancient smellscape and, conversely,

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[60] Presumably, in keeping with the context of ancient ritual practice, this refers to the purity of sacrifice (*jiesi* 潔祀), as was associated with performing the *yin*-sacrifice. We will return to this point below.
[61] This is a playful use of the word *wen*, meaning both "to hear" and "to smell."
[62] SKQS:844.572a. Ding Wei gained personal insight into the aloeswood industry of Hainan during a three-year banishment to the southern island between 1022 and 1025; for more on the life and work of Ding Wei, see Liu, "Tianxiang zhuan"; Liu, *Songdai Xiangpu*, 150–56.
[63] The identity of *xiang* 蒿 remains uncertain, but I follow the medieval commentarial tradition that treats *xiang* as a type of millet; see the full explanation in footnote 123.

those that that were preferentially favored by the Song elite. The older scented substances, here named as southernwood, millet, and sacrificial *chang*-ale, received little attention among the elite circles of Song smell aficionados. They instead focused discussion on aromatics like frankincense and aloeswood, two of the most important types of incense unknown in Chinese antiquity. Further hidden within Ding Wei's typology is a distinction between more commonplace odorants that were long native to the North China Plain and aromatic exotica, often viewed as luxury goods, that were introduced into China through political and economic networks of tribute and trade.

The second reason this passage is important is because Ding Wei delimits the most salient smells to those associated with sacrificial rites. The ancient *yin*-sacrifice, in the words of Ding Wei, was identified as "chiefly an offering of fragrance," an important turn of phrase we will revisit below. Additionally, southernwood, millet, and *chang*-ale were all employed primarily as fragrant sacrificial offerings to the spirits and ancestors. What are the origins of Ding Wei's beliefs about the ancient world of sacrificial odors? To get a handle on these issues we must turn to our early ritual treatises and examine how they animated the ancient olfactory imagination.

In an often cited passage from the *Rites of Zhou*, we are provided an overview of several types of sacrificial rites overseen by the Grand Ancestral Elder (*Da zongbo* 大宗伯), an officiant for state rituals, and the spiritual recipients of the offerings:

> They use the *yin*-sacrifice to make offerings to Shangdi of Vast Heaven; they use the actual *chai* [sacrifice] to make offerings to the sun, moon, planets, and asterisms;[64] they use the

[64] According to Zheng Xuan's comments, *xing* 星 refers to the Five Wefts (*wu wei* 五緯), or the five planets visible to the naked eye, while *chen* 辰 refers to the asterisms that comprise the Twelve Stations (*shi'er ci* 十二次) of the sun and moon as they move along the ecliptic, see ZLZY:33.1559. As noted by Edward Schafer, however, *xingchen* was a commonly used to refer to constellations collectively, see Edward H. Schafer, *Pacing the Void: T'ang Approaches to the Stars* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1977), 5. It is worth noting

> amassed *liao* [sacrifice] to make offerings to the Officer of the Center, the Officer of Allotments, the Master of Wind, and the Master of Rain.[65]
> 以禋祀祀昊天上帝，以實柴祀日月星辰，以槱燎祀司中，司命，飌師，雨師。

The passage continues on to describe several other types of sacrifice, but we will focus on these first three for now. The *yin* 禋, *chai* 柴 (or 祡), and *liao* 燎 (or 寮) sacrifices came to represent a cluster of rituals all enacted through burning sacrificial items on large bonfires. The influential Eastern Han exegete, Zheng Xuan 鄭玄 (127–200), offered insight as to how these might have been conducted and which oblations were used. He explained that these "three sacrifices [are performed] by simply amassing firewood and [using] sacrificial animals. Some [of these sacrifices] use jade and silk. These [offerings] are roasted and burned and made to ascend through smoke. This is done to requite *yang* [i.e., spirits]."[66]

Zheng Xuan's cryptic identification of the sacrificial animals, jade, and silk to be used as burnt offerings requires a thorough understanding of the contents of the *Rites of Zhou*. Zheng Xuan's explanations are often insightful as they are creative and highlight his commanding knowledge over these source materials. He correlates the three burnt sacrifices to an ancient three-tiered hierarchy of imperial sacrifice mentioned elsewhere in the same text: the *yin* sacrifice is equated with the great sacrifices (*dasi* 大祀), for which a sacrificial

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at the outset, as we will return to the *Rites of Zhou* several times in the course of this study, this compendium was a normative work, not necessarily descriptive of historical reality. It was nevertheless likely compiled with passages taken from pre-existing works, see comments in Lothar von Falkenhausen, "Reflections on the Political Role of Spirit Mediums in Early China: The *Wu* Officials in the *Zhou Li*," *Early China* 20 (1995): 280–281.

[65] ZLZY:33.1558. One can also consult the translations of this passage in Édouard Biot, *Le Tcheou-li; ou, Rites des Tcheou, traduit pour la première fois du chinois*, vol. I (Paris: B. Duprat, 1851), 419; Mu-Choo Poo, "Ritual and Ritual Texts in Early China," in *Early Chinese Religion, Part One: Shang through Han (1250 BC-220 AD)*, ed. John Lagerwey and Marc Kalinowski, vol. 1 (Leiden: Brill, 2009), 285; Milburn, "Aromas," 456. The *Rites of Zhou* was traditionally attributed to the Duke of Zhou 周公 (r. 1042–1036 BCE), but modern scholarship considers it to have been consolidated under the Qin, see Michael Loewe, ed., *Early Chinese Texts*: *A Bibliographical Guide* (Berkeley: Society for the Study of Early China, 1993), 24–32.

[66] 三祀皆積柴實牲體焉，或有玉帛，燔燎而升煙，所以報陽也。ZLZY:33.1559.

animal, jade, and silk were presented; the *chai* sacrifice is equated with the secondary sacrifices (*cisi* 次祀), for which a sacrificial animal and silk were presented; and the *liao* sacrifice is equated with the minor sacrifices (*xiaosi* 小祀), for which a sacrificial animal was presented.[67]

Thus, in Zheng Xuan's understanding, different combinations of offerings were assigned to each of the three rites. It remains unclear why these three types of offerings would be recommended in our classical sources, but Xu Ke has recently suggested that jade and silk formed an opposing pair with animal meat, whereby the former were considered "cultural" products and the latter was considered a "natural" product. Drawing upon the structuralist tradition, Xu argues that fire was the intermediary which resolved the oppositional forces of culture and nature, thus providing significance to the sacrificial act.[68] Regardless of the prescribed offerings, the principal feature of these rites according to Zheng Xuan was the incineration of offerings atop a ceremonial fire, thereby transforming them so they can "ascend through smoke."

All of the beneficiaries of these burnt sacrifices are classified as "heavenly spirits" (*tian shen* 天神). As the Tang subcommentary by Jia Gongyan 賈公彥 (fl. 627–656) notes, "nowadays, heavenly spirits are *yang* and the smoky vapor (*yan qi* 煙氣) ascends; this is also using *yang* [i.e., smoke] to requite *yang* [i.e., spirits]."[69] According to this explanation, which

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[67] The *Rites of Zhou* describes the hierarchy of sacrifices as such: "When establishing the great sacrifices, use jade, silk, and sacrificial animals. When establishing the secondary sacrifices, use sacrificial animals and silk. When establishing the minor sacrifices, use sacrificial animals," 立大祀，用玉帛，牲牷。立次祀，用牲幣。立小祀，用牲。ZLZY:37.1765. It should be noted that the *Rites of Zhou* does not explicitly connect the burnt sacrifices to this hierarchy. The only context it offers is to list the burnt sacrifices among the "auspicious rites" (*jili* 吉禮), ZLZY:33.1558.

[68] Xu Ke, "Gudai liaoji yongwu jiqi yiyi," *Sichuan daxue xuebao (zhexue shehui kexue)* 3 (2008): 138–43.

[69] 今天神是陽，煙氣上升，亦是以陽報陽。ZLZY:33.1568.

is a further elaboration of Zheng Xuan's initial comments, the proper functioning of sacrifice requires the correct correspondence between the sacrificial method and recipient. In this case, this required pairing the smoke of the burnt offerings with the heavenly spirits who reside above, both of which are indicated by *yang* in Jia Gongyan's commentary. In practice, such sacrifices were performed in open spaces, so as to allow unhindered access to the spirits.[70] Moreover, by properly requiting (*bao* 報) the spirits in this fashion, it was hoped they would bless the living with fecundity in a show of divine reciprocity.[71]

The production of *scented* smoke appears to be particularly significant for Zheng Xuan. For example, in his commentary to the *Book of Documents* (*Shujing* 書經), he glosses the *yin* sacrifice as the "sacrifice of fragrances" (*fenfang zhi zhai* 芬芳之祭), an interpretation that was echoed by Ding Wei nearly a millennia later.[72] This view is further elaborated in Zheng Xuan's annotations to the *Rites of Zhou*, claiming that "*yin* is a word for smoke and [because] the people of Zhou valued smell, one smelled the aroma of the smoky vapors (*yanqi zhi chou* 煙氣之臭)."[73] This latter comment shows the breadth of Zheng Xuan's inter-textual expertise. He is drawing upon a passage from the "Suburban Sacrifice of a Single Victim" (*Jiao te sheng* 郊特牲) chapter in the *Record of Rites* which underscores the importance of sacrificial aromas for the Zhou and connects this detail to his exegesis on the *yin* sacrifice. To get a clearer understanding of the new conceptual terrain Zheng Xuan is forging with his commentary, let us briefly examine the classical *yin* sacrifice as described in

[70] Wilson, "Imperial Cult," 255–56. According to Zheng Xuan, sacrifices to the heavenly deities were to be performed on a circular mound during the winter solstice, ZLZY:33.1559.
[71] Wilson, "Imperial Cult," 251; Kleeman, "Licentious Cults," 190.
[72] 禋，芬芳之祭。SSZS:19.417.
[73] 禋之言煙，周人尚臭，煙氣之臭聞者。ZLZY:33.1559.

sources previous to the Eastern Han, paying specific attention to the relationship of the rite to sacrificial smoke and fragrant odors.[74]

According to Paul Vogt, the *yin* sacrifice is absent from Shang oracle bone inscriptions, but appears on Western Zhou bronzes where it seems to refer to ancestral offerings in general. Moreover, in more specific textual contexts it appears to refer to livestock sacrifice and, importantly, to libation offerings.[75] To this we can add that in two separate passages from the *Rites of Zhou*, the *yin* sacrifice is closely associated with "luminous water and fire" (*ming shui hou* 明水火).[76] Commentarial traditions treat this as referring to the use of a burning-glass for harnessing sunlight to make fire as well as the use of a mirror to capture dew and collect water.[77] This particular combination of fire craft and water collection implies the processes of cooking, steaming, or even alcohol fermentation, a reasonable assumption given the sacrifice's association with libation offerings. According to Constance Cook, *yin* "came to mean pure and clean" and could thus refer directly to a "refined clear wine," as suggested by the graph's incorporation of the "wine" (*you* 酉) semantic.[78] Despite Zheng Xuan's reading of the *yin* sacrifice as associated with smoke, his

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[74] The *Record of Rites* is the most composite work of the Three Ritual Canons and was compiled during the Han dynasty from earlier materials and purported to preserve description of authentic Zhou rituals. Unfortunately, the precise dating of individual segments and chapters remains contentious, see comments in Loewe, *Early Chinese Texts*, 293–97.

[75] See comments in Paul Nicholas Vogt, "Between Kin and King: Social Aspects of Western Zhou Ritual" (Ph.D. dissertation, Columbia University, 2012), 182–83. By focusing on Western Zhou epigraphy, Paul Vogt's work is an important corrective to understanding of ancient ritual solely through the Three Ritual Canons and their commentaries.

[76] ZLZY:49.2428 and ZLZY:66.3324–3326, trans. Biot, *Le Tcheou-li*, Vol. 2, 90 and 315–16, respectively. For example, in the description of the duties of the Grand Invoker (*dazhu* 大祝), we are told that when one performs the great yin sacrifice one "takes luminous water and fire and invokes the honorable names [of the spirits]" 執明水火而號祝。ZLZY:49.2428. Zheng Xuan claims that "luminous" refers to "jade[-like] purity" (*guijie* 圭絜), but I do not understand the import of this clarification, see ZLZY:49.2428.

[77] ZLZY:70.3505. This is discussed under the Officer of Fire (*si xuan shi* 司烜氏), see translation in Biot, *Le Tcheou-li*, Vol. 2, 381–82 and brief discussion in Lin Sujuan, "Qiwei, qifen, qi zhi tonggan xian Qin jili yishi zhong 'qi' de shensheng tiyan, shenti ganzhi yu jiaohua yihan," *Qinghua xuebao* 43, no. 3 (2013): 395.

[78] Constance A. Cook, *Death in Ancient China: The Tale of One Man's Journey* (Leiden: Brill, 2006), 74–75.

interpretation of "luminous water and fire" as associated with food or drink preparation is clear: "The Officer of Fire gathers the *qi* of the sun and moon and uses them for *zheng* [i.e., steamed or fermented] offerings."[79]

A parallel tradition of interpretation for the *yin* sacrifice appears in the *Discourses of the States* (*Guoyu* 國語) of the Warring States, where it is glossed as "making offerings with a concentrated [i.e., pure/sincere] intention (*jingyi* 精意)."[80] This interpretation shifts the focus away from the external performances of the ritual officiant toward his internal disposition and ritual purity. This focus on internal states was adopted by pioneering linguist Xu Shen 許慎 (c. 55–c. 149) for his influential lexicography, *Explaining Graphs and Analyzing Characters* (*Shuowen jiezi* 說文解字). This text glosses *yin* as a "pure sacrifice" (*jiesi* 潔祀) and cites the above definition from the *Discourse of the States*.[81] These conceptualizations also seem to have influenced other commentators who choose to describe the *yin* sacrifice in terms of expressing reverence (*jing* 敬) to the spirits.[82]

These dual streams of interpretation, one regarding ceremonial activity and the other regarding ceremonial intent, need not be mutually exclusive. Nevertheless, as Cook points out, the interpretation of *yin* as related to smoke comes well after the *Discourses of the States*

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[79] 司烜所共日月之氣，以給烝享。ZLZY:49.2428. *Zheng* itself has a long and complex history, but seems to be related to harvest rituals, a point we will return to below.

[80] 精意以享，禋也。GYJX:1.31. It should be noted that *jing* 精 ("concentrated") is often paired with *jie* 潔 [or 絜] ("pure") in the *Discourse of the States* and were treated as roughly synonymous. Moreover, *jie* and *yin* can be found paired together ("*yin* purification" 禋潔。GYJX:18.513) and were used as apparent substitutes for one another ("purify the sweet alcohol" 潔其酒醴。GYJX:2.59 and "'*yin*' the sweet alcohol" 禋其酒醴 。GYJX:18.519). The *Discourses of the States* is often considered an informal commentary on the *Spring and Autumn Annals* (*Chunqiu* 春秋), thus forming a pair with the more formal *Zuo Commentary*, and was likely compiled during the Warring States period (475–221 BCE), possibly in the south, see Loewe, *Early Chinese Texts*, 263–68.

[81] 潔祀也。一曰精意以享為禋。SWJZ:1.2.

[82] For example, the commentary to the *Book of Odes* glosses *yin* as "to pay respect" 禋，敬。MSZY:17.1137.

frames it as concern for ritual purity (or even as a purifying ritual) and to libation sacrifices.[83] Critically, nowhere in the pre-imperial record is the use of aromatic smoke explicitly related to this sacrifice. It is only with the exegesis of Zheng Xuan that we see *yin* glossed as "a word for smoke" and described as a "sacrifice of fragrances." Even in such cases, Zheng Xuan still defines a key element of the sacrificial rite as presenting slaughtered livestock since he equates the *yin* sacrifice with the great sacrifices. This interpretation is in better alignment with the claim that "Zhou valued smell," since as we will see below, the smell that was valued was unequivocally the aroma of flesh offerings, not incense. The particular significance of smoke for Zheng Xuan may simply be what we would characterize as folk etymology: the graph for *yin* 禋 looks like the graph for smoke (*yan* 煙).

Turning our attention to the *chai* and *liao* sacrifices, in contrast to the *yin* sacrifice, both of these rites have an epigraphic record that can be traced to the Shang. Moreover, these sacrifices can be more confidently linked to burning sacrificial offerings in the pre-imperial period. The word *chai* is also directly used to refer to kindling in the Three Ritual Canons, such as in the phrase *fan chai* 燔柴, "to burn firewood," while *liao* is recorded in over nine hundred oracle bone inscriptions, developing an association in the Western Zhou with fiery celebrations for military victories, including the presentation of vanquished enemies' severed ears. Depending on the source, the recipients of these sacrifices differed from those noted in the *Rites of Zhou*, with the *chai* commonly targeting Heaven and the *liao* targeting a wide range of nature spirits and human ancestors.[84]

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[83] Cook, *Death in Ancient China*, 75n.119.

[84] Summarizing comments in Vogt, "Between Kin and King," 111–15, 346–50. According to Paul Vogt, while the *liao* sacrifice is clearly established in the epigraphic record, the use of the word *chai* during the Zhou to refer to a type of offering, "rests on very shaky ground," see Vogt, 349. The "Methods of Offering" (*jifa* 祭法) chapter of the Record of Rites contains a passage stating the "burning of firewood" (*fan chai*) was made as an

Zheng Xuan never isolates either of these rites individually in his commentary to highlight an olfactory dimension, yet he clearly considers the tripartite clustering of the *yin*, *chai*, and *liao* sacrifices to be defined by "amassing firewood" (*ji chai* 積柴) and thus by reasonable implication, creating fire and smoke.[85] Zheng Xuan's rough contemporaries echoed similar beliefs. Ma Rong 馬融 (79–166) notes the *chai* sacrifice involved "amassing firewood, adding a sacrificial animal atop, and igniting it."[86] Equally, Gao You 高誘 (c. 168–212) elaborates on the *liao* sacrificial method by claiming it involves "amassing firewood, placing jade and a sacrificial animal atop, and igniting it to cause the smoky vapors to ascend."[87]

Given the clear presence of fire and smoke during these sacrificial offerings, a few thorny questions remain. For one, what role does smell play in these affairs and should it be considered central to their efficacy? Moreover, what materials could impart a detectable odor to these rites? When focusing on the explanations in the Han commentarial record, we can conclude that none of the prescribed oblations outlined in the *Rites of Zhou* – whether livestock, jade, or silk – would be considered "incense" in the normative medieval Chinese sense of the word.

From a more speculative vantage, we could shift our focus to the type of wood kindling used for the sacrificial pyres. As it happens, the *Book of Odes* identifies a pair of

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offering to Heaven, see LJZS:46.3444. For further comments on *chai* and mountain sacrifices, see Sterckx, *Food, Sacrifice, Sagehood*, 96n.39.

[85] Zheng Xuan glosses the term "amassing" (*ji* 積) as "amassing firewood [as in the] *yin* sacrifice, 'amassed' *liao*, and 'actual' *chai*" 積，積柴，禋祀，槱燎，實柴。ZLZY:57.2884.

[86] 祭時积柴加牲其上而燔之。As cited in Zhang Xiuhua, "Cong jinwen cailiao kan 'yin,' 'chai,' 'liao' sanshong jili," *Mudanjiang daxue xuebao* 18, no. 2 (2009): 3. Ma Rong's comments are included in *Analyzing Graphs of the Classics* (*Jingdian jiewen* 經典解文).

[87] 积聚柴薪，置壁與牲於上而燎之，升其烟氣。As cited in Xu, "Gudai liaoji," 138. Gao You's comments are found in his commentary to the *Mr. Lu's Spring and Autumn Annals* (*Lüshi chunqiu* 呂氏春秋).

trees used for the *liao* sacrifice as the *zuo* 柞 and *yu* 棫, both are commonly identified as species of oak (genus *Quercus*).[88] While oak species would be sufficient to fuel large, smoky bonfires, it remains questionable if they could impart a significant olfactory dimension since they lack naturally fragrant oils or terpene compounds. If we choose to look beyond oaks, either due to the inaccurate identification of *zuo* and *yu* or the overly simplified description of the *liao* sacrifice in the *Book of Odes*, other possibilities emerge. By gleaning other references to trees in the *Book of Odes* we can create a botanical snapshot of the forests in the North China Plain during the early to mid-Zhou era, the period when the *Book of Odes* started to crystalize. The text describes ancient forests populated by broad-leaved deciduous trees and punctuated by several coniferous species, such as pine, cypress, juniper, and fir.[89] Geoarchaeological sporopollen analysis, a technique that looks at ancient spore and pollen samples recovered from sediment cores, confirms these ancient forests were composed mainly of species of oak mixed with species of pine.[90] Thus, it is possible that a variety of coniferous tree, infused with highly fragrant essential oils and resin, could have alternatively been used for these burnt sacrifices, providing a characteristic "evergreen" smell.

I highlight such a speculation because I also want to underscore a point of methodology. Even if we conclude the plausibility of a fragrant pine species being burned as part of these sacrificial rites, the scent of evergreen or any other odor delivered by smoke is never noted in our ancient sources. This should matter to us. Coming up with plausible

[88] Xu, "Gudai liaoji." The identity of these two trees remains contentious since their description is often imprecise and irregular. Based on the varied descriptions, it is believed that they belong to the genus *Quercus* or are, on the other hand, a kind of small shrubby evergreen. Xu Ke prefers the former interpretation given the described use of these trees as firewood.
[89] The most commonly attested tree in the *Book of Odes* is mulberry, suggesting its cultural importance to the authors,
[90] Xu, "Gudai liaoji."

material sources for smell should not blind us to which odors were actually salient to the authors of our texts. It would seem neither the smell of kindling, regardless of wood, nor any of the prescribed sacrificial items – save animal flesh, as we shall see – were deemed ritually important in regards to their smell. This does not mean fire and smoke were not part of ancient sacrificial religion, only that the creation of *scented* smoke, especially if conflated with the medieval activity of burning incense, was never an expressed goal in ritual texts previous to the idiosyncratic commentary of Zheng Xuan.[91]

Let us turn to one final scented material noted in our sources that deserves closer scrutiny, if only for the simple reason it is often treated in modern scholarship as ancient incense. Of all the sacrificial items burned in early China, none appeared more pungent than a class of plants now categorized under the genus *Artemisia*. The temperate grassland and wetland vegetation of North China produced numerous species of *Artemisia*, of which nine specimens appear in the *Book of Odes* alone.[92] Yamada Keiji has noted the differences in regional uses of two of the most important varietal types, mugwort (*ai* 艾) and southernwood (*xiao* 蕭). He notes that the people of the state of Chu in the south wore mugwort dolls at their waist and hung the plant on their doors as a type of demonifugic and therapeutic

[91] This is not necessarily a point of interpretation, but a limit of evidence, and a more comprehensive investigation of ancient texts, excavated manuscripts, and tomb assemblages may prove my claims inaccurate. Until such a time, we should be careful in interpreting ancient *yin* sacrifice solely through the lens of Zheng Xuan as scholar of Chinese smell culture frequently do. For example, Olivia Milburn cites a passage from the *Zuo Commentary* describing the spirits enjoying the smoky scent of the *yin* sacrifice. Based on this interpretation she also comments the smoke was being used to communicate with gods and spirits, Milburn, "Aromas," 456. A better interpretation would read the *yin* sacrifice in this passage as a libation sacrifice, possibly poured on the ground, and that the aroma of the alcohol was being enjoyed, or even consumed, by the spirits. The notions of spiritual enjoyment, spiritual smelling, and spiritual consumption are all implied by the term *xin* in this passage, an important point we will return to later in this chapter.

[92] Xu, "Gudai liaoji," 141. Plants in the *Book of Odes* that are often classified under the genus *Artemisia* include: *lou* 蔞, *fan* 蘩, *peng* 蓬, *ai* 艾, *xiao* 蕭, *hao* 蒿, *qin* 芩, *e* 莪, and *yu* 蔚. For a discussion of potential botanical identities, see Pan Fujun, *Shijing zhiwu tujian* (Taibei: Matouying chuban, 2001), 28–29, 34–35, 56–57, 126–27, 128–29, 220–21, 222–23, 234–35, and 246–47, respectively.

fumigant. Moreover, according to Yamada, this stood in contrast to northern ritualists who burned southernwood in their attempts to please the spirits.[93] A similar observation was first made by Zheng Xuan who commented in his notes to the *Book of Odes* that "southernwood is for sacrifice, while mugwort is for curing disease."[94] At first glance, both plants seem to have been prized for their aromas and their stunning religio-medical efficacy. This is a point underscored by Yamada: "one was used as incense to beckon the gods, whereas the other was used to drive away demons that caused illness."[95]

Focusing our investigation on the odorant more influential in the north, southernwood was considered integral for sacrifice according to Zheng Xuan. He argued its collection constituted a "great affair" (*dashi* 大事), a subtle allusion to the idea that "the great affairs of the state were sacrifice and warfare."[96] Furthermore, both Ding Wei and Ye Tinggui highlight southernwood as emblematic of the ancient Chinese smellscape, thus casting it as what we might call a proverbial "archetypal smell" of antiquity. Given its historical importance, it is also possible that southernwood should be also considered a kind of ancient incense that "beckoned the gods"? A more detailed survey of evidence suggests this is not the case.[97]

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[93] Keiji Yamada, *The Origins of Acupuncture, Moxibustion, and Decoction* (Kyoto: International Research Center for Japanese Studies, 1998), 67–69. *Ai* is often identified as *Artemisia argyi*, see Pan, *Shijing*, 126–27. It should be noted that the mugwort dolls cited by Yamada only first appear in a sixth century work, see footnote 217. *Xiao* is sometimes identified as *Artemisia subdigitata* (or variously *Artemisia dubia var. subdigitata*), see Pan, 128–29. Though imprecise, I have preferred to maintain the terminology of James Legge, Arthur Waley, Joseph Needham, and others, who translate *xiao* by the common nomenclature "southernwood."

[94] 蕭為祭祀，艾為療疾。MSZY:1.580. According to the *Rites of Zhou*, a special Officer of the Fields (*dianshi* 甸師) was in charge of growing and harvesting southernwood and cogongrass for state sacrifices, see my comments at HC#36.

[95] Yamada, *Origins of Acupuncture*, 69.

[96] This was noted in Zheng Xuan's commentary to the *Book of Odes*, see MSZY:4.703.

[97] A similar argument could be made against mugwort, which is perhaps most widely known as the primary ingredient used in moxibustion therapy. I have not yet found any pre-imperial work that attributes positive olfactory qualities – *xiang* or otherwise – to mugwort when it is burned. Moreover, if we consider the practice of moxibustion as developing out of older demonifugic techniques, mugwort's fragrance may not have been as important as its ability to produce semi-noxious smoke, a point we will return to in Chapter 3, Section 4.

First, in terms of textual precedent, there is no pre-imperial source that refers to southernwood as a type of *xiang*, i.e., incense (although one might justly infer from passages discussing southernwood that it possessed *xiang*, i.e., fragrance). This is also true for later medieval incense catalogues. While some compilers may speak of southernwood in their prefatory remarks to contextualize the history of scent culture prior to the Song, this plant is never included among the individual entries that comprise their inventory of incense raw materials. Second, in terms of archaeobotanical evidence recovered from ancient censers, no *Artemisia* species have yet to be found (although, very few aromatic *flora* overall have been identified).

If we turn to textual descriptions of how southernwood was used in classical sacrifice, we encounter an important piece of information: it was not burned in isolation. Often, the herbaceous plant was combined with the visceral fat of a slaughtered animal. Only after the special mixture was prepared could it be burned as an aromatic offering to the spirits. From the perspective of material culture, this mixture would approximate scented lamp oil or, perhaps, a tallow candle. The *locus classicus* for these instructions is the "Birth of the People" (*shengmin* 生民) in the *Book of Odes*, a hymn dating to the early Zhou. A single verse simply notes the following: "we gather southernwood and offer [animal] fat."[98] Zheng Xuan summarily expounds upon the ritual sequence as such: "When coming to the time [of sacrifice], take the southernwood herb and the fat of the sacrificial livestock and burn them to stimulate the location of the spirits; this allows their fragrances to be smelled."[99] Such an

[98] 取萧祭脂。MSZY:17.1144. The dating of the "Birth of the People" is noted in David R. Knechtges, "Questions about the Language of Sheng Min," in *Ways with Words: Writing About Reading Texts from Early China*, ed. Peter Bol et al. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000), 14. This poem is Mao no. 245.
[99] 至其時，取蕭草與祭牲之脂，爇之於行神之位。馨香既聞。MSZY:17.1144. Such a view was also reiterated in medieval commentaries on imperial histories, see Milburn, "Aromas," 457.n72.

understanding may have been extrapolated from another passage in the *Record of Rites* that explicitly directs southernwood to be mixed (*he* 合) with millet grains before being offered as *yang* offerings, i.e., burnt offerings.[100] Overall, in the context of state sponsored sacrifice, southernwood was treated as a kind of fragrance additive or food seasoning to be mixed with animal fat or sacrificial grains, not as an individual type of "incense." Moreover, as we will demonstrate in the following section, the concern of ancient ritualists was not to simply create scented smoke, but to deploy food aromas that could be consumed by the spirits.

In summary, while some scholars point to the burning sacrifices of *yin*, *chai*, and *liao* as integral to an early Chinese religious culture around smell, surviving documents have proven less likely to bear this out. Of the three ancient sacrifices, only the *yin* sacrifice has an explicitly established relationship to smell and that comes from the commentarial gloss of Zheng Xuan, a figure who lived at the end of the Eastern Han. While it is believed that Zheng Xuan may have fleshed out terse root passages with information gleaned from older "unidentified bodies of lore," it is also possible he made such a claim based upon his personal experience of a quickly changing world of smell.[101] Andrew Plaks offers this astute note regarding Zheng Xuan's exegetical habits: "one senses that the details he brings to bear in his elaborations may reflect the *realia* of the political, social, cultural, and especially religious life of his own latter-day world in late Han times."[102] By the time Zheng Xuan was composing his learned commentaries on state ritual praxis, the Han empire was undergoing an expansion in the kinds of aromatics that were available, especially in contrast to earlier

[100] LJZY:26.3157. This passage will be analyzed in more depth below.
[101] Zheng Xuan's potential use of older lore is noted in Andrew H. Plaks, "Zheng Xuan's Commentary on the Zhouli," in *Statecraft and Classical Learning: The Rituals of Zhou in East Asian History*, ed. Benjamin A. Elman and Martin Kern (Leiden: Brill, 2010), 165n.22.
[102] Plaks, 165.

eras during which works like the *Book of Odes* or *Rites of Zhou* were largely composed. The possibility cannot be rejected that Zheng Xuan's gloss of the *yin* sacrifice as a "sacrifice of fragrances" spoke more to the importance of smell – and possibly, scented smoke – in his contemporary world than it did to the original compilers of ancient ritual treatises.[103] On a final note, it is worth highlighting that later medieval incense specialists attribute remarks on a perfume blending recipe, known as the "Aromatic Recipe of the Han Palaces" (*Hangong xiangfa* 漢宮香方), to Zheng Xuan. This attribution has been convincingly demonstrated as spurious and the recipe itself should properly be viewed as a product of Song smell culture.[104] It still nevertheless reveals a late medieval view of treating Zheng Xuan at the head of a long history of incense specialists.

Of the available sensorial impressions stimulated through the creation of smoke, the olfactory dimension may have been less important than the visual in ritual works from the pre-imperial period. The ascent and dispersion of smoke naturally paired with a generic belief that the realm of the ancestors and spirits was located above or in the heavens. The real-world historical performance of smoke-producing sacrifices were almost certainly odorous affairs, but such olfactory realities did not typically cross the threshold of significance for being memorialized in the records of proper ritual performance. If we want to examine the olfactory imagination of ancient China, we should not only look towards burnt sacrifices as potential sites of olfactory meaning, but also towards blood and food

[103] As I suggested above, one may also take a less critical view of Zheng Xuan and interpret the totality of his comments on the *yin* sacrifice as referring to the creation of food aromas, with the focus on smoke reflecting his personal etymology of *yin*. In any regard, a brief scan through his sizable commentarial corpus does not reveal any clear reference to burning incense – a position that makes sense since the purpose of ancient sacrifice was not to send smoke to the ancestors and spirits, but to feed them.
[104] Liu, *Songdai Xiangpu*, 253–58. I return to this recipe in footnote 917.

sacrifices, where the sense of smell was more readily noted in our sources and closely associated with (and yet also carefully distinguished from) gustatory concerns.

3. The Scents of Sacrifice – Blood, Grain, and Alcohol Offerings

Returning to our passage from the *Rites of Zhou*, we continue with the listing of sacrificial rites overseen by the Grand Ancestral Elder, now turning to offerings of flesh:

> They use blood sacrifice to make offerings to the [spirits of] Soil and Millet, the Five Sacrifices [to the Tutelary Deities], and the Five Sacred Mountains. They use burial and submersion [sacrifices] to make offerings to the mountains, forests, rivers, and marshes. They use the slicing and dismembering [sacrifice] to make offerings to the hundred things of the Four Directions; and they use the dismembering, blood and raw flesh, and libation [sacrifices] to make offerings to the former kings.[105]
> 以血祭祭社稷，五祀，五嶽。以貍沈祭山林川澤，以疈辜祭四方百物。以肆獻祼享先王，以饋食享先王.

Reading through the names and descriptions of each sacrifice, it is clear that these were gruesome events.[106] Sacrificial animals were slaughtered, sliced, and dismembered as blood, flesh, and fat were apportioned out according to the sumptuary regulations of the respective rite. In their performance, the burnt sacrifices overlap with blood sacrifices since they both involved the killing of an animal and can involve the use of fire, but following Zheng Xuan's lead I want to separate out those rituals were smoke formed an integral component to the ceremony from other rituals that afford a special focus on blood, meat, and other animal products. Additionally, because some of this meat was also cooked, either through roasting or in stews, I will also talk about blood sacrifices as part of food sacrifices more broadly,

[105] ZLZY:18.1635, cf. trans. Biot, *Le Tcheou-li*, Vol. 1, 419; cf. trans. Poo, "Early China," 285. Medieval commentaries note that *li* 貍 ("fox") should be understood as *mai* 埋 ("to bury"), e.g., ZLZY:18.1635.
[106] The *Rites of Zhou* passage finishes by listing four seasonal sacrifices to the former kings. I will not cover these here due to the great disparity how they were performed and which sacrificial offerings were used.

including the use of grains and ales. As we shall see, there is kind of olfactory and ritual logic that runs through all of these blood, food, and drink offerings that may not be readily apparent.

Like the burnt sacrifices that were used to propitiate the heavenly spirits residing in the sky or celestial abodes above, these sacrifices focused on the other two classifications of deities, namely, the terrestrial spirits (*di qi* 地祇) and human ancestors (*ren gui* 人鬼), sometimes rendered as manes, who presumably resided on a lower plain. Thus, a loose logic continues between the method of sacrifice, here the display of goods in the terrestrial sphere, and the presumed abode of the divine recipient, making sure the spirits have optimal access to the offering. Turning again to Zheng Xuan, this rationale is apparent when he notes that "making offerings to the mountains and forests is called burial, and to the rivers and marshes is called submersion. The concealment [of the offering] follows the nature [of the spirit]."[107] These specific sacrifices involved the burial or submersion of blood, with the method of sacrifice dependent upon the dominant natural characteristics of the recipient, here based on earth for the spirits of mountains and forests or water for the spirits of rivers and marshes.[108] As for the other sacrifices, the offerings were most commonly displayed in ritual vessels and left open to the air or cooked with portions used as part of mortuary banquets.

Zheng Xuan carefully highlights the importance of smell during the performance of blood sacrifices: "*yin* sacrifices originate from [the use of] blood, [the spirits] value the aroma of its *qi*."[109] Jia Gongyan clarifies these remarks by stating, "The counterpart to Heaven are the *yang* sacrifices which originate from smoke, and [the spirits] value the aroma

[107] 祭山林曰埋，川澤曰沈，順其性之含藏。ZLZY:33.1579.
[108] On the use of blood for these sacrifices, see Wilson, "Imperial Cult," 256n.14.
[109] 陰祀自血起，貴氣臭也。ZLZY:33.1579.

of *qi* just the same."[110] This distinction between the dual classifications of *yin* and *yang* sacrifice may be related to a passage in the *Record of Rites* which claims that "sacrifice seeks the meaning of *yin-yang*." [111]

While the importance of smell is overlooked in the *Rites of Zhou* when describing burnt sacrifices, the evidence is quite clear in support for the salience of smell when involving livestock sacrifice and ritual libations. As discussed in the *Record of Rites*, the "Suburban Sacrifice of a Single Victim" (*Jiao te sheng* 郊特牲) chapter mentions different kinds of sacrifice and unambiguously highlights the significance of odors in ritual performance:

> The suburban sacrifice has blood, the grand banquet has raw flesh, the 'three offerings' has boiled meat[112], and the 'one offering' has well-done meat. These utmost offerings are not indulged for their taste, but valued for their *qi* aroma. When feudal lords are guests, libations of *yu*-spiced *chang*-ale are used. These libations are used for their aroma.[113]
> 郊血，大饗腥，三獻爓，一獻孰；至敬不饗味而貴氣臭也。諸侯為賓，灌用鬱鬯。灌用臭也。

As this passage relates, the various offerings of blood, flesh, and meat are not presented because of their perceived impact on the palate, but due to their influence on the nose. This includes the use of sacrificial *chang*-ale made of millet, which was also classically prized for its distinctive aroma. Zheng Xuan's comments on a later related passage in the "Suburban Sacrifice" inform us that, in regard to slaughtered animals, only blood, raw flesh, and boiled meat are ritually used for their *qi* (referring to *qi* aroma [*qichou* 氣臭] in the passage above),

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[110] 對天為陽祀自煙起，貴氣臭同也。ZLZY:33.1583.
[111]故祭，求諸陰陽之義也。LJZS:26.3156. In contrast, the root text of the *Rites of Zhou* makes a single distinction between *yin* and *yang* sacrifices based on the coloring of animals used during the sacrificial rite, ZLZY:23.1105.
[112] See the highly informative discussion of *yan*, "boiled meat," and *shu* 孰, "well-done meat," in Boileau, "Ritual Elaborations," 99–108.
[113] LJZS:25.3129. Modified translation of Boileau, "Ritual Elaborations," 93–94; Sterckx, *Food, Sacrifice, Sagehood*, 85; Wilson, "Imperial Cult," 259–60.

precisely because these viands remain uncooked (*wei shu* 未熟).[114] The exegetical concern over the state of the offerings introduces a problem, it requires well-cooked meat, included among the offerings used for the *qi* aroma in the *Record of Rites*, to be partitioned off from the three other uncooked items.

While there may be clues gleaned from a structuralist distinction between raw and cooked food, the later Sui-Tang scholar Kong Yingda 孔穎達 (574–648) mobilizes a different theoretical system: spatial relationships. Kong Yingda notes, "that which is proximal is vulgar and that which is distal is venerated; these issues are not the same."[115] He continues, "the affair of consuming [well-cooked] meat is close to human feelings, while the consumption of blood is the most distant [from human feelings]."[116] Following from Kong Yingda's analysis, those spirits who are distant, and consequently bearing the least affinity to humans, deserve the highest veneration. Because of this, the food that is in its raw, less palatable form (i.e., the state most distant from human gustatory enjoyment) should be reserved for those same highly regarded distal spirits.

Drawing upon the ideas presented by Zheng Xuan and Kong Yingda, Gilles Boileau offers a synthetic view of blood sacrifice. The most distant and highest ranked spirits are placed on one end of a spectrum where blood, flesh, and boiled meat constitute the most representative class of offerings. As *uncooked* offerings, these three items are particularly noted for their *qi*-aroma. This is in contrast to the more immediate and proximate ancestors who are presented with well-cooked meat, which, by contrast, is more closely associated with

[114]血，腥，爓三者而祭，是用氣也。以其並未熟，故云用氣。LJZS:26.3157.
[115] 近者為褻，遠者為敬，其事非一。LJZS:24.3116.
[116] 肉於人食啗之事，於人情為近，血於人食啗最遠。 LJZS:24.3117. This passage is briefly discussed by Boileau, "Ritual Elaborations," 96n.25.

the sense of taste. This outlines a sensory hierarchy that positions smell above taste, just as the higher, more revered deities take precedence over close ancestors.[117] The primary purpose for displaying a sacrificial feast of raw and uncooked foods was not to appeal to the sense of taste, as might be assumed by humans participating in the banquet, but to stimulate the sense of smell by diffusing the aromas to the higher spirits and drawing them closer to partake in the offerings. In other words, the ontological standing of the recipient of the offering, *vis-à-vis* their proximal relationship to humans, determined their primary sensual relationship to the sacrificial rite. A slightly more detailed version of Boileau's tabulations would look like this:[118]

Table 1.2: Sensorial and Spatial Relationships Between Recipients of Sacrifice

Relationship//Domain	**Heaven**	**Close Ancestors**
Spatial relationship	distal	proximal
Temporal relationship	ancient past	recent past/present
Social relationship	unfamiliar/venerated	familiar/vulgar
State of offerings	raw (blood, raw flesh, and boiled meat)	cooked (well-done meat)
Affective domain	grotesque (not eaten by humans)	pleasurable (eaten by humans)
Sensorial domain	smell	taste (smell)

It should be noted again that the *Record of Rites* claims that blood, raw meat, boiled meat, *and cooked meat* are all valued for their smell, it is only Zheng Xuan, and subsequently Kong Yingda, who treat sacrificial cooked meat as distinctive. Nevertheless, such analyses provide interpretive leverage and the comparison between smelling and tasting is instructive. As such, I believe the phenomenological operations of different sensations have the ability to

[117] Boileau, "Ritual Elaborations," 92–96. It appears that blood and raw meat were offered as part of every sacrifice involving oxen, thus multiple classes of spirits may have been called in each type of sacrifice.
[118] Boileau, 96. I have added more detail to the table composed by Boileau, including labeling the specific kinds of relationships and domains at play.

motivate cultural meaning. More specifically, the sensorium can act as a structural metaphor and give shape to, or affirm certain aspects about, complex social and religious phenomena. For example, it is frequently reiterated that the sense of smell operates distally, namely that the nose detects odors from objects at a distance without direct physical contact.[119] This stands in contrast to taste which is persistently proximal because the palate needs to come into contact with food and its flavors. The ancestors and spirits for whom smell is more closely associated remain the ones who are the most distant and unfamiliar, while the spirits and banqueters aligned with taste are conceived as more proximal to, or as constituent of, the human realm. Consequently, as the offerings are more thoroughly heated, cooked, and transformed, they move along a spectrum from smell to taste, making them more suitable for human palatability and, ultimately, consumption.

Later in the "Suburban Sacrifice" chapter we are given a further clue as to why not all spirits are not attracted to food through taste like humans. It presents a series of things that spirits are known to enjoy and contrasts them to human desires which are often conceived as oppositional. For example, it explains that while spirits enjoy ancestral temples, these are not spaces which are comfortable for people to inhabit and live. The passage ends with the summation: "that which communicates with the spirits cannot be identical with what is meant to be comfortable or pleasurable [for humans]."[120] By overturning the expectations of what spirits should enjoy if they were human, the realm of spirits is set off as distinctive by not only different types of foods they should receive, but also by the sensory means in which

[119] The question over the "physical contact" of various senses is socially and culturally determined. James McHugh has shown that classical Indian epistemologists conceived smell as a "contact sense," yet it nevertheless still functioned distally, see McHugh, *Sandalwood and Carrion*, 25–29.
[120] 所以交於神明者，不可以同於所安樂之義也。LJZY:26.3151.

they should receive them. In other words, that which is unpalatable and noxious to humans remains pleasurable and fragrant to spirits.

Returning again to the "Suburban Sacrifice" chapter, the passage continues on to chronicle the historical shifts in the methods of sacrificial performance, this time suggesting a fluid hierarchy of the senses as one moves diachronically across dynastic changes:

> At the sacrifices during the time of the Yu clan [i.e., the time of Shun 舜], the use of *qi*-aroma was considered most important. In the offerings of blood, raw flesh, or boiled meat, [all] were used due to their *qi*-aroma. The people of Yin [Shang dynasty] considered sound the most important. Before there was any smell or flavor [produced from the sacrifices], they would cause the music to resound clearly. Only after there had been three musical performances would they go out and welcome the sacrificial victim [for slaughter]. The roar of the music was the means by which they summoned all between heaven and earth. The people of Zhou considered aroma the most important. In libations they used the aroma of *chang*-ale. *Yu*-spice is mixed with the *chang*-ale and their aromas, which are *yin*, reach down to the deep springs. The libations are poured with a jade ladle[121] so as to use the *qi* of the jade. After the libations were poured they would welcome the sacrificial animal [and slaughter it] to offer its *yin qi*. Southernwood is mixed with glutinous millet and panicled millet and their aromas, which are *yang*, reach up the walls of the hall. Therefore, once the offerings are made, they would burn southernwood mixed with grain.[122]
> 有虞氏之祭也，尚用氣；血腥爓祭，用氣也。殷人尚聲，臭味未成，滌蕩其聲；樂三闋，然後出迎牲。聲音之號，所以詔告於天地之間也。周人尚臭，灌用鬯臭，鬱合鬯，臭陰達於淵泉。灌以圭璋，用玉氣也。既灌然後迎牲，致陰氣也。蕭合黍稷，臭陽達於墻屋。故既奠，然後焫蕭合羶薌[123]。

This passage is particularly rich in its detail of ancient odorants and deserves careful analysis. In its most simple form, this passage outlines a change in the prioritization of the senses

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[121] I follow the commentarial tradition in reading *gui zhang* 圭璋 as a ladle with a jade handle (*gui zan* 圭瓚), see LJZY:26.3157.

[122] LJZY:26.3157; cf. trans. Sterckx, *Food, Sacrifice, Sagehood*, 92–93; Milburn, "Aromas," 455–56.

[123] The meaning of these last two graphs, *shan xiang*$_1$ 羶薌, have been contested since the Eastern Han. As they stand without elaboration, the graphs indicate two basic scent terms (what we may call "olfactemes"), with *shan* (also written 膻) sometimes identified as a "rank ovine smell" and *xiang*$_1$ as the "aroma of grains." Zheng Xuan claims, however, that *shan* is a phonetic error for *xin* 馨, and notes that *xiang*$_1$ is a homophone of *xiang*$_2$ 香, thus rendering *shan xiang*$_1$ as *xin xiang*$_2$ which simply means "fragrant," see LJZY:26.3158. Kong Yingda further claims that *xin xiang*$_2$ properly refers to glutinous millet and panicled millet (*shuji*), see LJZY:26.3158. While this could be seen a series of labyrinthine interpretations, it loosely echoes a statement made elsewhere in the root text of the *Record of Rites* that states "glutinous millet (*shu* 黍) is called "fragrant mixture" (*xiang*$_1$*he* 薌合), see LJZY:5.2747. The relevant comment of Kong Yingda states that millet (*shu* 秫) is pliable and easily worked into mixtures, as well as exceptionally fragrant, thus motivating its variant name as "fragrant mixture" and presumably lending to it being mixed with southernwood in the passage from the "Suburban Sacrifice." The overall impact of these interpretations provides a reading of the root passage where the directions for mixing southernwood with millet grain is stated twice.

during sacrificial performance, from smell, to sound, and back to smell again. These historical claims should not be read as authentic descriptions of the past, but as idealized projections of a ritual culture seeking to establish the legitimacy of its contemporary beliefs and practices. The *Record of Rites*, the text from which this passage is extracted, shows influence of ideas circulating during the Western Han, thus dating any specific passage can prove problematic and may be a composite of different eras.[124] I believe this passage reflects an emerging discourse on the role of sensation in sacrifice, specifically over the value of smell in relation to sound, or in particular the use of music (*yue* 樂), during the sacrificial rites to draw down the spirits.

The earliest period noted in the above passage shows a preference for uncooked offerings, here noted for their *qi*, or what I render as *qi*-aroma.[125] It is difficult to determine the precise import of *qi*, a notably ambiguous term, but given the context of the previous passage where sacrificial blood and meats are valued for its "*qi* aroma" (*qichou*) this may function as a shorthand for smell. Throughout the Warring States and early Han, physiological theories developed around the idea of "blood humor" (*xueqi* 血氣) which formed a pseudo-biological foundation for life (both animal and human) and was associated with mental functioning, affective temperament, and spiritual awareness.[126] Thus, here, *qi* might be portrayed as more of a bio-spiritual nutrient derived from animal flesh and blood than as a merely ephemeral smell, but it remains difficult to determine a conclusive

[124] The fact that Confucius is referred to frequently and reverentially suggests that this text was compiled during the process in which his stature was elevated, see Loewe, *Early Chinese Texts*, 295.
[125] I will later return to a discussion of why *qi* is intractably difficult to translate into a single English word, particularly given that it is deployed differently across physiological, cosmological, and sacrificial contexts.
[126] Roel Sterckx, *The Animal and the Daemon in Early China* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2002), 73–78.

reading.[127] In any regard, there is no need to take these interpretations as mutually exclusive, and I prefer to read *qi*, within certain ritual and sacrificial contexts, to have clear olfactory undertones.

The second period refers to the sacrifices during the Shang Dynasty and characterizes them as prioritizing music. Importantly, as the passage relates, music did not replace smell, it only preceded it in the sacrificial sequence. This third period forms an ideological pair with the second phase, when smell was re-prioritized with the use of sacrificial *chang*-ale, southernwood, and grains during the Zhou. While the commentarial tradition tends to read these changes in light of alternations between the cosmological pairing of *yin-yang*, I suggest reading this passage in a different light that converges on the total ritual sensorium. The creation of musical sounds and the production of aromas constituted two main elements of the ancient ritual repertoire caused the spirits to descend (*jiang shen* 降神).[128] This was an apparent necessary precedent for the rite to bring fecundity to the people. In this regard, spirits were considered analogous to humans in that both voluptuous smells and harmonious music could enhance their responsiveness to requests, just like pampered guests at a banquet.

This begs the question, why pair these two sensorial domains in the above passage? I suggest, just as noted above concerning smell, that sound primarily functions as a distal sense. In this regard, both smell and hearing can be imagined as a sensual conduit to a distal,

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[127] Mu-Chou Poo has made a similar claim, noting that *qi* in some contexts refers to smell, but also to the sense of breath and, by extension, to life-force, see Poo, "Early China," 293.

[128] Other similar phrases included "beseech the spirits" (*qiu shen* 求神) or "contact the spirits" (*zhi shen* 致神). Another attested means of attracting the attention of the spirits was through shamanic dance (*wu* 舞), thus adding a haptic and visual element to the ritual repertoire, see Constance A. Cook, "Moonshine and Millet: Feasting and Purification Rituals in Ancient China," in *Of Tripod and Palate: Food, Politics, and Religion in Traditional China*, ed. Roel Sterckx and Roel Sterckx (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), 15–16 and sources cited therein. Notably, as we will see next chapter, the performance of dancing women includes an olfactory aspect – they are holding scented plants.

and perhaps altogether different, plane of existence. Moreover, *unlike* smoke, both aromas and sounds traverse space without a visual trace, thus appearing to move between visible and invisible realms in order to call upon ephemeral spiritual benefactors. The sense of smell, and that of hearing, are especially appropriate for signaling transition, a point that is underscored by David Howes who has argued that "the sense of smell is the liminal sense *par excellence*," a claim that was based on earlier work on the perceived liminality of sound.[129] Overall, I believe the distal and non-visible phenomenal qualities of both olfaction and aurality helped forge them as a sensorial pairing in the above passage due to the peculiar power they were believed to have in summoning distal and equally non-visible spirits.

While sacrificial food remained a focus of these ritualized events, the proximal quality of gustation along with the fact that food never appeared to actually be consumed by the spirits—it was apportioned out to banquet guests or left to rot—always failed to align with the expectations of a spiritual world located far away and inhabited by shimmery, ephemeral entities. The sensorial qualities of smell and sound corresponded better with these expectations of non-human existence. Moreover, once realizing the sacrificial logic to pairing smell and sound, new insights can begin to reveal themselves. For example, the "King Wen" hymn in the *Book of Odes* claims that "High Heaven's communication is without sound, without smell."[130] While this has long been interpreted as representing the unfathomable will of Heaven, it is clear that the principal means of communication from humans to spirits, namely aurality and olfaction, simply do not work in the reverse; humans are left deaf and anosmic precisely because the spirits were known to hear and smell. In addition, the

[129] For Howes' quote and the context in which he proclaimed it, see Kenna, "Why Does Incense Smell Religious," 14.
[130] 上天之載，無聲無臭。MSZY:16.1087.

sacrificial paring of sight and sound may also explain why the verb *wen* 聞, for reasons not yet well understood, came to mean both "to hear" and "to smell," even though a simple graphic etymology depicts the gateway (*men* 門) of the ear (*er* 耳).[131]

The quintessential aromatic offering used to draw down the spirits in Shang inscriptions and early Zhou and Warring States texts was a spiced ale known as *chang* 鬯 (or 暢).[132] This was a fermented ale of dark millet, hence its alternate name, "dark millet *chang*" (*juchang* 秬鬯), to which an aromatic plant was added for flavor and smell.[133] This plant, called *yu* 鬱 (or variously 郁 and 欝), which Han commentators referred to as *yujin* 鬱金, or "Yu Gold," has been the subject of considerable scholarly debate, but many now identify it as a native species in the genus *Curcuma*, possibly wild turmeric.[134] At times, this sacrificial

[131] Jean Geaney notes that there is only one occurrence of *wen* meaning "to smell" in Warring States texts, see Jane Geaney, *On the Epistemology of the Senses in Early Chinese Thought* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2002), 191n.41. Besides indicating (neutral) odors in classical texts, *chou* also meant "to smell," as did *xiu* 嗅. In some contexts, *xin* 歆 also seems to refer to a kind of spiritual smelling, as will be discussed below.

[132] *Chang* is glossed as a type of *jiu* 酒, and while often translated as wine, many early Chinese fermentations were not made from fruit, but grains. In this context, ale is the preferable translation; see passing comments in Cook, "Moonshine and Millet," 18; Sterckx, *Food, Sacrifice, Sagehood*, 14. Debates eventually arose among medieval commentarial circles as to whether *chang* referred directly to a plant. For example, the subcommentary to the *Rites of Zhou* by Kong Yingda cites a weft-apocryphon as claiming "the *chang* herb grows in courtyards" 鬯草生庭, to which Kong Yingda explains as referring to the herb used to prepare *chang*-ale, i.e. *yujin*, or wild turmeric, see ZLZS:19.1663.

[133] *Ju* is one of many less common terms for a variety of millet that have no generally agreed upon botanical referents. The early lexicographic work, *Approaching Elegance* (*Erya* 爾雅), identifies *ju* simply as "black millet" 黑黍。EY:13.3487. *Explaining Graphs and Analyzing Characters*, under the variant *ju* 鬰, glosses the grain as "black millet with two grains in a single husk and used for fermentation" 黑黍也。一稈二米，以釀也。SWJZ:5.128. According to *Approaching Elegance*, however, having "two grains in a single husk" is a characteristic of a different kind of millet known as *pi* 秠, EY:13.3487; see also SWJZ:7.177. It appears the description of *ju* provided in *Explaining Graphs and Analyzing Characters* was copied by Zheng Xuan in his commentary to the *Rites of Zhou*, ZLZY:32.1502. No species of millet produces black grains, so I treat "black" here as referring to darker colored grains.

[134] For the identification of *yu* as *Curcuma aromatica* (wild turmeric) or *Curcuma longa* (common turmeric), see Pan, *Shijing*, 278–79; for more on the complex identity of Yu Gold in ancient and medieval sources, see my comments to Yu Gold Aromatic at HC#7.

libation is described as a "yellow liquid" (*huang liu* 黃流), presumably because of the hue imparted by this vivid vegetal additive.[135]

Kong Yingda described the process of making the ancient sacrificial libation as a means to amplify the scent of the plant and ale: "Boil the wild turmeric plant and mix it. Its *qi*-aroma is fragrant and will blend with the *chang*. Moreover, by mashing the wild turmeric [to extract the] juice and mixing it with the *chang* ale, one causes the fragrance to increase significantly."[136] The key botanical part of the wild turmeric used in the preparation process was almost certainly its fragrant, golden colored rhizome. Therefore, as Berthold Laufer has suggested, the addition of the suffix "gold" to the plant's name calls attention to the yellow-colored root of plants in the turmeric family.[137] The use of rhizomes for flavoring was common in ancient cuisine, with ginger representing a common example, but the use of these root systems for stimulating olfactory pathways was equally important, with no better example than with spiced – and scented – *chang*-ale.

As noted in the "Suburban Sacrifice" passage, the aroma of the ale would penetrate down into the deep springs, a location that brings to mind the Yellow Springs (*huang quan* 黃泉), an underworld destination for departed souls. The downward moving *yin* energy of

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[135] The *locus classicus* for "yellow liquid" is the poem "Foothills of Mount Han" (*Han lu* 旱麓) from the *Book of Odes*, see MSZY:16.1109 (Mao #239), trans. Arthur Waley, *The Book of Songs*, ed. Joseph R. Allen (New York: Grove Press, 1996), 235 ("yellow flood"). In the context of the poem, the yellow liquid is held by a jade-handled ladle during a libation sacrifice to attract divine blessings. The relevant commentary of Zheng Xuan glosses "yellow liquid" as dark millet *chang*-ale, see MSZY:16.1109. Elsewhere in the "Suburban Sacrifice" chapter we find reference to *yu*-infused *qi*-aroma (*yuqi* 郁氣), referring to the aroma wafting from the sacrificial ale, see LJXZ:11.401. In other texts, *qi*-vapors can also have the quality of being "lush" (*yuyu* 鬱鬱), which suggests an olfactory dimension through the ostensive reference to the *yu* plant, similar in English to calling something "lemony."

[136] 煮鬱金草和之，其氣芬芳調鬯也，又以搗郁汁和合鬯酒，使香氣滋甚。LJZY:26.3158. Kong Yingda makes a similar statement elsewhere: "Take the black millet grains and mash the wild turmeric, extracting the juices and boiling it. After mixing and fermenting the ale, the *qi*-aroma will be fragrant and harmonized smoothly (*chang*), therefore it is called *chang*," 以黑黍米搗鬱金草，取汁而煮之，和釀其酒，其氣芬香調暢，故謂之鬯。MSZY:36.1109.

[137] Laufer, *Sino-Iranica*, 323.

the *chang* aroma thus compliments the upward moving *yang* energy of odors of the southernwood and grain mixture.[138] Furthermore, according to the *Rites of Zhou*, there were two libation officers who made this sacrificial drink, one in charge of preparing the black millet ale, called the "*chang*-ale officer" (*changren* 鬯人) and the other in charge of infusing it with crushed wild turmeric root and serving it at appropriate functions, called the "turmeric officer" (*yuren* 鬱人). Together these officers would also participate in mortuary rituals in which the corpse was cleansed with this spiced ale.[139] In this situation, the mortuary cleansing would not only deepen the association with the departed travelling to the underworld, but also provide a perfumed barrier to the foul odor of the decaying corpse. There were other aromatics used in early Chinese funerary practices, but the associations between *chang* ale, downward moving *yin* energy, and the underworld seem particularly significant.

The next important odorant in the Zhou-era ritual sequence of the "Suburban Sacrifice" chapter was a mixture of southernwood and millet grains that were utilized to produce a pungent aroma that rises like *yang* energy. Forming a complimentary dyad, the aroma of the *chang*-ale, associated with *yin* and water, and odor of grain and herbs, associated with *yang* and fire, could diffuse throughout the entire spiritual terrain above and below, beckoning the spirits to participate in the rite and confer their blessings. While this passage does not discuss the ritualized use of animal fat, likely because blood sacrifices are relegated to an earlier – idealized – sacrificial period, Zheng Xuan's comments are clear in

[138] A similar bidirectional division is also used to describe the postmortem movement of cloudsouls (*hun* 魂) and whitesouls (*po* 魄), entities that also have a close relationship to the life-sustaining quality of *qi*.
[139] ZLZS:19.1662–63, trans. Biot, *Le Tcheou-li*, Vol. 1, 465–72.

proclaiming that visceral fats are to be "mixed with southernwood and burned," a process which can also include millet grains.[140]

Along with southernwood and *chang*-ale, millet was the third and final of the classical odorants mentioned by the Song perfume specialist Ding Wei and deserves special attention. Varieties of millet, such as glutinous millet (*shu* 黍) and panicled millet (*ji* 稷), were a staple of the Zhou diet in the north, although a wider variety of grains were cultivated by the Warring States period.[141] Due to its importance as a principal food crop, millet also occupied a central role within early sacrificial religion. For example, an oft-cited hymn in the *Book of Odes* anthology entitled the "Birth of the People" praises the founding deity of the Zhou, Hou Ji 后稷, or "Lord Millet." This hymn recounts the inauguration of sacrifices to Shangdi 上帝, the father of Lord Millet, and places the Zhou squarely within the agricultural legacy of Chinese civilization. Anne Birrell and Robert Campany have explored the hymn as a sitiogony, a term coined by Bruce Lincoln to describe myths that recount the nature and origin of food (from the Greek *sitos*, "food, bread, grain").[142] Relevant to our examination is the critical role that food aromas play in this myth. Millet and other grains may have been the

[140] I am paraphrasing Zheng Xuan's lexical comment on *lüliao* 膟膋, which he describes as "intestinal fat that is mixed with southernwood and burned; panicled millet and glutinous millet can also be used," 膟膋，腸間脂也，與蕭合燒之，亦有黍稷也。LJZY:26.3156–57.

[141] Sterckx, *Food, Sacrifice, Sagehood*, 14; Cook, "Moonshine and Millet," 17. *Shu* and *ji* are now often considered two subspecies of broomcorn millet, *Panicum miliaceum*, with *ji* frequently, though not always, identified as the non-glutinous variety, see Ping-ti Ho, "The Indigenous Origins of Chinese Agriculture," in *Origins of Agriculture*, ed. Charles A. Reed (Hague: Mouton, 1977), 437–40; see also Pan, *Shijing*, 120–21; Nanjing zhongyiyao daxue, ed., *Zhongyao da cidian* (Shanghai: Shanghai kexue jishu chubanshe, 2006): #5115; cf. #3929 (*ji* as *Setaria italica*, i.e. foxtail millet); for discussion on the debate over the identity of *ji*, see Te-Tzu Chang, "The Origins and Early Cultures of the Cereal Grains and Food Legumes," in *The Origins of Chinese Civilization*, ed. David N. Keightley (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1983), 65–65.

[142] See Anne Birrell, *Chinese Mythology: An Introduction* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1993), 41 and Robert F. Campany, "Eating Better than Gods and Ancestors," in *Of Tripod and Palate: Food, Politics, and Religion in Traditional China*, ed. Roel Sterckx (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), 96–122.

nutritive sustainers of Zhou civilization, but when employed as sacrificial offerings they transformed into the fragrant sustenance of the divine.

In a stripped-down version of this sitiogonic myth, we are told that after being abandoned as a baby by his human mother, the semi-divine Lord Millet begins to plants beans and other grains that soon come to flourish as great crops, thus establishing the practice of agriculture among the Zhou. Subsequently, Lord Millet uses the harvested grains to initiate ritual sacrifices. The framing of the hymn then shifts from a narrative of Lord Millet's innovations to that of the invocator addressing an audience on the eve of the new year. The hymn then describes the processes involved in preparing the sacrifice: the threshing, washing, and steaming (or fermenting, *zheng* 烝) of the grains, the boiling and roasting of the meat, and the burning of southernwood mixed with sacrificial fat.[143] The hymn concludes by describing the outcome of the ritual preparation of the feast:

> As the fragrance begins to rise, Shangdi is tranquil and delighted. The fine aromas are true and proper. Lord Millet inaugurated the sacrifices, and without flaw or blemish the people have continued them until now.[144] 其香始升，上帝居歆。胡臭亶時，后稷肇祀，庶無罪悔，以迄于今。

This myth reveals that the origin of agriculture is inextricably bound to the origin of sacrifice, with both functioning as vehicles of nourishment. Implicit in this story is the belief that the chain of nourishment will not end with Shangdi, but that he will provide timely and proper rains in the coming year so the crops can grow, thus restarting the sacrificial cycle. The name

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[143] There is some confusion early in the narrative when the mother makes sacrificial offerings to Shangdi in order to have a child, yet this is the same child who is later believed to *inaugurate* sacrificial ritual. Campany suggests that by erasing the original ritual act of the mother sacrifice can be properly envisioned as a product of patrilineal descent, see Campany, "Gods and Ancestors," 99, 117–18. Puett suggests that Lord Millet instituted the "correct" sacrifices which allowed Shangdi to remain in his heavenly abode, see Michael Puett, *To Become a God: Cosmology, Sacrifice, and Self-Divination in Early* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2002), 71–72.

[144] MSZY:17.1146. I have consulted Birrell, *Mythology*, 57; Puett, *To Become a God,* 71; and Campany, "Gods and Ancestors," 99.

of the central protagonist, Lord Millet, also reminds us that this sacrificial grain in the lynchpin of the cycle of nourishment, with millet considered as both a primary crop for humans and chief offering for spirits. Within this cycle, however, there is a sensory imbalance; while humans can eat the grains of the feast directly with their mouths, Shangdi can only consume (or "be delighted by," *xin* 歆) their fumes – in this case, their fragrances (*xiang*) – with his nose.

As with the various classes of raw and uncooked flesh offerings, sacrificial grains are also noted to have ritually significant olfactory dimensions. Southernwood acts as the common aromatic "seasoning" for animal and grain offerings, being mixed into both. Taken together, the offerings of *chang*-ale, blood, flesh, fat, grain, and southernwood, constitute the most fragrant items in ancient literature on ritual sacrifice; or in other words, they constitute the basic scents of classical sacrifice, not plumes of smoke. The prevailing concern among ancient ritualists was not which incense (*xiang*) to burn to communicate with the spirits, but which food-based fragrance (*xiang*) to deploy to draw down and nourish the spirits.[145] We now turn to a deeper examination of *xiang* and the undergirding logic by which spirits were nourished by fragrant aromas.

4. The Sense of Sacrifice and the Logic of Alimentation

Ancient Chinese sacrifice involves a contradiction: the use of material goods in the attempt to influence an immaterial world of ghosts and spirits. During sacrificial ceremonies, banquet

[145] It is indeterminate if *xiang* had this meaning in the southern state of Chu. In two passages in the *Songs of Chu*, *xiang* refers to the scent of (non-sacrificial) plants, but in both cases the works in which they appear can be dated to the Han. These will be discussed in the next chapter.

displays could be lavish: pots of stews, tureens of soups, and jars of grains were set beside pitchers of sacrificial ales and slaughtered animal flesh. While these displays would easily call to mind the pleasures of the palate, the nose also remained a concern during sacrifice, as the "Suburban Sacrifice" reminds us, "the utmost offerings are not indulged for their taste, but valued for their *qi* aroma." This significance of ritual smells is classically exemplified in a hymn from the *Book of Odes* entitled, "Truly, Southern Hills" (*xin nanshan* 信南山):

He sacrifices with clear alcohol,	祭以清酒，
Followed by a red bull,	從以騂牡，
Offering it to the ancestors.	享于祖考。
Grasping the bell-knife	執其鸞刀，
To split open its hide,	以啟其毛，
He takes the blood and visceral fat.	取其血膋。
Present them, offer them,	是烝是享，
Fragrant and aromatic,	苾苾芬芬，
How luminous was the sacrificial service.	祀事孔明。
Illuminating our ancestors,	先祖是皇，
They respond with great blessings,	報以介福，
Ten-thousand years of life without limits![146]	萬壽無疆。

The procedure of offering a libation sacrifice of alcohol, followed by the killing of an animal to retrieve its blood and visceral fat mirrors closely the characterization of Zhou era ritual in the *Record of Rites*. This relationship is based on the fact that early hymns such as these likely formed the template for later elaborations of sacrifice found in the Three Ritual Canons.[147]

Notably, olfactory pathways form the primary bridge that connect the display of material offerings to the response of the immaterial ancestors. In the hymn, the offerings are described as "fragrant and aromatic" (*bibi fenfen* 苾苾芬芬), exemplifying the early

[146] MSZY:13.1011–1012. Translation adapted from Kleeman, "Licentious Cults," 185. This hymn is numbered as Mao no. 210 and is dated to the early Western Zhou.
[147] For further discussion on the influential nature of the *Book of Odes* on later textual descriptions of sacrifice, especially that of "Thorny Caltrop," see Kern, "Thorny Caltrop," 52–54.

linguistic device known as reduplication (*chongdie* 重疊).[148] This poetic device is most commonly used as onomatopoeia to express the sounds of bells, but here is employed perhaps as an attempt to embody the fullness and olfactory pungency of the sacrificial space. In the hymn of the "Thorny Caltrop" we again find smells immediately preceding the positive response of the spirits: "Fragrant and aromatic (*bifen* 苾芬) were the sacrificial offerings, the spirits crave the drink and food; they predict for you a hundred blessings."[149] It is easy to ignore the powerful scents that mark such ritual occasions – to overlook what is right under our nose – but by analyzing the scents of sacrifice, we may get a better understanding of the sense of sacrifice.

According to our sources, ancient sacrificial food rites were punctuated by the immaterial smells they spawned, but what purpose did they serve? Why was there such an attempt to create ritual environments so redolent of aromas? In its most basic expression, smelling was perceived as a higher form of eating. Olfactory sensations produced during sacrifice resolved anxieties over the welfare and nourishment of immaterial spirits, and thus smelling was partly conceived on a logic of consumption and alimentation. Within the context of ancient ritual sacrifice deriving from the Northern plains, food aromas were thought not only as a way to entice spirits to descend, but also the means in which they fed and received sustenance.[150] In addition to Boileau, other scholars have commented on how

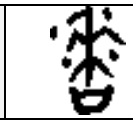
[148] For passing comments on early poetic reduplication, see Kern, 79–80n.102.
[149] MSZY:13.1007. Translation adapted from Kern, 87–88. This hymn is numbered as Mao no. 209.
[150] When Yamada analyzed *xiang* according to its functional dimensions, he drew upon ancient Chinese sacrificial lore to characterize its meaning as "spice," see Yamada, *Tōzai kōyaku shi*, 22. This is not an entirely accurate characterization, as it places an unwarranted emphasis on gustation in these cases. Smelling was envisioned as an appropriate form of divine eating, but not necessarily human consumption. The medieval period will see a great expansion in the ideas concerning macrobiotic hygiene and "special eating" that also nourishes life (*yangsheng* 養生), of which the practice of "avoiding grains" (*bigu* 辟穀) emerged as among the most popular, see Campany, *Making Transcendents*, 62–87.

descriptions of ancient rituals established a series of sensory hierarchies between humans and the spirit realm. In his analysis of the Lord Millet myth, Campany has identified a hierarchy of eaters, stations, and food, where humans consume grains here on earth, in contrast to Shangdi who consumes their fragrance in the heavens.[151] Furthermore, Roel Sterckx has noted how smell belongs to a distinctive "sacrificial paradigm" that takes precedence over taste (*wei* 味).[152] These theories are given further credence when we realize that our pre-imperial sources do not highlight the sensorial pathway of smell for *all* sacrificial objects. Logs of kindling, bolts of silk, and discs of jade remain, in effect, ritually odorless. This is likely due to the fact that they were not believed to impart nourishment to the spirits just as they conferred no such alimentary benefit to humans.

To further drive this point, we will turn our attention to three important sacrificial terms that appear in our sources, namely *xiang*, *qi*, and *xin*, and trace their olfactory dimensions. Glosses of *xiang* will point to an overarching meaning of a sweet, favorable fragrance, but a graphic etymology also suggests associations with ritualized activities centered around food. Food sacrifice and mortuary feasting peaked during the late Shang and Western Zhou, but remained an integral part of statecraft and private elite life throughout the Warring States period.[153] As noted above, ritual offerings consisted of an array of meats and grains (especially millet), but also included items refined through the processes of cooking and fermentation, like *chang*-ale. These foods and fermentations were offered as sustenance

[151] Campany, Gods and Ancestors," 98–99; Campany, *Making Transcendents*, 64.
[152] Sterckx, *Food, Sacrifice, Sagehood*, 84–85.
[153] According to Constance Cook, the emergence of new approaches to divinity, including a wide range of self-cultivation practices centering on macrobiotic diets, physical exercises, and contemplative practices, all of which bypassed traditional ancestral worship, loosened the significance of food sacrifice, see Cook, "Moonshine and Millet." For a review of these newly emerging ritual technologies of bio-spiritual cultivation, see Puett, *To Become a God*.

for spirits and deceased ancestors in ornately decorated bronze vessels during sumptuous ritual banquets. Relevant to our analysis, oracle bone inscriptions dated to the late Shang suggest the graph for *xiang* developed precisely among such opulent ritual contexts [Figs. 1.1–1.3].[154]

Fig. 1.1		**Fig. 1.2**		**Fig. 1.3**	

A closer examination of the oracle bone graphs reveals two components, roughly divided between an upper and lower half. Regarding the bottom half, one common view interprets the square shape with "ears" () as a mouth (modern *kou* 口), but this does not necessarily account for the dot found in the center of one extant inscription [Fig. 1.3]. It stands that this "dotted" version eventually developed into the modern rendering of *xiang*, which uses *yue* 曰 ("to speak").[155] Interestingly, paleographer Zhao Cheng warns against interpreting the archaic component as relating to the mouth, instead arguing that the square shape with ears should properly be seen as a sacrificial vessel, such as a ritual *dou*-vessel 豆 for holding food.[156] The top half of the graph () is rather universally understood to represent grain and most likely depicts the drooping ears of wheat filled with seeds, sometimes rendered as dots.[157] Reading

[154] The standard reference numbers for these three graphs are as follows: [Fig. 1] 林 2.25.15, [Fig. 2] 前 4.53.4, [Fig. 3] 南明 115, see Xu Zhongshu, *Jiagu wen zidian* (Chengdu: Sichuan cishu chubanshe, 1988). 791.
[155] For one scholar who interprets the bottom portion as "mouth," see Xu, *Jiagu wen zidian*, 791. A summary overview for scholarly interpretations of *xiang* can be found in Li Xiaoding, ed., *Jiagu Wenzi Jishi* (Nanyang: Institute of History and Philology, Academic Sinica, 1965), 2393–94. Below we will see that Xu Shen preserves the "ears" of the square by claiming the bottom component is *gan* 甘.
[156] Zhao Cheng, *Jiagu wen jianming cidian: buci fenlei duben* (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1988): 218 (commenting on another graph).
[157] Zhao, *Jiagu wen*, 209. See also the brief comments in Wu Zhenfeng, "Si qi mingwen kaoshi," *Kaogu yu wenwu* 6 (2006): 59.

the two halves together, the early graph for *xiang* depicts the preparation of grain and/or its ritual sacrifice in bronze vessels.

Based on Shang and Western Zhou inscriptions, the principal grain sacrifice was referred to as *zheng* 烝 (or 蒸), a term that may have also referred to steaming or fermenting. Before becoming seasonally tied to winter during the Warring States period, the *zheng* sacrifice was intimately linked with convivial post-harvest celebrations, where celebrants consumed their stocks of grain and grain-fermented ales which were also offered as libations to ancestors.[158] The processing of these grains and grain mash, as well as the grand display of these grain offerings in vessels, would have created a space redolent of food, signaling the oncoming feast for ancestors and humans alike. By combining the primary elements of grain sacrifice, namely the ritual vessel and the grain offering, it would appear that the earliest graphs for *xiang* may have reflected such an aromatic ritual setting.[159]

Fig. 1.4	

The earliest semantic gloss for *xiang* was offered by Xu Shen who lived about a century before Zheng Xuan during the Eastern Han. Xu Shen set out to analyze small seal script (*xiaozhuan wen* 小篆文), a pre-Qin script that had a distant affiliation to oracle bone script of which was wholly unknown to Xu Shen or his contemporaries. Thus, while we should be critical of applying Xu Shen's analysis to the inscriptions of the late Shang, the

[158] Cook, "Moonshine and Millet," 17; Vogt, "Between Kin and King," 148–61, esp. 156–59. Another common transcription for the inscriptions was *deng* 登 or *deng* 鄧

[159] Among the three attested versions of *xiang* appearing in oracle bone inscriptions, all are part of proper nouns. Thus, we are afforded no clues as to how this graph may have been understood semantically in context. Xu reproduces the short divination passages in which these three early *xiang* graphs occur, noting that first two appear as the name of a place and the third as part of a person's name, Xu, *Jiagu wen zidian*, 791.

similarity with the above interpretation is notable. After providing the graph for *xiang* in small seal script [Fig. 1.4], Xu offers the following, characteristically brusque, gloss and semantic etymology:

> *Xiang* is [a kind of] "fragrance." Its [semantic] constituents are "millet" and "sweet."[160]
> 香芳也。从黍从甘。

Xu's entry is insightful on two fronts. First, it glosses *xiang* as a "fragrance" (*fang* 芳), an aromatic property of a substance and not a substance in itself. As we will see, *xiang* only developed into a second order class of aromatics sometime around the Eastern Han. Second, it divides the graph into two separate graphemes, evoking two further prongs of meaning. On the one hand, Xu Shen's gloss associates *xiang* with a particular ostensive odorant, "glutinous millet" (*shu* 黍; on top), the chief class of grain offered in ancestral rites and commonly used for fermenting ale.[161] On the other hand, the gloss also suggests a positive hedonic value for *xiang* by employing the pleasing gustatory term, "sweet" (*gan* 甘; on bottom). By selecting to read the lower grapheme as *gan*, and not *yue*, Xu engages in an act sensory scholars might identify as "synesthetic transference," whereby terms more closely associated with one sensory domain are used to describe another sensory domain (such as, in English, when we say a "sharp" taste, a "loud" color, and so forth). In this case, a basic "taste

[160] SWJZ:7.180. As explained by Françoise Bottéro and Christoph Harbsmeier, Xu Shen's work provides only meanings that are relevant to the explanation of specific Chinese graphs, it does not attempt to give a comprehensive overview of the different meanings of the word under discussion. I have followed the general guidelines suggested by Bottéro and Harbsmeier in translating this entry, including the "X *cong* 从 Y" formula that provides a semantic explanation for the occurrence of "element Y in graph X," see Françoise Bottéro and Christoph Harbsmeier, "The 'Shuowen Jiezi' Dictionary and the Human Sciences in China," *Asia Major*, Third Series, 21, no. 1 (2008): 258–59. Xu Shen's entry also includes a supplemental quote from the *Zuo Commentary* and a typical "subsumption formula" indicating the graph's status as a pseudo-radical, stating, "All [graphs] subsumed under *xiang* will have the [semantic] constituent *xiang*," 凡香之屬皆从香。

[161] Cook, "Moonshine and Millet," 16–17.

term" sometimes called a gusteme – "sweet" – is used to describe a smell. Xu Shen's entry on *xiang*, when read in totality, can be envisioned as a sweet fragrance connected to millet or grain. Overall, both the graphic and semantic etymologies for *xiang* situate it as a cultural nexus point for religious beliefs centered on sacrifice, food, and fragrance.

It should be underscored that *xiang* does not appear with great frequency in pre-imperial sources, but when it does appear in ancient texts, it is often associated with sacrifice.[162] For example, *xiang* appears twice in the *Book of Odes* anthology. We already encountered the first instance of *xiang* in the "Birth of the People" where it represents the various scents of the inaugural sacrifice that ascend to Shangdi. The second occurrence, in the hymn entitled "Clear Away the Grass" (*zaishan* 載芟) is less straightforward, but it appears in the context of a libation sacrifice: "When there is the aroma (*bi* 馝) of the scented-sweet alcohol (*xiang*), glory shall come to the fatherland."[163] *Bi*, according to Xu Shen, refers to the "aroma of food," (*shi zhi xiang* 食之香), while the commentary of Zheng Xuan glosses *bi* as simply "aroma" (*fenxiang* 芬香).[164] This leaves the irregular circumstance of treating *xiang* as an object, not the fragrant property of an object. Zheng Xuan proposes reading *xiang* as referring to "sweet alcohol" (*jiuli* 酒醴), the sacrificial libation noted in the preceding

[162] *Xiang* is also well known as one of the Five Odors (*wuchou* 五臭), an early osmological system of smell categorization. But it is often overlooked that the pentad of odors can also be traced to the scents of food sacrifice. From this vantage, *xiang* was the sweet fragrance of cooked food, a reading we can find substantiated through Xu Shen's graphic etymology. We will return to the Five odors and their relation to sacrificial food in the next chapter.

[163] 有馝其香，邦家之光。MSZY:19.1298; translation adapted from Waley, *Book of Songs*, 304. This hymn is numbered as Mao no. 290. I understand the grammatical structure here as "有[adjective]其[noun]," as described by Zhang Cuili, "Shijing 'jiao' zijie—jiantan zi yi yu shiyi de hujie," *Leshan shifan xueyuan xuebao* 29, no. 2 (2014): 59.

[164] SWJZ:5.129 and MSZY:19.1298, respectively.

lines of the hymn.[165] In this situation we find *xiang* functioning as a metonym: the fragrant part standing for the sacrificial whole.

This peculiar use of *xiang* was unexpectedly revisited in 2005 when an early Western Zhou bronze *gui*-tureen 簋 came to the attention of scholars. It bears an intriguing inscription describing contemporaneous sacrificial procedure, a procedure we have already encountered many times. It reads as thus:

> In the morning and evening, use aromatic fragrances as offerings to the hundred spirits. Without exception, the smells are appropriate and the aromatic fragrances ascend high and low.[166]
> 其日夙夕用厥馨香享示[=祀]于厥百神，亡[=無]不鼎[=当]豳[=紛→芬]夆[=芳]，馨香則登于上下.

This inscription, possibly commissioned by a member of the Zhou court in the tenth century BCE, underscores the importance of creating aromas during sacrifice.[167] Strikingly, the compound *xinxiang* 馨香, "aromatic fragrances," functions as a metonym for the sacrificial offerings which, in this case, cannot be contextually identified (for the inscription of *xiang*, see Fig. 1.5).

Fig. 1.5 

Kong Yingda, writing over a millennia and a half after this inscription was sponsored, concludes that *xinxiang*, a phrase that is also found in the *Book of Documents*, refers to the

[165] MSZY:19.1298. For a discussion on the identity of this sacrificial alcohol as a Sichuan pepper infused spirit, see Zhang, "Shijing jiao zijie," 58.
[166] This transcription is rendered by Wu Zhenfeng, see Wu, "Si qi mingwen kaoshi." Li Xueqin offers several possible emendations to this transcription, but the overall meaning of the passage remains the same, see Li Xueqin, "Bo si qingtongqi yu Xi Zhou diansi," in *Guwen zi yu gudai shi*, ed. Chen Zhaorong, Vol. 1 (Taibei: Zhongyang yanjiuyan lishi yuyan yanjiusuo, 2007), 179–89.
[167] Li suggests a dating during the reign of King Mu of Zhou 周穆王 (traditional r. 976–922 BCE) or King Gong of Zhou 周恭王 (traditional r. 922–900 BCE), see Li, "Bo si qingtongqi."

pairing of glutinous millet and panicled millet.[168] Whatever the case may be for both this inscription and the stanza in the *Book of Odes*, these examples suggest a profound mutual imbrication between odors and their sacrificial odorants, such that the mere mention of aromatic fragrances calls to mind ritual food sacrifice.

Moving into the Warring States period and the early Han, *xiang* would continue to denote a fragrant property of objects, almost always items of food or drink. We find *xiang*, for example, describing a variety of sacrificial grains (especially millet), ritual ales (especially *chang*-ale), fats offered in sacrifice (more typical in later period texts) and several types of creeping rootstalk plants (i.e., plants with rhizomes) or flowers, of which the latter two appear to have important religious significance during this period in the South as exemplified in the *Songs of Chu* (*Chuci* 楚辭).

Fig. 1.6		**Fig. 1.7**		**Fig. 1.8**	

It is worth pausing to note the curious overlap in the graphic etymologies of *xiang* and *qi*. It is frequently remarked that the graph for *qi* represents the vapors (qi_1 气) wafting off steamed rice (*mi* 米), exemplified by the numerous examples found in bronze inscriptions [Fig. 1.6]. This is conspicuous callback to *xiang* with a parallel focus on grain aromas. A different graphic etymology, however, is given for variant and older versions of *qi* that lack the rice grapheme (氣) [Fig. 1.7]. This homophonous variant, qi_1, has its graphic origins as wisps of air depicted by three horizontal lines [Fig. 1.8]. This etymology is echoed by Xu

[168] For the relevant quote in the *Book of Documents*, see the "Pronouncement on Alcohol" (*jiu gao* 酒誥) at SSZS:16.381; for Kong Yingda's exegesis, see footnote 123.

Shen's gloss on this graph as meaning "cloud vapors" (*yunqi*$_1$ 雲气).[169] In time, *qi* (with rice component) came to serve as the standard orthography for both variations (although later Daoists sometimes adopted the more esoteric form, *qi*$_2$ 炁[170]), thus co-opting the original meaning of *qi*$_1$ as "vapors." In either graphic derivation, *qi* is presented as an essential quality or element, whether it be the nutritive steam expelled from cooked rice or the vaporous air allowing all living beings to breath.

Over time, the meaning of *qi* came to constitute several overlapping, but not fully coinciding, semantic fields.[171] For example, from within physiological and medical epistemic contexts, *qi* functions more narrowly as the vital breath or the vital energy component of blood that gives life to a person. On the other hand, within a cosmological epistemic context, *qi* functions as the most elemental substance, comprising the entirety of the universe in varying levels of refinement. Many somatic-spiritual regimens work chiefly from within this cosmological schema since they concern the absorption, manipulation, or processing of *qi*, while at the same time also drawing upon an understanding of the physiological importance

[169] SWJZ:1.10. Neither graphemic etymology is supported semantically by the oldest attestations found in Shang and Zhou inscriptions where *qi*$_1$ takes the meanings of "to beseech" (as phonetic loan for *qi*$_3$ 乞), "until" (*qi*$_4$ 迄), and "end" (*qi*$_5$ 訖). See brief discussion in Harper, *Early*, 77–78. Moreover, Xu Shen glosses *qi* 氣 as "to offer food to guests" (later disambiguated as *xi* 餼), taking the *qi*$_1$ component as simply phonetic, SWJZ:7.181. Interestingly, the sacrificial, gustatory, and olfactory connotations are all expressed through Xu Shen's gloss.

[170] This graph can be analyzed graphically as incorporating the critical Daoist concept of "non-being," *wu* 无, atop "fire," *huo* 火, here rendered as four dots). One might interpret this as a very subtle heat, along the lines of an animating principle. For a different reading as a "puff of air" (*wu*) over "fire" (*huo*), see Needham and Lu, *Science and Civilisation in China,* Vol. 5, Part 2*,* 155.

[171] I was inspired to conceive of different discursive and epistemic frameworks of *qi* through the comments of Roel Sterckx, who suggested a physiological context separate from a cosmological context, see Sterckx, *Animal and Daemon*, 73. Lu Gwei-djin and Joseph Needham provide an array of potential meaning of *qi*, including subtle spirits, tenuous matter, gas or vapor, as well as radioactive emanations, but make no mention of odors, see Gwei-Djen Lu and Joseph Needham, *Celestial Lancets: A History and Rationale of Acupuncture and Moxa* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980), 16n.a.

of breath.[172] Critically, these diverse contextualized meanings seemingly converge around an idea that *qi* is conceived a vital substrate, for life and all things. Additionally, I would argue, that within a sacrificial epistemic context, *qi* functions as the vital, nutritive smell of sacrificial food offerings, thus also converging upon its basic identity as a life-giving substrate. When framed by these three different discursive contexts, the meaning of *qi* moves along a sensorial spectrum of visual air vapors, to tactile (*qi*-dense) objects, to olfactory aromas. At the same time, *qi* still maintains a semantic anchoring across these meanings, the overlapping portion of a Venn diagram, as a life-energy providing substrate. The fact that varying contexts necessitate not only different meanings of *qi*, but also different sensory engagements, make finding an apt and handy translation of *qi* elusory.[173]

Classically, *qi* always held olfactory connotations (as it does in modern Chinese[174]), but the aspect that links *qi* to its other physiological and cosmological dimensions is that it sustains life. This is partly due to the nature of smelling itself, which can detect invisible

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[172] Robert Campany has recognized two major idioms of "*xian* [immortality] arts," one based on the manipulation of *qi* and the other based on confounding the bureaucratic system of spirit officials who kept tallies on human lifespans. For summary comments on these ideas, see Campany, *Making Transcendents*, xvi–xvii; for a more in-depth discussion, see Robert F. Campany, *To Live as Long as Heaven and Earth: A Translation and Study of Ge Hong's Traditions of Divine Transcendents* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002), 18–97.

[173] Arguments over the best translation of *qi* are debated in Sinology and several scholars have decided to simply keep the term untranslated, such as the series of publications in the *Science and Civilisation in China* (transcribing it as *chhi*). Among those who have adopted a principled stance on translation is Donald Harper who opts for "vapor" since it expresses the sense of something material, pervasive, and volatile. Consequently, he rejects the misleading associations of "air" and Greek *pneuma*, see Harper, *Early*, 77–78. On the other hand, Steven Bokenkamp rejects "breath" due to its narrow range of connotations in English, along with misperceptions afforded by "vapor" and "energy," in favor of *pneuma*, which holds for him both the adequate connotations of breath and spirit, see Stephen R. Bokenkamp, *Early Daoist Scriptures* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997), 16–20. Lastly, Constance Cook has suggested the invisible force of Chinese virtue (*de* 德) helped give conceptual form to the vital essence of cosmological *qi*. I would suggest that the cosmological understanding of *qi* may equally derive from its simpler sense as life-sustaining breath or nutritive sacrificial odor.

[174] The medieval commentarial tradition would often gloss *qi* as odor (*chou*) or fragrance (*xiang*) – or vice-versa – such as Kong Yingda's note: "aroma refers to the *qi* of *chang*-ale" 臭謂鬯氣也。LJZY:26.3158. In the context of modern Chinese, *qiwei* 氣味 can refer to both the sense of smell and taste.

stimulus and engender appetitive responses and consequently can call upon perceptual cues suggesting "higher" and more refined forms of eating. As with *xiang*, *qi* signals this shift to the spiritual domain that operates beyond taste, but still signifies the alimentary force behind sacrificial performances that attempt to send smells into the air to feed the spirits.

If we return to the "Birth of the People" hymn, we read that "as the fragrance (*xiang*) begins to rise, Shangdi is tranquil and delighted (*xin*)." The translation of *xin* as "delighted" takes into account the affective component of the sacrifices for the spirits, but it also hides the sensual mechanism through which the spirits consume the aromatic fumes.[175] *Xin* is frequently encountered in classical documents as an activity that is uniquely practiced by the spirits and context strongly suggests it was conceived as an analogue to smelling. *Xin* remains difficult to translate because it covers the sensorial terrain of olfaction, the alimentary aspects of eating, and the affective quality of enjoyment. In his classical lexicography, Xu Shen glosses *xin* as "spirits eating *qi*," thus underscoring the alimentary focus of ancient sacrifice at the cost of obscuring its focus on sacrificial scents.[176] Adequately explaining *xin* seems to have been difficult for medieval Chinese commentators who would sometimes pair it with *shi* 嗜, meaning "to crave." This seen with the medieval Kong Yingda's exegesis of the *Book of Odes*, noting that, "Since the drink and food are aromatic and fragrant, the spirits *shi-xin* the comestibles."[177] Even though the most salient sensual aspects of the food and drink offerings are their odors, Kong Yingda still reduces them down to objects to be eaten as food and not smelled as nutritive fragrances.

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[175] The affective quality is underscored by the medieval commentarial tradition which claims that *xin* was originally written as *yu* 欲, "to crave," see, for example, LHJS:25.1047.
[176] 神食气也。 SWJZ:8.224.
[177] 由飲食馨香，故神歆嗜之。 MSZY:13.1008.

These issues have not gone unnoticed by modern scholars who conclude that *xin* appears to be the ancient equivalent of "spiritual smelling."[178] In no place is this more evident in classical sources than in Wang Chong's 王充 (27–c. 100) *Weighted Debates* (*Lunheng* 論衡). Here we find that *xin* functions as a spiritual sense and the means by which spirits received their sustenance. In his chapter on "The Meaning of Sacrifice," we encounter both Wang Chong's characteristic wit and penetrating attack on what he considered futile superstitions. He begins by surveying the common beliefs on ghosts and spirits, noting that people think they eat and drink like guests invited to a banquet. He then turns to a series of premises and logically derived conclusions designed to disprove their existence. Turning to one of these passages concerning *xin*, we find this short argument:

> Now, those who are able to delight (*xin*) have mouths and noses that are open. If the nose becomes congested and stuffed, or the mouth is gagged and obstructed, then they cannot be delighted (*xin*). When a person dies, their mouth and nose rot and decay. How are they able to still delight (*xin*)?[179]
> 凡能歆者，口鼻通也。使鼻齆不通，口鉗不開，則不能歆矣。人之死也，口鼻腐朽，安能復歆.

The argument is fairly straightforward, if we take the premise that spirits need to absorb offerings through their noses and mouths as true, this then *a priori* proves impossible because spirits no longer have physically functioning bodies. Here *xin* straddles the functions of the nose and mouth, thereby tacitly acknowledging that spirits were widely perceived as needing to smell and eat their offerings. At other places, Wang Chong seems to highlight only one sensorial aspect of *xin*, for example, in one passage he compares *xin* to the act of inhaling

[178] See comments in Wang Weihui and Akitani Hiroyuki, "Hanyu 'wen/xiu' yici de xianzhuang yu lishi," *Yuyan Ji Yuyanxue* 15, no. 5 (2014): 718. Also see the brief comments in Milburn, "Aromas," 456n.70.
[179] LHJS:25.1053; cf. trans. Alfred Forke, *Lun-Hêng, Part I: Philosophical Essays of Wang Ch'ung* (Leipzig: Harrassowitz, 1907), 513.

("taking in air" 內氣), hinting an association with the nose (for Wang Chong, inhalation is a function of the nose), while in another passage he describes *xin* as eating or drinking, noting that just as one uses the mouth to eat, thus one uses the mouth to *xin*.[180]

To best understand the apparent contradictions of *xin* we need to remember the contradiction at the core of ancient sacrifice; namely the use of material goods to influence immaterial agents. When Wang Chong, or other medieval commentators, wanted to highlight the alimentary effects of sacrifice, they would commonly draw upon metaphors of eating since this most closely coincided with human sensorial experience. Wang Chong regularly noted this assumed commonality between humans and spirits, as when he stated that spirits "have the shape of humans, and therefore at sacrifices eat like humans."[181] Yet, at the same time, the material world of food and eating was not fully commensurate with human experience regarding the spirits, an experience that we saw earlier was often founded on opposing what human enjoy. Spirits were often treated as invisible or ephemeral, and thus although they needed to eat like humans, they could not physically consume food like humans. By drawing metaphorically from the human experience of smell, the ancient ritualists could begin to conceptualize how the immaterial spirit realm could interact with the material world. The act of eating – and tasting – requires physical contact with an object, but what happens if you do not have a physical body? Smell provides an alternative to eating since it does not require physical contact, it is as seemingly ephemeral and distal as the spirits themselves. *Xin* became symbolic of the tensions between the physical eating of food and

[180] LHJS:25.1053 and LHJS:25.1051, respectively; see trans. Forke, *Lun-Hêng*, Vol. 1, 513 and 511–512, respectively. Forke translates *xin* primarily as "smell" in this chapter on sacrifice. This works in many contexts, but also produces awkward phrasing, such as, "with the mouth one likewise smells," Forke, *Lun-Hêng*, Vol. 1, 511.
[181] 如人之形，故其祭祀，如人之食。LHJS:25.1054.

smelling of immaterial fragrances. This tension continued through the long medieval period, as for example when the Buddhist monk Zanning 贊寧 (919–1001), in his attempt to defend the offering of incense at state functions, notes the general belief that Heaven "delights in" the aromas of sacrifice, before rhetorically asks how it is possible for Heaven to actually consume (*shi* 食) those smells. In reality, Zanning asserts, it was the people who valued the aromas.[182]

Since spirits were conceived as residing on a higher plane of existence, food aromas were seen as a higher form of food, and smelling operated as a higher form of eating. Within a sacrificial context, the act of smelling was founded on a logic of consumption and alimentation, where nutritive essences, in the form of fragrances (*xiang*) and aromas (*qi*), could be consumed (*xin*) by the spirits. In return, the spirits would grant blessings to the living in the form of rain and crops, thus continuing the cycle of nourishment between agricultural production and ritual sacrifice.

5. Conclusion

The ancient landscape of smell was filled with the odors of sacrifice. This reality was noted by late medieval scholars like Ding Wei, who keyed into the significance of millet, southernwood, and *chang*-ale and the aromas they emitted. During the Song, however, these odorants were not as significant to the discerning nose as aloeswood and frankincense,

[182] Paraphrasing T2126.241c28–a01; see also trans. Albert Welter, *The Administration of Buddhism in China: A Study and Translation of Zanning and the Topical Compendium of the Buddhist Clergy (Da Song Seng Shi Lüe)* (Amherst: Cambria Press, 2018), 304. I will return to Zanning's defense of incense in Chapter 4, Section 1.

materials that could be found burning in palace halls, scholars' studios, and religious altars alike. These changes represented more than shifting patterns of elite taste and within the context of ritual practice we should not interpret aloeswood as a mere substitution for millet, nor frankincense for southernwood; these two sets of fragrant materials reflect distinctive approaches to communicating with the heavens built on different ritual logics.

The smoke producing rites of the *chai* and *liao* sacrifices (and questionably, the *yin* sacrifice) are sometimes treated as inevitably leading to the adoption of incense burning in the medieval period. But these rites proved to be surprisingly inert in regards to smell in our earliest sources. Their strongest claim to olfactory salience comes in the commentarial tradition of Zheng Xuan, a figure who lived long after many of our ritual texts were first compiled. As we have seen, Zheng Xuan glosses the *yin*-sacrifice as a "sacrifice of fragrances," but such a claim can only be built upon a loose or anachronistic reading of the sources, specifically by interpreting the *qi*-aromas of the "Suburban Sacrifice" chapter as the smoke of large bonfires. A closer reading of the *Record of Rites* reveals that the odors of importance were not billows of smoke, but aromas of food generated through the display of blood, meats, grain, and alcohol at banquets. A similar confusion persisted throughout the medieval period in regards to southernwood, a plant was often treated by Song scholars as a native incense "prototype." But our sources never speak of burning southernwood in isolation or even as part of an incense blend, it was always to be mixed with food, either animal fat or grains, before being burned.

The olfactory *realia* of ancient sacrificial banquets certainly involved more than our texts reveal, as we can imagine, for example, the smell of burnt wood also filling the air, yet according to our sources it was only food and alcohol that were salient to the efficacy of

ritual praxis and, ultimately, the sacrificial cycle of nourishment. This belief, I argue, was based upon a certain governing logic that motivated the ancient ritual imagination. The aromas of sacrificial foods, items that ran the gamut from blood, raw flesh, and cooked meat, to grains, southernwood, and turmeric spiced ales, were not only conceived as sensorially captivating to the ancestors and spirits, but also provided sustenance to them. In return for this food, the spirits would repay humans with rain and fertile fields. Of course, while the people ate their food, the incorporeal ancestors and spirits could only smell it. In this way, the phenomenology of smell, with its ability function distally in contrast to taste, formed a natural correlate with a belief in invisible spirits that inhabited distant, yet permeable, planes of existence. So too the phenomenology of sound and music, which were often treated together with smell in the ritual lore of ancient China.

Olfaction also cuts through several closely related concepts in the ancient ritual imagination. The principal example is *xiang*, "aroma," the sacrificial scent *par excellence*. This is the sacrificial food aroma that ascends to Shangdi for his consumption and enjoyment. Another term inextricably bound to this sacrificial process is *xin*, "to delight," a concept that confounds our understanding of the divine sensorium. It appears to specifically refer to spiritual smelling, but of a special kind that also captures the immaterial nutrients of the dispersed sacrificial aromas. Lastly, there is the concept of *qi*, ubiquitous to nearly all domains of Chinese religion and philosophy, which is elusive to pin down lexically with uniformity and precision. Similar to both *xiang* and *xin*, *qi* resides in several semantic fields, none of which are fully coextensive. In the context of sacrificial ritual, *qi* appears as an olfactory component to offerings, especially blood and flesh, but this is always anchored to its meaning of a life-energy providing substrate. This latter, more fundamental meaning of *qi*

also motivates its common medical understanding as "vital breath." While not often given the same importance in modern scholarship as medical *qi* or cosmological *qi* (the basic "stuff" of the universe), a sacrificial "*qi*-aroma" resonates well with the uncontested belief that food aromas provided sustenance to the spirits. Thus, the best way to feed the hungry spirits was, oddly, not to invite them to eat at the banquet tables with the rest of the human guests, but to have them stay on the "sensorial peripheries" where smell could serve them just the same.

This chapter has attempted to establish a comparative baseline regarding not only the types of scented offerings used in ancient state sacrifice, but also the structured logic behind their selection. The next chapter turns to a different category of odorants – roots, leaves, and flowers that were not typically viewed as food – and explores the distinctive ways in which they were deployed to open communicate with the spirits.

Chapter Two – Strange Smells and the Material Culture of Aromatics in Early Medieval China

1. Introduction

During the Han dynasty, the vistas of the Chinese world of smell were broadened considerably. This was due to a combination of factors, including the expansion of the Chinese imperial domain to the west and south, a marked increase in the supra-regional circulation of goods, and the immigration of Indian Buddhists to coastal regions and metropolitan centers. All of these factors motivated a shift in Chinese material culture that is readily charted in early medieval imperial histories, regional gazetteers, and the *belles-lettres* of the period. The luxury commodities and foreign exotica, sometimes referred to as "strange things," further propelled creative responses that expanded or reconfigured normative Chinese religious belief and practice.[183] Notably, with the importation of foreign aromatics, and the lore that accompanied them, an entirely new world of smells, stinks, and odorous objects challenged pre-existing sensory paradigms.

These tensions between clashing worlds of smell were sometimes revealed in the creation of new narratives that sought to explain or otherwise contain the anomalous. One such story can be found in the *Uncollected Records* (*Shiyi ji* 拾遺記) by Wang Jia 王嘉 (d. ca. 385), a noted recluse and reputed master of methods (*fangshi* 方士) from the northern coastal state of Qi 齊. Based on the title of his work, we suspect Wang Jia felt compelled to

[183] For a theoretical discussion on the category of anomalies and how they interact with dominant cultures, see Robert F. Campany, *Strange Writing: Anomaly Accounts in Early Medieval China* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1996).

compile old stories he thought were largely ignored or in danger of being forgotten. Inscribing these tales as various episodes in the lives of past rulers who encounter marvelous *flora*, *fauna*, and other substances, Wang Jia relates the following short story about the legendary sovereign known as the Yellow Emperor (Huangdi 皇帝):

> By decree, [the Yellow Emperor] summoned his hundred rulers and many ministers. Of those who received his virtuous teachings, he ranked them by arranging jade tablets atop thoroughwort straw[184] mats. He burned Sinking Elm Incense and crushed various gems into bits and combined them with the Sinking Elm resin to make a paste. He smeared it on the ground to distinguish between the ranks of seniors and juniors, the Chinese and the barbarians.[185]
> 詔使百辟群臣受德教者，先列珪玉於蘭蒲席上，燃沉榆之香，舂雜宝為屑，以沉榆之膠和之為泥，以塗地，分別尊卑華戎之位也。

This episode portrays the Yellow Emperor assigning rank to his lords and ministers by engaging in three ritual actions: bestowing jade tablets (*gui* 珪), burning incense (*xiang*), and smearing paste on the ground to delineate different classes of ministers. In this brief, yet highly symbolic account, there is a tension between two divergent olfactory worlds, with one spilling over into the other and consequently needing to be circumscribed, contained, and domesticated. As with many medieval stories about the anomalous, it is conceived upon a

[184] I treat *pu* 蒲 ("reeds" or "straw") here as the stems and herbage of the thoroughwort plant, but recognize it would also bring to mind the mortuary mat of woven *pu* as noted in the *Record of Rites*, see LJZS:41.3375. This latter plant is often identified as bulrush (*Typha orientalis* or *T. latifolia*), now known as "fragrant *pu*" (*xiangpu* 香蒲), see Pan, *Shijing*, 122–23; Pan Fujun, *Chuci zhiwu tujian* (Taibei: Matouying chuban, 2010), 104–05. According to the *Songs of Chu*, thoroughwort could also be made into "thoroughwort mats" (*lanjie* 蘭藉) upon which offerings are placed, see CC:2.56, trans. Gopal Sukhu, *The Songs of Chu: An Anthology of Ancient Chinese Poetry by Qu Yuan and Others* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2017), 6.

[185] SYJ:1.9; amended translation of Larry C. Foster, "Wang Chia's *Shih-I*," *Monumenta Serica* 333 (1977–1978): 386. Wang Jia cites the *Record of the Feng and Shan Sacrifices* (*Fengshan ji* 封禪記) as his source, but this text is otherwise unknown. For more discussion on this passage, see my comments to Sinking Elm Incense at HC#55.

schema of spatial ordering; the center represents all that is culturally and aesthetically familiar, while the periphery represents the odorous and aberrant.[186]

The periphery is symbolized by the chimerical aromatic, Sinking Elm Incense, and for those steeped in medieval smell culture would immediately recognize as a playful twist on Sinking in Water Incense (*chenshui xiang* 沈水香), the descriptive, yet anomalous-sounding Chinese term for aloeswood.[187] First described in third century documents, aloeswood was a curiously non-buoyant, densely resinous heartwood that quickly became a favorite import for early Chinese perfumers. This incense is juxtaposed against the native aromatic, thoroughwort (*lan* 蘭), a herbaceous plant famed for its aroma and powerful therapeutic and apotropaic properties.[188] Thoroughwort is well represented and widely praised in classical literature. For example, the *Zuo Commentary* relates a story where thoroughwort is gifted in a dream by a heavenly messenger (*tianshi* 天使) to a young concubine in the state of Zheng. The woman is informed thoroughwort represents the "fragrance of the land" (*guoxiang* 國香) and she subsequently names her child, the heir to the throne, after the prized plant.[189] Moreover, in the early medieval period, thoroughwort was praised as a perfume suitable for a king, reputedly by no less an arbiter of refined taste than

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[186] As noted by Robert Campany, "to rule the world was to collect the world," and consequently Chinese visions of imperial order was based on "cosmographic colleting," where various objects out in the world were collected and categorized, see Campany, *Strange Writing*, 101–126.

[187] Blunting the allusion, Larry Foster translates Sinking Elm Incense (*chenyu zhi xian* 沉榆之香) as aloeswood, see Foster, "Wang Chia's *Shih-I*," 386.

[188] Seemingly starting sometime around the Song, *lan* increasingly referred to a variety of orchid, but older usages denoted a species of herbaceous *Eupatorium*, see Pan, *Shijing*, 144–45; Pan, *Chuci*, 20–21. For further discussion on the early medieval identity of *lan*, see my comments to Thoroughwort Aromatic at HC#29 and the Aromatic from Douliang at HC#34.

[189] Durrant, Li, and Schaberg, *Zuo Tradition*, 605; see also Sterckx, *Food, Sacrifice, Sagehood*, 172n.18; Milburn, "Aromas," 458; Gopal Sukhu, *The Shaman and the Heresiarch: A New Interpretation of the Li Sao* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2012), 104. Except for Sukhu, in all of these scholarly discussions *lan* is anachronistically rendered as orchid, see previous footnote. For further discussion of this passage, see my comments to Fragrance of the Land at HC#83A.

Confucius himself.[190] Together, thoroughwort and Sinking Elm Incense form a complimentary pairing of spatially indexed odors: one domestic, one foreign.

The Yellow Emperor, a famed cultural hero strongly associated with immortality cults since the Han, plays an important role as a cultural mediator in this tale. Placed in the hands of an eminent sage-ruler, pungent Sinking Elm Incense is brought into an aesthetic order and thus turned familiar. The Yellow Emperor functions like a collector of exotica attempting to control the periphery by subsuming it under a centric order. Moreover, this story acts as a proof text to demonstrate that resinous tropical incense has a place in the mytho-historical origins of Chinese civilization, obscuring its more recent introduction into the Chinese smellscape.

This chapter focuses on the figure who became the archetypal collector of exotica in the medieval period, Emperor Wu 漢武 of the Han (156–87 BCE, r. 141–87 BCE). Living at the beginning of the Western Han dynasty, we find his life embellished into legend in the years after his death, especially through a range of literary works that come to be classified as "accounts of the strange" (*zhiguai* 志怪). These works start to appear with greater frequency in the Six Dynasties (220–581) and can be characterized as short episodes or tales, oftentimes presented as records of historical events, that discuss strange customs and fantastic *flora* and *fauna* around the Chinese empire. Like the tale of the Yellow Emperor, Emperor Wu functions as both a collector and domesticator of foreign aromatic substances, symbolically bringing them into the fold of Chinese cultural norms and normative religious praxis.

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[190] Cai Yong 蔡邕 (132–192 CE) relates a story about Confucius travelling through a secluded valley and catching a glimpse of thoroughwort, thus causing him to exclaim, "Ah, thoroughwort is the fragrance of a king. It is now alone among the lush growth, with the multitudes of grasses as its companions. It is like a worthy person who does not accord with the time and comingles with commoners as his friends" 夫蘭當為王者香，今乃獨茂，與眾草為伍。譬猶賢者不逢時，與鄙夫爲倫也。Quoted in Fu, *Xiang wenhua*, 17.

Both pre-modern sources and modern scholarship will sometimes point to the reign of Emperor Wu during the Western Han as decisive in stimulating a shift in the smellscape of China, or as deftly termed by Olivia Milburn, a "perfume revolution."[191] Most of these arguments rest on the claim that Emperor Wu's campaigns of conquest to the west and south ushered in a wave of new luxury items and rare goods. The principal reasons for the increased circulation of these commodities are said to be found in the effects of territorial expansion, including an increase in tributary delegations bearing gifts and better access to strategic commercial trade routes. This chapter will focus on destabilizing the presumed evidence supporting the circulation of supra-regional aromatics during this period.

As we will see, in spite of Han-era records detailing the arrival of numerous exotica like pearls, kingfisher feathers, and woolen textiles, foreign aromatics are never mentioned as part of long-distance trade or foreign tribute. More importantly, what Western Han documents reveal is a world of smell that is firmly rooted in a local, native smellscape. This is further supported by archaeobotanical evidence recovered from a second century BCE tomb in southern China. Equally, often overlooked is the fact that the ongoing imperial unification of China brought together diverse geographical and climatological regions that possessed their own indigenous plant species, loosely divided between three vegetal belts:

[191] For example, Dinah Jung states that "archeological findings from tombs attest to the use of aromatics and suggest the hypothesis of strategic imports of foreign perfumery substances during the reign of Emperor Wu," Dinah Jung, "The Cultural Biography of Agarwood: Perfumery in Eastern Asia and the Asian Neighbourhood," *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain & Ireland* 23, no. 1 (2013): 107. Implicit or explicit acceptance of what I will call an "Emperor Wu hypothesis" can also be found in Berthold Laufer, *Chinese Pottery of the Han Dynasty* (Leiden: Brill, 1909), 180; Wolters, *Indonesian Commerce*, 97; Needham and Lu, *Science and Civilisation in China,* Vol. 5, Part 2, 140; Bedini, *Trail of Time*, 27–28, 29; Liu, *Songdai Xiangpu*, 25–26; Fu, *Xiang wenhua*, 34–36; Yang, "Xunxiang xisu wenhua," 175; and Zhang Meiya, *Fojiao xiangpu yu xiangqi quanshu* (Taibei: Shangzhou chuban, 2010): 25. Olivia Milburn takes a more cautious stance, stating that "although the extent of change in Western Han dynasty use of aromatics is debatable, in the longer term this opening of trade undoubtedly had an enormous impact," Milburn, "Aromas," 442.

the temperate north, the sub-tropical south, and the tropical far south. The discourses and contestations that emerged around smell during the Western Han were not between native Chinese odorants and distant exotica, but between the plants of the temperate north and the semi-exotic plants of the south.

This picture would change considerably during the Eastern Han. Beginning in the first century, when we have the earliest textual attestation of Chinese knowledge about aromatics originating east of the Pamir Mountains, and continuing over the next two centuries, we find a staggering growth in aromatic exotica arriving from the Mediterranean, the southern Arabian Peninsula, northern and southern India, the Malay Peninsula, the Indonesian Archipelago, and the Indochinese Peninsula. This relatively rapid change in the material culture of smell would not only further stimulate ongoing changes to the conceptions of the aromas of sacrifice (*xiang*), specifically to where *xiang* could be understood appropriately as "incense," but also energized the imagination of authors whose tales of the strange anthologies would talk about smell and smelly objects in novel ways not seen during the Western Han. The significant economic, political, and cultural disturbances that occurred during the Eastern Han and Six Dynasties were handled, in part, by these authors through the use of the figure of Emperor Wu. His stature was raised into that of a hero of Chinese culture who tamed the wild frontiers and received tribute from distant lands, among which a definitive subset of gifts were foreign aromatics.

2. The Divided Smellscape of Ancient China

As we have seen in regards to ancient Chinese sacrificial religion, the aroma of offerings such as grains, meats, and ales were particularly effective in drawing down the spirits and providing them with a higher order of nourishment. These food related substances, however, do not exhaust the catalogue of ancient Chinese odorants. In examining both historical documents and recent archaeological discoveries, we find that many other materials were utilized for their aesthetic qualities and religio-medical properties. Our first task is to best ascertain which odorants comprised the Chinese smellscape just prior to Emperor Wu's campaigns of expansion so as to set another comparative baseline. This will dovetail into a discussion of the salient odorants that can be culled from documents compiled under Emperor Wu's reign to see if a notable "perfume revolution" occurred as a direct result of the famed emperor's interest in foreign exotica. This will further branch off into a discussion of the Eastern Han where we start to see the clearest evidence for truly significant shifts in the Chinese landscape of smell and ultimately a change in the broader patterns of religious praxis.

Determining precisely which ancient plants would have been selected for their fragrant smell is a task fraught with difficulty for the contemporary olfactory historian. Since the act of smelling is not a neutral physiological activity, but a socialized practiced, the criteria for which materials pass over the sensory threshold from non-odorous to odorous, or moreover, which of those odors then constitute a "good" or "bad" smell, are going to be negotiated and regulated to some extent by cultural and historical factors. Not all things smell equally to every person. For example, the immediate joy or dismay of being served a ripe

durian may speak to some who have smelled or tasted the fruit before. A positive or negative response will be modified in part by cultural expectations around the peculiar odor of this fruit.

As I have already suggested, the unambiguous use of the term *xiang* as a second order taxon of "aromatics" does not appear in Chinese texts previous to the Eastern Han, thus there is no discussion of which odorants properly constitute such a classification in early Chinese texts.[192] Some of this speculative work, however, has already been undertaken by modern scholarship, to which we now turn. To get a general sense of the types of plant people in pre-imperial China may have valued for their smell we can again look to the *Book of Odes* for direction. This work remains an invaluable compendium of native botanicals growing in the North China Plains and areas around the Yangzi River Basin.[193] Among the nearly one-hundred and fifty plants listed in the poetry anthology, Wang Yingzhu, Ma Qinglin, and Li Yanxiang have identified eleven *flora*, in addition to wild turmeric spiced *chang*-ale, as possessing significant aromatic properties. These include mugwort (*ai* 艾), southernwood (*xiao* 蕭), white artemisia (*fan* 蘩), green artemisia (*hao* 蒿), water artemisia (*lou* 蒌),

[192] One potential exception may be the third century BCE "Categories of Land" (Diyuan 地員) chapter of the *Master Guan* (*Guanzi* 管子). While it does not speak of aromatics (*xiang*), it does identify two different sets of five "scented plants" (*chou* 臭 [sic]). The first set includes: wild angelica (*baizhi* 白芷), Sichuan pepper (*jiao* 椒), Sichuan lovage sprouts (*miwu* 蘼蕪), creeping fig (*bili* 薜荔; see Pan, *Chuci*, 42–43), and *lian* 連 (forsythia?). The second set includes: wild angelica, Sichuan lovage sprouts, Chinese lovage, *lian* (reading 蓮 as 連; forsythia?), and *yu* 與 (unknown), see GZ:19.58.1101 (cf. trans W. Allyn Rickett, *Guanzi: Political, Economic, and Philosophical Essays from Early China, Vol. 2* [Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1985], 269–70) and GZ:19.58.1106 (cf. trans. Rickett, 272–73), respectively. It appears, in certain contexts, *chou* may have functioned as an early second-order classifier for "scented plants." For example, *chou* is used in a similar way in the *Record of Rites* where it is used to designate scented material placed inside a small pouch and worn on the body; see discussion below. In later medieval works, a taxonomic order of aromatics is often signaled through the use of *xiang* as a suffix, such as we see in Sinking in Water Aromatic (aloeswood), Dragon Brain Aromatic (camphor), Chicken Tongue Aromatic (cloves), and so forth.

[193] According to Ping-ti Ho, the *Book of Odes* covers the regions of present-day Shanxi, Shaanxi, and Henan provinces, the Han River valley down to the middle Yangzi River valley, western and central Shandong, northwestern Anhui, and southern Hebei, see Ho, "Chinese Agriculture," 424; for a map of important sites noted in the *Book of Odes* anthology, see Waley, *Book of Songs*, ix.

pepperwort (*pin* 蘋), cogongrass/lemongrass (*mao* 茅[194]), bulrush (*pu* 蒲), thoroughwort (*xian* 蕳[195]), Sichuan pepper (*jiao* 椒), and yarrow (*shi* 蓍).[196] As discussed in the previous chapter, southernwood gained particular appeal as an apparent archetype for ancient odorants among later Song dynasty scholars of incense, presumably for its prescribed use in state sacrifice. Thoroughwort, noted in the introduction of this chapter, was traditionally prized for its strong scent and use as perfume, as well as its symbolic evocations of virtue and purity.

Based on a larger body pre-imperial works, other scholars have presented different enumerations (See Appendix 1 for overview and tabular comparison). For example, Fu Jingliang identifies eleven aromatic plants, in addition to the musk pod of the musk deer (*she* 麝), as representative of the pre-imperial period.[197] Fu's list overlaps in the selection of mugwort, southernwood, lemongrass, thoroughwort, Sichuan pepper, and wild turmeric, but offers several substitutions and additions, including sweet basil (*hui* 蕙), cassia (*gui* 桂), wild angelica (*zhi* 芷), Mulan magnolia flowers (*mulan* 木蘭), and Yulan magnolia flowers (*xinyi* 辛夷). To provide additional points of comparison, Liu Jingmin identifies eleven indigenous Chinese aromatics, inclusive of musk, but approximately half are unique from those noted

[194] *Mao* and several binomial variants came to denote different types of native and foreign grasses. Typically, when used in the most ancient sources, *mao* is identified as cogongrass, or *Imperata cylindrica*. This grass, however, is not often treated as having a salient smell and *mao* later came to refer to several other plants that have a more distinct odor, including lemongrass. When Fu Jingliang mentions *mao* below, he explicitly identifies it as a *Cymbopogon* "lemongrass" species. For more on the identity and ritual uses of *mao* and other native Chinese grasses, see my commentary to lemongrass at HC#36.

[195] For emending the reading of *jian* 蕳 to *xian* 閑, see BCGM:1.903 [蘭草/釋名].

[196] Wang, Ma, and Li, "Zhongguo gudai xiangliao," 64. Notably, these authors do not comment on their selection criteria. Not all of the Chinese plants have English common names, thus I have used the genus of the plant as an expedient. It should be underscored that the modern botanical identity of many ancient Chinese plants remains speculative.

[197] Fu, *Xiang wenhua*, 15–16. Lu does not comment on his selection criteria. He also notes that he does not consider his list comprehensive.

above.[198] Moreover, Joseph Needham and Lu Gwei-djin select a total of twelve aromatic substances, nine vegetal and three of animal origin, they consider to be "fully indigenous" to the early period of China. Eight of these are novel items not listed in the three previous sources.[199]

While such lists are extraordinarily helpful to orient our investigation, there are two points to highlight regarding these modern identifications of ancient aromatics. First, except for spiced *chang*-ale, and by association, wild turmeric, sacrificial offerings such as grains and animal flesh are not considered relevant for modern scholars studying ancient scent culture. This is in spite of the fact that the aromas of foods were among the most salient odorants of the ancient North China Plains ritual smellscape. This selection bias is due in part to the lasting influence of medieval perfuming arts that developed primarily around the use of incense. As we will see, this is also reflected in the semantic shift of *xiang* from meaning the aroma of a ritual food offering to a class of objects that generally did not encompass food and drink.

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[198] Liu, *Songdai Xiangpu*, 19. Liu is the most explicit in her selection methodology. She analyzed the "Aromatics" (*xiang*) divisions of the Northern Song encyclopedia, the *Imperial Readings of the Taiping Era*, and selected substances that were cited from pre-unification works.

[199] Needham and Lu, *Science and Civilisation in China,* Vol. 5, Part 2*,* 136–37. Needham and Lu do not explain their selection criteria. Confusingly, the table they provide showing the "Constituents of incense, and other aromatics" does not match their corresponding textual description. Namely, putchuk (costus) is highlighted in the text as an early native aromatic, but this is not indicated on the table. Moreover, two types of jasmine are noted in the text as being late additions to Chinese aromatics, but are identified as "early" on the table. Lastly, neither rue nor walnut-gum are noted in the textual description as "early," but nonetheless are marked as part of the early Chinese smellscape. Consequently, I have used Needham and Lu's textual description as the source for my listing here. Nevertheless, I still remain skeptical of several of their claims. For example, there is no evidence that spikenard root was used as an aromaitc until after the fall of the Han dynasty. A similar claim can be made in regards to the use of onycha, which is not discussed in textual sources until the Six Dynasties. Furthermore, evidence suggests that while native Chinese camphorwood was used for its resistance to fungal infections since the Warring States, camphor was not successfully extracted until the Song. Moreover, costus root is not cited in any pre-imperial documents and was known as a foreign import in the early medieval period. Lastly, it is debatable if *mao* referred to a type of citronella (or lemongrass) in the pre-unification period; it is better understood as cogongrass – a plant which is not particularly odorous.

Secondly, there is clear disagreement as to which materials were thought most salient to the ancient smellscape. A total of thirty-one unique odorants are collected in the above lists, but no single item in represented in all four. Of those items that appear in a majority of the lists are cogongrass/lemongrass, thoroughwort, wild turmeric (or *chang*-ale), sweet basil, and musk; of those that appear in two lists include mugwort, southernwood, Sichuan pepper, cassia, and wild angelica.

As an important corollary, additional distinctions should be made based on geographical distribution. Consequently, if we examine the *Songs of Chu* (*Chuci* 楚辭), an ancient poetry anthology of the southern state of Chu, an even wider array of fragrant *flora* can be added.[200] For example, Pan Fujun has identified twenty-two fragrant plants and an additional twelve aromatic trees noted among the natural imagery of the Chu lyrical poems.[201] Of these plants highlighted by Pan, only thoroughwort, sweet basil, wild angelica, Sichuan pepper, and cassia overlap with the ten items cited above. In my view, these five plants reflect a reasonable summation of the most important plants of the ancient smellscape that were not commonly cited for use in state sacrifice.

The large disparity in the total number of fragrant plants in the *Songs of Chu* as comparted to the *Book of Odes* is not solely due to a more inclusive selection criteria by Pan, nor should it be reduced to a heightened olfactory sensitivity of ancient southern poets. This disparity is also related to regional climate, with the sub-tropical and tropical south having a

[200] The *Songs of Chu* has a complex literary history, but the core of the work is traditionally ascribed to the poet-statesman Qu Yuan (ca. late 4th–early 3rd cent. BCE). It is evident that not all parts of the anthology were written by Qu Yuan and some works were clearly composed during the Han. Dating for the different stratifications of poems in the *Songs of Chu* is discussed in Sukhu, *Songs of Chu*, 213–20.
[201] Pan, *Chuci*, 8; see also Liu, *Songdai Xiangpu*, 19 (who accidentally omits *guihua* 桂花, *Osmanthus fragrans*). Pan does not explain his selection criteria. Curiously, he does not include either mugwort or southernwood in his list, even though they appear in the *Song of Chu* and other scholars, both pre-modern and modern, regularly treat these as aromatic plants.

greater botanical diversity and higher occurrence of sweet-smelling plants. Phytogeographically, the modern Chinese state can be divided into three distinct vegetal belts: the temperate plains of North China (North China belt), subtropical South China (South China Belt), and the tropical far south (South Asia belt).[202] The state of Chu sat squarely in the subtropical south, comprised of present-day Hunan, Hubei, and the immediately surrounding areas (but with a notable territorial spur that reached into temperate Shandong). This is important to our understanding of material scent culture for two reasons. First, warmer climates not only produce plants with more vibrantly colored flowers and sweeter tasting fruits, but also genera and species that generate higher concentrations of fragrant volatile oils. Secondly, warmer and more humid climates cause plants of the same species to produce more fragrant chemical compounds than ones occurring in more temperate regions. The greater biodiversity of the subtropical south simply smelled sweeter than the temperate north. This point will come into higher relief with the introduction of supra-regional tropical oleoresins and oleogums, botanical materials that naturally occur far less frequently across China.

In the wars of unification that brought an end the Warring States period (403–221 BCE), Chu was defeated by the state of Qin 秦 in 226 BCE, thus introducing not only a new supply of semi-exotic materia aromatica, but also a body of poetry (and other works now lost) that motivated distinctive beliefs and attitudes about scented plants. Because of the

[202] These three belts are roughly divided by the Qin Mountains (Qinling 秦岭), located at approximately at the 34th parallel of latitude and the Southern Mountains (Nanling 南嶺) at approximately at the 25th parallel, see Hui-Lin Li, "The Domestication of Plants in China: Ecogeographical Considerations," in *The Origins of Chinese Civilization*, ed. David N. Keightley (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1983), 22. A more nuanced analysis of these regions incorporating altitude, aridity, and other factors can be found in Joseph Needham, Gwei-Djen Lu, and Hsing-Tsung Huang, *Science and Civilisation in China Vol. 6: Biology and Biological Technology, Part I: Botany* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 35–47.

significant geographical variances of ancient China and the constantly moving boundaries of the imperial state, critical scholarship should not treat the ancient Chinese smellscape as monolithic, but instead as having important regional differences and distinctive olfactory practices. A firm separation between the north and south, however, is a product of the imagination, as a northern-southern cultural division has always been porous, but particular emphases and patterns of practice can be seen as delineated in our sources.

If we return again to the scented *flora* in the *Songs of Chu* anthology, several passages reveal how they were used in the subtropical south. Significantly, and perhaps against our expectations, burning aromatic plants is never addressed, nor is using them as a kind of incense to open communication with the spirits.[203] Almost universally, scented plants were used to adorn the body. In some cases, a cord was used to string (*ren* 紉) scented foliage and then tied directly to a garment's belt-sash as a fragrant ornament or charm (*pei* 佩). This is described for thoroughwort in the beginning of the famous poem "Encountering Sorrow" (*Lisao* 離騷).[204] Wild angelica is also described as being strung (*ren*), knotted (*jie* 結), and fastened (*lan* 攬), all of which can be understood as referring to being tied to a person's garment.[205] Additionally, in "Looking at Past Days in Sadness" (*Xi wangri* 惜往日), sweet

[203] This is surprising since one of the mythical founders of Chu is Zhu Rong 祝融, the traditional deity of fire, see Sukhu, *Songs of Chu*, 48–49n.11. Smoke is noted in "Summoning the Soul" (*Zhaohun* 招魂), often considered one of the oldest parts of the *Songs of Chu*, but it is emitted from torches with no apparent ritual significance, see Sukhu, 178. Sukhu suggests the torch smoke was used to ferret out quarry from the bushes, see Sukhu, 179n.9. For speculative arguments that Indo-Iranian *soma*/*haoma* rituals had entered the region of Chu by the late Warring States, see He Zhang, *Is Shuma the Chinese Analog of Soma/Haoma? A Study of Early Contacts between Indo-Iranians and Chinese*, Sino-Platonic Papers Number 216 (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania, 2011). Relevant to our investigation, He Zhang comments: "That the Chu people's ancestors had many Officers of Fire [*huozheng* 火正] demonstrates that the Chu *wu*/shaman practices were involved heavily with fire worship," Zhang, 23. If such is the case, it remains curious why unambiguous references to such practices appear to be entirely missing from the *Songs of Chu* anthology as preserved today.
[204] CC:1.3, trans. Sukhu, *Songs of Chu*, 35.
[205] See CC:1.7, CC:1.12, and CC:1.14, respectively.

basil is explicitly characterized as being worn as a belt charm (*pei*).[206] On other occasions, the use of a "belted sack" (*peiwei* 佩幃) is specifically described.[207]

This latter type of scenting equipment would be inscribed as "perfuming sachets" (*xun$_1$nang* 熏囊) on Western Han tomb inventory slips (to be discussed below) and more widely known in the medieval literature as "scenting sachets" (*xiangnang* 香囊). Ancient Chinese garments were not designed with pockets, thus numerous daily-use items were carried in a pouch attached to a belt-sash.[208] Adorning the body with a scenting sachet was arguably one of the most common olfactory practices of ancient China outside of sacrifice. In fact, bracketing the archaeological discoveries of incense burners from the late Warring States and Western Han, surviving textual evidence paints a world where the use of plant charms and small pouches of aromatics were among the principal methods of perfuming, second only perhaps to lustration customs with scented water.[209] The literary history of the use of scenting sachets can be traced to the *Record of Rites* where underage boys and girls were expected to wear a "pouch of scents" (*rongxiu* 容臭) on their belt-sash when meeting with their parents or venerated elders.[210] Donning the appropriate attire was considered part

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[206] CC:4.152, trans. Sukhu, *Songs of Chu*, 126. Sweet basil is also noted as being strung (*ren*) twice in "Encountering Sorrow," see CC:1.7 and CC:1.13, trans. Sukhu, *Songs of Chu*, 35, 37.
[207] CC:1.38 and CC:1.41, trans. Sukhu, *Songs of Chu*, 44 and 46, respectively.
[208] We see this explained in the "Family Standards" (*neize* 内則) chapter of the *Record of Rites*, where various articles for daily use are carried inside a satchel (*pan* 縏) when getting dressed, see LJZY:27.3167 and brief comment in Wang Shujin, Dong Xianyan, and Chen Gumiao, "Mawangdui Han mu chutu xiangnang de tanjiu," *Sichou* 48, no. 9 (2011): 58. Objects of self-adornment also functioned as tokens of rank and symbols of future aspiration, see comments in Sukhu, *Shaman*, 89; for the later medieval Chinese Buddhist adoption of similar adornment practices, see Copp, *Body Incantatory*, esp. pp. 44–54.
[209] We will return to bathing and ritual lustration in Chapter 5, Section 8. For more on the textual history of scenting sachets through the medieval period, see my comments to the scenting sachet at HC#97.
[210] LJZY:27.3167. Zheng Xuan's commentary to the *Record of Rites* clarifies that *rongxiu* refers to a fragrant object (*xiangwu* 香物), see LJZY:27.3167. I read *rong* 容 as meaning "to contain," and thus by extension referring to a "containing device," such as a pouch. This is not the only interpretation of this term. The Tang subcommentary, citing a Mr. Yu 庾氏, notes that because the scenting sachet enhanced one's appearance (*xingrong* 形容), it was called, apparently, an "appearance scent" (*rongxiu*), see LJZY:27.3167. It is worth

of a morning routine in preparation for service to one's parents. Even though more information about their usage is found scattered throughout the *Songs of Chu*, it appears the practice of adorning the body with scenting sachets was practiced in the north and south alike.

Gopal Sukhu has analyzed the symbolism scattered throughout "Encountering Sorrow" arguing that fragrant plants were not only part of an olfactory aesthetic of ornamentation, but were emblematic of ritual purity, hidden virtue, and divine presence.[211] Consequently, a loss of purity and virtue, or the lack of spiritual presence, could be called to mind through the adornment of substances less fragrant than the idealized scents of thoroughwort, wild angelica, or sweet basil. In such scenarios we find materials like mugwort, prickly ash (*sha* 椥), dung, and dirt being packed into these "scenting" pouches.[212] This led to a rich field of allusion where smell and virtue were treated as analogous. "The sense of smell and the nature of odors," James McHugh argues, "lend themselves to being a model of the epistemology of values in general."[213] Thus, scents and odors could be strategically employed as structural metaphors to give shape to an otherwise amorphous phenomenon such as virtue. In turn, we find one's virtue could be envisioned as spreading and influencing others, or remaining (visually) unnoticed in spite of its presence, or being overtaken by stronger opposing forces, all important themes for early Chinese poets who lamented the corrupt affairs of state.

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noting that *xiu* 臭 (also *chou*) predates the use of *xiang* to denote a class of fragrant objects, specifically fragrant plants, see footnote 192 above.

[211] Sukhu, *Shaman*, 87–115.

[212] CC:1.36 and CC:1.41, trans. Sukhu, *Songs of Chu*, 44 and 46.

[213] McHugh, *Sandalwood and Carrion*, 74.

The most popular ritual specialists in the Chu region during the Warring States and Han were *wu*-shamans 巫 (also called spirit mediums), figures who were well-versed in variety of occult arts, including sacrifice, divination, and exorcism. But in the early Chinese imagination, *wu*-shamans were closely connected to mediumship and spirit possession.[214] According to Sukhu, poems like "Encountering Sorrow" and "Lord of the Clouds" (*Yunzhong jun* 雲中君) depict *wu*-shamans as engaging purificatory acts, such as ritual lustrations with scented water and adornment with fragrant plants, to "make themselves attractive to the spirits" in preparation for their descent.[215] A similar point is raised by Di Lu and Vivienne Lo, who, citing "Encountering Sorrow," claim that scenting sachets would have been "part of a person's accoutrement used to entice good spirits and ward off malevolent influences."[216] In such cases, bodily cleanliness, olfactory hygiene, ritual purity, and divine presence were collapsed into one conceptual field. Equally, the governing logic behind contact with the spirits was not motivated by alimentation, but adornment, attraction, and embodiment. It should be noted, however, that "Encountering Sorrow" never speaks of malevolent forces or evil spirits, but merely the fading of favorable scents as symbolic of the

[214] See discussion in Von Falkenhausen, "Spirit Mediums," 294–95; Sukhu, *Shaman*, 75–77. Previous to the Han, *wu*-shamans were routinely identified as both men and women, but during the Han they were increasingly identified as women, see Von Falkenhausen, 288–89. A dated, but still valuable, presentation on *wu*-shamans can be found in Arthur Waley, *The Nine Songs: A Study of Shamanism in Ancient China* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1955).

[215] Sukhu, *Shaman*, 77. How shamanic possession worked during this period remains unknown. There has been much debate in scholarship if *wu*-shamans entered into a state of ecstatic trance, but there is nothing in our early or medieval sources to clearly support this claim. Arthur Waley notes that dance was a common practice attributed to *wu*-shamans, but also that it was far from the only occult art they practiced, see Waley, *Shamanism*, 9. Sukhu reads two episodes of "what we would call trance" in "Encountering Sorrow," but admits these passages are more related to visionary travel or spirit travel than the mechanisms of possession, see Sukhu, *Shaman*, 81. Lothar Von Falkenhausen, on the other hand, thinks the reason trance is omitted in the *Rites of Zhou* and later Han commentaries on this text is because the authors has thought it was too obvious to include, see Von Falkenhausen, "Spirit Mediums," 295.

[216] Lu and Lo, "Scent and Synaesthesia," 40.

loss of virtue, political status, and access to the divine.[217] Moreover, the *Songs of Chu* never address the use of fragrant smoke to communicate with the spirits.

In summary, by using the two oldest poetry anthologies, the *Book of Odes* and the *Songs of Chu*, as virtual regional herbariums, we can investigate which substances were highlighted by poets as comprising the ancient smellscape. As discussed, a core group of five plants came be known in texts of both the north and the south: thoroughwort, sweet basil, wild angelica, Sichuan peppercorn, and cassia. Arguably the most important olfactory practice involving these aromatics was bodily adornment, chiefly through the use of scenting sachets and plant charms, but also through infused waters of lustration and, as we will see in the following chapter, garment fumigation.[218] We can also infer a distinctive ritual logic at play in the *Songs of Chu* where the adornment of scents was symbolic of purity, thus making the *wu*-shaman a suitable receptacle of divinity and evoking the presence of spirits. In turning to the Western Han, we will find these olfactory practices continued unabated and some were even adopted into state sacrificial rites.

3. The Regional Smellscape of the Western Han

Archaeobotanical evidence provides an important supplement to our textual documents. Nevertheless, it should be remembered that tombs are no less neutral in terms of representing the available aromatics that were "out there" in the world. Recognizing these limitations,

[217] It is often noted in secondary scholarship that a common Chu practice was to hang mugwort dolls on doorways to expel miasmatic influences, but this citation first appears in the *Record of Seasonal Rites of Jing Chu* (*Jing Chu suishi ji* 荊楚歲時記), a text from the early sixth century, see Zhang, *Shuma*, 20. It remains to be seen if this was a pre-imperial religious practice; it was likely not.

[218] We might wonder if the durability of metal and ceramic incense burners, and the relative fragility of silk and fabric scenting sachets, have led to the improper perception of the importance of the former over the latter.

they still provide useful information regarding which scented substances were readily accessible and, moreover, deemed worthy of collection and preservation. In this regard, no other archaeological discovery compares in importance for the history of Western Han smell culture than the tomb complex at Mawangdui 馬王堆 in Changsha, Hunan. Changsha was an imperial fiefdom under the Western Han that controlled the southernmost territory once occupied by the state of Chu. Mawangdui was excavated between 1972 and 1973 by the Hunan Provincial Museum, and the two intact tombs, dated to between 186 BCE and 168 BCE, have produced a number of studies devoted to the artifacts of Western Han smell culture. The most dazzling assortment of goods were recovered from Tomb 1, constructed to hold the remains of Xin Zhui 辛追 (d. ca. 163 BCE), the wife of the enfeoffed chancellor for the kingdom of Changsha, Li Cang 利蒼 (d. 186 BCE) who was buried in Tomb 2. This latter tomb had been plundered by grave robbers before excavation began. Tomb 3, which remained intact, held the remains of a man in his thirties who is believed to be the chancellor's son.

No less than nine different kinds of scented botanical materials were discovered in Xin Zhui's tomb.[219] Utilizing microscopic cross-section cellular analysis, these items were identified as *Zanthoxylum armatum* (Sichuan pepper[220]), *Eupatorium fortunei*

[219] Hunan sheng bowuguan and Zhongguo kexueyuan kaogu yanjiusuo, *Changsha Mawangdui yi hao Han mu fajue jianbao*, Vol. 1 (Beijing: Wenwu chubanshe, 1973), 35–36; Hunan nongxueyuan, *Changsha Mawangdui yi hao Han mu chutu dongzhiwu biaoben de yanjiu* (Beijing: Wenwu chubanshe, 1978), 21–42; Liu Lixian, "Changsha Mawangdui san hao Han mu chutu yaowu jianding yanjiu," *Kaogu* 9 (1989): 856–60; Lu and Lo, "Scent and Synaesthesia," 43. Inadvertently repeating an identification error by Lu and Lo, Olivia Milburn distinguishes Sichuan pepper (*Zanthoxylum armatum*) from *Z. bungeanum*, thus providing a list of ten total aromatics. None of the official Mawangdui catalogues list the latter. Additionally, Milburn identifies *Lingusticum sinense* as licorice root, but it should be noted that Chinese licorice (*gancao* 甘草) was not recovered at Mawangdui. For the relevant sections, see Lu and Lo, "Scent and Synaesthesia," 42 and Milburn, "Aromas," 445.

[220] Sichuan pepper is a broad name for the dried fruit follicles of several plants in the genus *Zanthoxylum*. While associated with Sichuan cuisine, *Zanthoxylum* spp. occurs across China.

(thoroughwort), *Anthoxanthum nitens* (syn. *Hierochloe odorata*; sweetgrass), *Magnolia denudata* (Yulan magnolia[221]), *Alpinia officinarum* (galangal), *Zingiber officinale* (ginger), *Asarum forbesii* (wild ginger), *Ligusticum sinense* (Chinese lovage[222]), and *Cinnamomum japonicum* (cassia[223]). These aromatic materials were found inside a variety of storage containers and scenting equipment, including a set of lacquered toiletry boxes, an embroidered aromatic pillow, six scenting sachets, six herbal pouches, and a pair of painted ceramic vessels that functioned as incense burners.[224] The discovery of the two ceramic censers was particularly revealing because they contained identifiable plant remnants, a great rarity among archaeobotanical finds. One ceramic censer, found in the southern compartment of the crypt and identified as item number 286 in the official archaeological report, contained the ashen remains of sweetgrass while the other, found in the northern compartment and identified as item 433, held a mixture of galangal root, sweetgrass root, Chinese lovage root, and Yulan magnolia flower buds.[225]

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[221] Some authorities now differentiate between the *Magnolia* genus and the *Yulania* subgenus, in which case this plant is now identified as *Yulania denudata*. In either case it is still distinct from the Mulan magnolia, or *Magnolia liliiflora* (*Yulania liliiflora*).

[222] The original reports from the 1970s cite this material as *Ligusticum et. Jeholense* Nakai et Kitagawa, but the taxa is poorly understood and sometimes considered synonymous with different species. I follow Di Lu and Vivienne Lo in identifying it as *Ligusticum sinense,* see Lu and Lo, "Scent and Synaesthesia," 43.

[223] The original reports from the 1970s cite this material as *Cinnamomum chekiangensis* Nakai, but this now generally considered a variant of *Cinnamomum japonicum*, specifically *Cinnamomum japonicum* Siebold (syn. *Cinnamomum japonicum var. chekiangense* (Nakai) M.B.Deng & G.Yao).

[224] Chen Dongjie and Li Ya, "Cong Mawangdui yi hao mu chutu xiangliao yu xiangju tanxi Handai yongxiang xisu," *Nandu xuetan (renwen shehui kexueban)* 29, no. 1 (2009): 6–12. As we will see next chapter, the use if the term "incense burner" (*xianglu* 香爐), from a strict perspective, is anachronistic to this period. There are no tomb inventory slips for these ceramic vessels, but they are clearly modeled upon older chalice-shaped sacrificial bronzes. In alignment with modern Chinese archaeological practice, scholarly Mawangdui publications refer to these ceramic vessels as *xun1lu* 熏爐, which might be rendered as "perfuming braziers" or "diffusion braziers." This Chinese name aligns with what we know as the oldest name for this type of scenting equipment (i.e., without the graph *xiang*).

[225] Hunan sheng bowuguan, *Mawangdui yi hao Han mu*, Vol. 1, 125.

Table 2.1: Aromatics Recovered from Mawangdui Tomb 1

Chinese Identification	Common Name	Binomial Nomenclature	Plant Material
huajiao 花椒	Sichuan pepper	*Zanthoxylum armatum*	seed & seed husk
jiang 姜	ginger	*Zingiber officinale*	rhizome
gaoben 藁本	Chinese lovage	*Ligusticum sinense*	rhizome
gaoliangjiang 高良姜	galangal	*Alpinia officinarum*	rhizome
peilan 佩蘭	thoroughwort	*Eupatorium fortunei*	herbage (foliage & stems)
maoxiang 茅香	sweetgrass	*Anthoxanthum nitens* (syn. *Hierochloe odorata*)	rhizome
guipi 桂皮	cassia	*Cinnamomum japonicum*	bark
xinyi 辛夷	Yulan magnolia	*Magnolia denudata*	flower bud
duheng 杜衡	wild ginger	*Asarum forbesii*	rhizome
Legend: Grey indicates aromatics found in incense burners			

The rectangular embroidered pillow was stuffed with thoroughwort leaves.[226] Four of the six scenting sachets, identified as "perfuming sachets" (*xun$_1$nang*) on the tomb inventory slips, measured between 32.5 centimeters and 50 centimeters long, and thus were too large to be worn on a belt-sash. They were likely meant to be hung on furniture, such as depicted in the anonymous Eastern Han narrative poem "A Peacock Southeast Flew" (*Kongque dongnan fei* 孔雀東南飛). The poem describes attaching scenting sachets to the sides of a bed frame.[227] One of these pouches from Tomb 1 was filled with the rootstalks of sweetgrass, while another was filled with Sichuan peppercorns. The final two contained a mixture of sweetgrass and magnolia flower buds.[228] Lastly, in addition to these four pouches, the corpse

[226] Hunan sheng bowuguan, 71 (identified as item 440); Chen and Li, "Mawangdui yi hao mu," 6.
[227] See translation in Anne Birrell, *New Songs from a Jade Terrace: An Anthology of Early Chinese Love Poetry, Translated with Annotations and an Introduction* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1982), 53–62.
[228] Hunan yixueyuan, *Changsha Mawangdui yi hao Han mu gushi yanjiu* (Beijing: Wenwu chubanshe, 1980), 262; Chen and Li, "Mawangdui yi hao mu," 6; Wang, Dong, and Chen, "Mawangdui Han mu," 59; Lu and Lo, "Scent and Synaesthesia," 42. These are identified in the excavation reports as items 65-1, 65-2, 65-4, and 442. To these items we can add the six herbal pouches (items 355-1, 355-2, 355-3, 355-4, 355-5, and 355-6). The contents varied from simple Sichuan peppercorns, to a mixture of seven items, including Sichuan peppercorns,

of Xin Zhui was found clutching two embroidered scenting sachets. These contained Sichuan peppercorns, cassia bark, sweetgrass, and galangal root.[229]

The discovery of these aromatics in many of the storage compartments surrounding the coffin, as well as in possession of the corpse, speaks not only to their importance in Han mortuary practices, but hints to their practical utility in daily life. Quotidian uses were not limited to perfuming and olfactory aesthetics. Medical manuscripts recovered from Tomb 3 at Mawangdui attest to the therapeutic and apotropaic applications of scented *flora*, with Sichuan pepper, ginger, and cassia, appearing regularly in prescribed treatments.[230] Since Xin Zhui is believed to have suffered from heart disease, it is possible the pair of embroidered scenting sachets were related to her treatment.[231] These therapeutic applications of aromatics, more so than their sacrificial use as divine nourishment or symbols of divine presence, will resonate with the medieval stories of Emperor Wu that we will turn later in this chapter.

There are three further points worth considering in terms of the cache of aromatics found at Mawangdui. First, all nine of the plants were regionally available, with most growing within the formal boundaries of the Western Han empire. While the phytogeographic boundaries are scattered – for example, cassia was most likely sourced from

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cassia bark, sweet grass, galangal root, ginger root, wild ginger root, and Mulan magnolia buds, see Hunan yixueyuan, *Mawangdui yi hao Han mu*, 262. Mawangdui Tomb 3 contained additional aromatic pouches, including one filled with sweet grass and galangal root (item 130) and one filled with thoroughwort, galangal root, cassia bark, Sichuan peppercorns, and ginger root (item 172). Another embroidered pillow was also discovered, again containing thoroughwort (item 150). Finally, within the coffin, a silk bag was found containing sweet grass, cassia bark, Sichuan peppercorns, Chinese lovage, and the mineral cinnabar. See Liu, "Mawangdui san hao Han mu," 856; Wang, Dong, and Chen, "Mawangdui Han mu," 62; Lu and Lo, "Scent and Synaesthesia," 43.

[229] Hunan yixueyuan, *Mawangdui yi hao Han mu*, 262. The initial excavation report claimed the two pouches, which were twelve centimeters long, contained only generic aromatic herbs, see Hunan sheng bowuguan, *Mawangdui yi hao Han mu*, Vol. 1, 28.

[230] Harper, *Early*, 103–04.

[231] Hunan yixueyuan, *Mawangdui yi hao Han mu*, 263–264; see also Lu and Lo, "Scent and Synaesthesia," 43–45. The above theory does not account for why the pouches were placed with the corpse, however. It is possible they were thought to have a continuing therapeutic effect in the afterlife or were simply among the favored items of the deceased.

the southeastern coast, sweetgrass from the temperate north, and galangal from the tropical frontiers of the far south – none of the recovered *flora* were transported over exceptionally long distances. The finds at Mawangdui thus point to a robust interregional trade of perfumes, spices, and drugs by the second century BCE, but not necessarily an active supra-regional movement of aromatics through the Western Regions (i.e. Central Asia) or across the Southern Seas (i.e. maritime Southeast Asia) into China. Importantly, as Milburn has noted, galangal was not likely cultivated within the Han empire when the tombs at Mawangdui were sealed, thus suggesting there was trade with the kingdom of Nanyue 南越 in the far south before it fell to Emperor Wu's military forces half a century later.[232] Chinese trade with the far south is likely very ancient, and if the identity of the *yu* plant used to spice sacrificial *chang*-ale was indeed a wild turmeric, as discussed in the previous chapter, this would have necessarily been imported into the temperate north during the Zhou.[233] In either regard, the aromatics of Mawangdui all represent local or regional materials.

The second point focuses our attention on the materiality of these native Chinese plants. Five of the nine aromatic botanical types were chiefly comprised of rhizomatic rootstalks. The reason for harvesting these parts of the plants' anatomy is fairly straightforward. As certain species of plants grow, fragrant volatile oils are deposited into one or more different structures of the plant. For example, the cassia tree concentrates most of its volatile oils in its bark (and some it int flower buds), while the Yulan magnolia accumulates scented oils in its flowers. Ginger, wild ginger, galangal, Chinese lovage, and

[232] Milburn, "Aromas," 446–47. As we will see below, there were claims that galangal was cultivated in Chang'an during the reign of Emperor Wu, but it is impossible to verify if this was the case.
[233] See brief discussion of this point in my comments to wild turmeric at HC#7.

sweetgrass, on the other hand, all have creeping subterranean rootstalks where pungent volatile oils gather in the highest concentrations.

Recognizing the materiality of early Chinese scent culture is critical. For one, the Mawangdui cache of aromatics helps clarify ambiguities in our textual sources that infrequently explicate which botanical parts were prized for their fragrant qualities (or medicinal attributes). Consequently, it is important to underscore that flowers are rarely encountered in early documents as sources of perfume.[234] The dovetails into an important corollary regarding what has become a traditional English translation practice, namely the inaccurate rendering of ancient *lan* (thoroughwort) as orchid, *zhi* (angelica) as iris, and *yujin* (turmeric) as tulip. These translations obscure the material realities of early Chinese smell culture that valued roots and rhizomes. This contrasts with many modern, Euro-centric sensibilities where roses and other flowers are often the primary focus of olfactory culture.

If we narrow our focus to the botanical remnants recovered from the pair of ceramic censers, rhizomes also formed the majority, constituting three out of four types. Writing in 1956, nearly two decades before the Mawangdui tombs were discovered, Yamada Kentarō explained the region around the Yellow River basin in the temperate Chinese north was isolated from the areas of the world that naturally produced incense (*kōyaku* 香薬).[235] In the context of Yamada's expertise as a professional perfumer, true incense referred to the vibrantly scented tropical tree resins and gums, especially frankincense and myrrh from the Arabian Peninsula and East African coast. Yamada's commentary is insightful because it directs attention towards the types of materials that were treated as suitable for burning in

[234] The evidence of magnolia flowers at Mawangdui is an important exception. We also find the peony noted in several recipes collected in the Mawangdui medical manuscripts, see Harper, *Early*, 238, 276, 277.
[235] Yamada, *Tōzai kōyaku shi*, 319.

early China (outside of sacrificial grains and meats). If the contents of the ceramic censers at Mawangdui can be extrapolated into a more generalized pattern of plant selection for this period, then rhizomes were among the most important native aromatics for burning. By the early Eastern Han, at least according to prescriptive textual accounts, the leaves of sweet basil appear to have grown in importance.[236] Only with the expansion of supra-regional trade later in the medieval period do we find the use of resins, gums, and scented woods as incense.

This leads to the third point regarding the aromatics at Mawangdui and early Chinese incense more broadly. As articulated by scholar Zhao Chao, native Chinese scented botanicals are typically difficult to burn, and moreover, the smoke they produce is not particularly fragrant.[237] If we look again to the pair of censers, we find their contents comprised lightly processed and loosely torn bits of roots, stems, and flower buds, all of which when incinerated would have produced billows of smoke with only a subtle scent. This would stand in stark contrast to the strongly scented exotic resins and resin saturated woods of later centuries that were more typically set atop charcoals and left to slowly smolder. In contrast to the burned sweetgrass at Mawangdui, this indirect burning method allowed the complex fragrances of things like frankincense, aloeswood, and sandalwood to spread with substantially less smoke – especially when the raw materials were crushed, blended with honey, and made into small pellets in accordance with the standard medieval

[236] This will be detailed more clearly in Chapter 3, Section 5. Notably, however, I am not aware of any archaeological excavations of Han tombs that have yielded sweet basil, although in many cases only unidentifiable burned ash remains.

[237] Zhao Chao, "Xiangpu yu gudai fenxiang zhi feng," *Zhongguo dianji yu wenhua* 4 (1996): 49; see also Milburn, "Aromas," 442–43, 448, 459. A slightly more nuanced claim is made by Sun Ji who notes that certain grasses in the north were not particularly fragrant, thus potentially delaying the development of scenting equipment. This was in contrast to the far south where chalice-shaped censers are believed to have originated, see Sun, *Handai wuzhi wenhua*, 413.

incense processing procedure. This change in the materiality of incense will also influence the imaginary world on display in medieval tales of the strange.

Moving away from the archaeobotanical evidence of Mawangdui, and to further establish a comparative baseline for later changes in the medieval smellscape, we are fortunate to have a record of notable scented plants known during Emperor Wu's early reign just previous to his campaigns of expansion. Around 138 BCE, Sima Xiangru 司馬相如 (179–117 BCE), a court official and poet from the region of Shu, was summoned to the Han court where he composed a rhapsody about Shanglin Park, a massive imperial hunting preserve located to the southwest of the capital Chang'an.[238] The park was stocked with many kinds of rare and exotic *flora*, *fauna*, stones, minerals, and other objects. Sima Xiangru's poem is a poetic masterwork on the sights, sounds, and scents of the gardens, devoting separate sections to thematically similar groupings of plant and animal life.

The "Rhapsody on Shanglin Park" (*Shanglin fu* 上林賦) identifies over twenty different kinds of plants that perfume the environment.[239] With typical flourish, Sima Xiangru writes: "bent and blown by the wind, they emit fragrance, waft pungence – so redolent and

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[238] For a summary on the issues surrounding the dating of Sima Xiangru's poem, see David R. Knechtges, *Wen Xuan or Selection of Refined Literature, Volume Two: Rhapsodies on Sacrifices, Hunting, Travel, Sightseeing* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1987): 73, 75. For comments on the fantastic elements of the poet's life, see Martin Kern, "The 'Biography of Sima Xiangru' and the Question of the Fu in Sima Qian's Shiji," *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 123, no. 2 (2003): 307–10.

[239] The *Rhapsody on Shanglin Park* is located in a handful of sources, one of which is the "Biography of Sima Xiangru" (*Sima Xiangru liezhuan* 司馬相如傳) in the *Book of Han*, see HS:57.2547–2575, trans. Knechtges, *Wen Xuan*, Vol. 2, 72–114. The proper division of plant names has long been debated; I follow the enumeration suggested by David Knechtges and refer the reader to his translation and commentary of the relevant passage, see Knechtges, 84–87. The list of fragrant plants, with appropriate emendations to match the translation conventions of the present work, is as follows: 1. *luhui* 綠蕙 (sweet basil); 2. *jiangli* 江離 (Sichuan lovage); 3. *miwu* 蘼蕪 (Sichuan lovage sprouts); 4. *liuyi* 流夷 (peony); 5. *jielu* 結縷 (knot-thread); 6. *lisuo* 戾莎 (galingale); 7. *jieche* 揭車 (loosestrife); 8. *heng* 衡 (wild ginger); 9. *lan* 蘭 (thoroughwort); 10. *gaoben* 槁本 (Chinese lovage); 11. *shegan* 射干 (blackberry lily); 12. *zijiang* 茈薑 (purple ginger); 13. *ranghe* 蘘荷 (mioga ginger); 14. *zhen* 蔵 (winter cherry); 15. *cheng* 橙 (ground cherry); 16. *ruo* 若 (galangal); 17. *sun* 蓀 (calamus); 18. *xianzhi* 鮮枝 (malabar nightshade); 19. *huangli* 黃礫 (virgin's bower); 20. *jiang* 蔣 (water bamboo); 21. *zhu* 芧 (chufa); and 22. *qingfa* 青薠 (green sedge).

scented – and a myriad of perfumes issue forth."[240] Not surprisingly, several items overlap with the aromatics discovered at Mawangdui, including wild ginger, thoroughwort, Chinese lovage, and galangal, as well as others plants that are attested in the *Songs of Chu*, such as sweet basil and loosestrife. This suggests the "Rhapsody on Shanglin Park" shared an olfactory vocabulary with the *Songs of Chu*, if not also a real-world overlapping distribution of fragrant botanical species.

Not all of the plants and trees cited in the rhapsody, however, were naturally indigenous to the temperate climate of Chang'an. The most curious citation, appearing towards the end of the poem, is the cultivation of Iranian grapes (*putao* 蒲陶). If we can trust the reported arrival of Sima Xiangru in Chang'an in 138 BCE, this is the earliest mention of grapes in Chinese literature. It even predates the reputed first introduction of the grapevine by over a decade when Zhang Qian 張騫 (d. 113BCE) returned from the Western Regions in approximately 125 BCE.[241] The repeated lore of Zhang Qian "opening" contact with the distant western frontiers need not be taken literally and the presence of grapes in Chang'an may reflect the fact that long-distance trade was already taking place earlier than imperial

[240] 應風披靡，吐芳揚烈，郁郁菲菲，衆香發越。HS:57.2553, trans. (with minor changes) in Knechtges, *Wen Xuan*, Vol. 2, 87.

[241] Knechtges, *Wen Xuan*, Vol. 2, 92n.206; Laufer, *Sino-Iranica*, 221. According to the *Book of Han*, both grapes (*Vitis vinifera*) and foreign alfalfa (*Medicago sativa*) were cultivated in China after the return of envoys who were sent to the Western regions following the return of Zhang Qian, see A. F. P. Hulsewé, *China in Central Asia: The Early Stage, 125 B.C.-A.D. 23: An Annotated Translation of Chapters 61 and 96 of The History of the Former Han Dynasty* (Leiden: Brill, 1979), 132–33, 135–36. The precise dates of Zhang Qian's expedition remains unknown. Some speculations regarding times of departure and return are summarized in Hulsewé, 209n.774. Later medieval sources proclaim Zhang Qian returned with several other exotic plants, including walnuts, pomegranates, coriander, garlic, and safflower, see Roger Greatrex, *The Bowu Zhi: An Annotated Translation* (Stockholm: Föreningen för Orientaliska Studier, 1987), 236–37n.34 and sources cited therein.

Chinese sources claim.[242] This point was established by Zhang Qian himself.[243] As noted by Edward Schafer, viticulture was well suited to the northerly climate, but this was not the case for several other plants reputedly growing in Emperor Wu's hunting preserve. Trees such as the mandarin orange (*gan* 甘; *Citrus reticulata*), bitter orange (*cheng* 橙; *Citrus ×aurantium* [sic]), or even the common camphor (*yuzhang* 豫章; *Cinnamomum camphora*), "could hardly have borne fruit or even survived in the north," Schafer warns, "unless elaborate arrangements had been made for their protection."[244]

There are two points to raise from this excursus on plant indigeneity. The first is that the "Rhapsody on Shanglin Park" was not encumbered by an implicit aim to describe *flora* only capable of surviving in Chang'an, or in the case of grapevines, *flora* that were even regionally available. The creative poetic imagination was allowed to describe an idealized botanical world of magnificent variety. Yet, of the approximately two dozen aromatic plants that were cited, all were endemic to China. Items like galangal were from the far south, but there is no mention of aromatics from far-distant realms, such as Arabian frankincense, Mediterranean storax, or Indian gum guggul. The olfactory imagination of Sima Xiangru

[242] For example, *Mr. Lu's Spring and Autumn Annals* (*Lüshi chunqiu* 呂氏春秋), compiled around 240 BCE, notes both salt from Bactria (Da Xia 大夏) and musical instruments from even further west, see discussion of this text and other relevant passages in Tsung-I Jao and Léon Vandermeersch, "Les relations entre la Chine et le monde iranien dans l'Antiquité: historiquement revisitées à la lumière des découvertes archéologiques du dernier quart de siècle," *Bulletin de l'École française d'Extrême-Orient* 9 (2006): 211–12.

[243] As is widely noted, while Zhang Qian was in Bactria (Da Xia; Tukhāra in Sanskrit sources), just north of the Hindu Kush, he claims to have seen products originating from southwestern China. He was informed they were procured by Bactrian merchants in northern India, see Hulsewé, *China in Central Asia*, 211. For the long history of the "Southwest Silk Road" that connected Yunnan to India, as well as a detailed discussion of the numerous routes connecting the two regions, see Bin Yang, "Horses, Silver, and Cowries: Yunnan in Global Perspective," *Journal of World History* 15, no. 3 (2004): 281–322.

[244] Edward H. Schafer, "Hunting Parks and Animal Enclosures in Ancient China," *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient* 11, no. 3 (1968): 328. These trees are listed in Knechtges, *Wen Xuan*, Vol. 2, 91 (line 202) and 94 (line 224).

remains thoroughly tied to a native Chinese smellscape.[245] This mirrors the aromatics recovered from the tombs as Mawangdui that were sealed earlier in the second century BCE.

Secondly, the reliability of Sima Xiangru's work was questioned by his contemporaries, and many scholars today consider the "Rhapsody on Shanglin Park" to be a poetic fabrication exalting the power and dominion of Emperor Wu over his empire. The growth of the Han empire under Emperor Wu would be symbolically captured in later medieval works through vast construction projects in Shanglin Park as the emperor sought to include the marvelous items gathered during his conquests.[246] The confines of the imperial

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[245] One point of contention remains the identity of *chantan* 檀, which could be understood as an early transcription of Sanskrit *candana*, or sandalwood; such speculation is noted in Knechtges, *Wen Xuan*, Vol. 2, 94n.223. Schafer has shown that *tan* 檀 was a native Chinese rosewood, possibly *Dalbergia hupeana*, that grows across a vast terrain of southern and eastern China, see Schafer, "Rosewood," 129–130. Schafer was mistaken, however, in claiming the name for rosewood was only applied to Indic sandalwood in the fifth century; it is clearly used in the earliest strata of Buddhist translations in the second century. Outside of the use by Sima Xiangru, *tan* also appears in the *Book of Han* as the name of a tree found in Kaśmīra; see translation and comments in Hulsewé, *China in Central Asia*, 105–06, 106n.214. Importantly, however, the sandalwood tree, *Santalum album*, does not occur in northern India. Moreover, the other trees noted in the *Book of Han* as found in Kaśmīra are all native to China, such as the "oak" (*huai* 櫰) and "catalpa" (*zi* 梓); see Hulsewé, 106 (I retain Hulsewé's translations). Thus, it appears *tan* was not intended in this case to transcribe *candana* as much as function as a botanical analogue to a foreign species, which may or may not have been the sandalwood tree. Beyond the citation to grapes, given the absence of any other supra-regional *flora* in the "Rhapsody on Shanglin Park," I am not confident in reading *chantan* as *candana*, but it remains an intriguing possibility. It is also worth noting that while Chinese camphor trees were used to produce a distilled camphor aromatic, there is no evidence of this practice until the twelfth century at the earliest, well after foreign camphor had been imported from the Southern Seas; see my comments to camphor at HC#1. Sima Xiangru also notes the native liquidambar tree (*Liquidambar acalycina*) in his rhapsody, but there is no evidence of the Chinese tapping this tree for its fragrant resin until the beginning of the third century, after foreign resins were already known; see my comments to White Gum Aromatic at HC#33.

[246] According to the *Yellow Maps of the Three Capitals* (*Sanfu huangtu* 三輔黃圖), following the conquest of Nanyue in 111 BCE, Emperor Wu constructed the Cultivating Lychee Palace (*Fuli gong* 扶荔宮) to house the exotic *flora* discovered in the tropical southern regions. Due to the harsher climates of the north, however, none of the tropical plants survived and the lychee trees needed to be continuously transplanted until the project was eventually abandoned, see SFHT:3.247, trans. Thomas E. Smith, "Ritual and the Shaping of Narrative: The Legend of the Han Emperor Wu" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Michigan, 1992), 679–80. This ambitious project is not recorded in the imperial histories of the Western Han. The *Yellow Maps of the Three Capitals* remains difficult to date and evidence suggests there were accretions added over many centuries, with something approaching the final form appearing only during the Tang, if not later. Notably inscribed bricks bearing the name Cultivating Lychee Palace were excavated at a site in Hancheng 韓城 county in Shaanxi in 1960, see Shaanxi sheng wenwu guanli weiyuanhui, "Shaanxi Hancheng Zhichuan Han Fuligong yizhi de faxian," *Kaogu* 11 (1961): 123–26. As the archaeological report notes, this site is more than 400 miles from Chang'an (present-day Xi'an) and thus could not have been on the precincts of Shangling Park. Consequently,

preserve thus represent a microcosm of the known universe over which the Han emperor reigned, and his collection of curios formed a material expression of his power, not so far removed from the "cabinets of curiosities" (*Wunderkammar*) in seventeenth and eighteenth century Europe. We will return to this point below and in the next chapter in discussing the menagerie of animals found on intricately designed *boshan* censers.

Previous to the Han, the frontier borderland known as the Western Regions was *terra incognita*. Chinese knowledge about this area was as imprecise as it was fantastic and was often portrayed as populated by mysterious immortal beings and bewildering beasts who roamed through mythical terrains and country sides. As a result, this region was often envisioned as beyond normal human contact and relegated to the domain of *wu*-shamans who possessed special powers of travel. The return of Zhang Qian's extended expedition in Central Asia, including several years in captivity, furnished the Chinese court with the first verified accounts of this pseudo-magical region. As recounted in the *Book of Han* (*Han shu* 漢書), Emperor Wu was delighted to hear Zhang Qian's report concerning the vast array of "oddities" (*qiwu* 奇物) found in the Western Regions and was encouraged by reports that foreign rulers valued Chinese goods and wished to broker an allegiance with the Han empire.[247] In contrast to the impoverished foreign policy of previous generations, the *Book of Han* informs us that "strange things from diverse regions were brought from the four quarters of the world" during the reign of Emperor Wu.[248] According to the official history, such imported exotica included ivory, rhinoceros horn, pearls, kingfisher feathers, lions, and

unresolved questions remain as to the relationship between these two cites and when the Cultivating Lychee Palace in Hancheng was both constructed and abandoned.

[247] HS:11.2689; cf. trans. Hulsewé, *China in Central Asia*, 210–12.

[248] 殊方異物，四面而至。HS:96.3928; cf. trans. Hulsewé, 200.

ostriches, as well as the cherished blood-sweating horses used to conquer the northern nomadic people.[249] While many of these items were probably never seen by commoners, these goods must have had a considerable impact on the imagination and consumption habits of the elite.[250]

Even if this list represents a strategic exaggeration to heighten the prestige of the emperor and Chinese state, it is important to underscore that perfume, incense, or any other notably fragrant materials are not listed among the items of trade or tribute which reputedly poured in from the Western Regions (exemplified, for example, by lions and ostriches) and the far south (exemplified by pearls and kingfisher feathers). The point here is not to exclude from possibility any supra-regional movement of aromatics, as many merchants, both foreign and Chinese, undoubtedly operated beyond the view of imperial surveillance.[251] Nevertheless, it remains significant that foreign aromatics, if they indeed circulated in any capacity, were never deemed salient in the Western Han historical accounts of luxury exotica. Zhang Qian's expedition is often portrayed as instigating a wave of newly imported commodities, but items that came to define later medieval trade and tribute, such as aloeswood, frankincense, and camphor, among others, are noticeably missing from the catalogue of foreign goods in the *Book of Han* and other contemporary documents, such as the *Records of the Grand Historian* (*Shiji* 史記). This includes the records of items that

[249] Hulsewé, 198–200.
[250] Ying-shih Yü notes that Han foreign trade was almost entirely propelled by the consumption habits of the elite, a phenomenon that did not go unnoticed by more critical ministers of the court, see Yü, *Trade*, 191–93.
[251] Han law required proper documentation for all goods entering and leaving the country. For a discussion on the practice and scope of contraband trade during the Han, see Yü, *Trade*, 117–32.

arrived from the far south, even after the port of Panyu 番禺, the old capital of Nanyue, fell to Han forces in 111 BCE.[252]

In the next chapter we will shift our focus to the history of Chinese incense burners, but because their use is often closely connected to Emperor Wu, especially through mountain-shaped *boshan* censers, it is worth making a preliminary point here about their use in ritual. As we examined in the previous chapter, ancient sacrificial state religion did not employ the burning of incense. As far as surviving Western Han documents reveal, this remained the case up through the first century BCE (and possibly even into the early sixth century[253]), even in regards to the reign of Emperor Wu. Tradition ascribes the establishment of the Music Bureau (*yuefu* 樂府) under Emperor Wu's direction in 113 BCE, and while this origin is historically suspect, a total of nineteen "Songs for the Suburban Sacrifices" (*jiaosi ge* 郊祀歌) can be traced back to the output of this academy and are preserved in the *Book of Han*.[254] According to David Knechtges, and in spite of the fact that we only have incomplete knowledge about activities of the Music Bureau, "there is no doubt that the new music

[252] Olivia Milburn underscores the strategic importance of Panyu in opening lines of commercial contact with the Southern Seas, see Milburn, "Aromas," 447–48. Much is sometimes made of the resin-like material recovered from the tomb of Zhao Mo (r. 137–122 BCE), the king of Nanyue. It is frequently reported to be frankincense, yet the lead archaeologist, Mai Yinghao, offered a much more subdued assertion claiming the substance cannot be identified conclusively; see my comments to frankincense at HC#9. Even if further testing concluded the material is frankincense, it remains open to debate the impact that such a resin had on second century BCE Nanyue smell culture, especially if long-distance trade was sporadic. Most notably, Western Han reports on the products of the far south fail to mention aromatics of any kind, let alone re-exported frankincense.
[253] We will examine the first recorded use of incense in state sacrifice in Chapter 4, Section 10.
[254] A more diplomatic understanding of Emperor Wu's role is that he "recreated" a virtually new institution that existed earlier, see comments in David R. Knechtges, "A New Study of Han *Yüeh-Fu*: Popular Songs and Ballads of Han China by Anne Birrell (Book Review)," *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 110, no. 2 (1990): 310.

occupied an important place at [Emperor Wu's] court, and that [Emperor Wu] gave his official endorsement to it.[255]

The first recorded hymn in the *Book of Han*, all of which are untitled, is the one that draws most upon olfactory imagery.[256] In its broadest strokes, the hymn outlines the various rites surrounding the welcoming of spirits during a state sacrifice. It begins by announcing that a timely day has been chosen to initiate the sacrifice and declares that southernwood is to be burned with animal fat, as is outlined in the "Birth of the People" of the *Book of Odes*. This act subsequently causes the spirits (*ling* 靈) of the four directions to descend. The ritual space is later noted as being redolent with other aromas, including the scent (*xiang*) of millet (*zi* 粢) and a ritual alcohol, here described as cassia bark infused ale (*gui jiu* 桂酒).[257] The substitution for turmeric spiced *chang*-ale is significant, as not only would cassia need to be brough in from the south, but cassia ale is cited in the "August of the East, the Grand Unity" (*Donghuang taiyi* 東皇太一) of the *Songs of Chu*, where it is used as a sacrificial offering.[258] Thus, while the sacrificial program still represents the cycle of feeding the spirits with the very crops they blessed, we also find clear evidence of the influence of southern olfactory practices.

The next part of the hymn begins a section of the ritual that does not have clear precedent in the *Record of Rites*. It is instead modeled off the acts of ritual devotion, and

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[255] David R. Knechtges, "The Emperor and Literature: Emperor Wu of the Han," in *Imperial Rulership and Cultural Change in Traditional China*, ed. Frederick P. Brandauer and Chun-chieh Huang (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1994), 62.
[256] HS:22.1052, trans. Birrell, *Mythology*, 6–8; see also comments in Knechtges, "New Study."
[257] Some have argued that *gui jiu* should instead be understood as referring to osmanthus blossoms infused ale, see e.g., Knechtges, "New Study," 315. While this reading may be appropriate for later periods, the roughly contemporary Mawangdui medical manuscripts speak of adding pulverized cassia to liquor in three recipes, see Harper, *Early*, 223, 276, and 279; see also my comments (and relevant footnotes) to cassia at HC#52.
[258] CC:2.55, trans. Sukhu, *Songs of Chu*, 6 ("cassia wine").

arguably shamanic possession, found in the "August of the East, the Great Unity." The Music Bureau hymn describes a group of women, wearing jades and pearls on their belt-sashes and clasping thoroughwort and wild angelica (*zhi* 芷[259]), performing a dance, presumably in the presence of the already descended spirits. The analogous portion of the "August of the East, the Grand Unity" states: "Let the serpent limbs of shamans dance dressed in splendid robes, inundating the hall with their fragrances and scents."[260] According to Marianne Bujard, in 111 BCE, dance and music – perhaps involving female performers adorned with scented plants – were added to the sacrifices offered to Grand Unity (*taiyi* 太一) at the Sweet Springs Palace in Chang'an.[261] These women performer-shamans, often described in Western Han sources as wearing long-sleeved robes, were also depicted in small jade plaques and deposited in Han tombs, confirming the twisting and twirling postures of their dance.[262] If heavily perfumed, we might imagine their fragrant scent propelled by the breeze of their garments. The hymn concludes with a libation offering, where members of the sacrificial banquet could join the spirits in sensual appreciation of the offerings.

This hymn exhibits a clear conjoining of two ancient olfactory worlds of imagination, one of the north and one of the south. The offerings of southernwood, fat, millet, and scented ale (albeit of a southern variety) are combined into a sequence of ritual activities that include

[259] For the reading as *zhi*, see BCGM:1.845 [白芷/釋名]
[260] CC:2.56–57, trans. (with minor modifications) Sukhu, *Songs of Chu*, 6. Arthur Waley translates these lines as such: "The Spirit [i.e., the shaman] moves proudly in his splendid gear; sweetest scents with gusts of fragrance fill the hall," Waley, *Shamanism*, 23.
[261] Marianne Bujard, "State and Local Cults in Han Religion," in *Early Chinese Religion, Part One: Shang through Han (1250 BC-220 AD)*, ed. John Lagerwey and Marc Kalinowski, vol. 2 (Leiden: Brill, 2009), 787. The chief sacrifices still reflected traditional offering materials: alcohol, a bull, a deer, and a pig. There is also evidence of jujubes and dried meats, but no mention is made of incense.
[262] For a discussion of these plaques and additional textual references, see Susan N. Erickson, "Twirling Their Long Sleeves, They Dance Again and Again ... ' Jade Plaque Sleeve Dancers of the Western Han Dynasty," *Ars Orientalis* 24 (1994): 39–63.

the ornamentation of thoroughwort and wild angelica. If we read this through a certain logic of ritual scent, the aromas of sacrificial foods are meant to draw down and nourish the spirits, while bodily perfumes are intended to symbolize and affirm their presence. To be clear, the burning of incense is not cited as a component of this sacrificial program, just as it was absent in the descriptions of state sacrifice in the Three Ritual Canons.

In summation, the discovery of aromatics and scenting equipment at Mawangdui provides us invaluable insights that both support and nuance our textual sources. The cache of plants sourced from different regions proves the existence of an interregional trade, while the discovery of scenting sachets, far less durable than bronze or ceramic vessels, proves they were not merely poetic fantasies and may have been used therapeutically or as apotropaic charms. A majority of the recovered kinds of aromatics, including the materials used for incense, were comprised of lightly processed roots and would have created a considerable amount of smoke when burned. In addition, while Emperor Wu is oftentimes portrayed as an enthusiastic collector of incense and other foreign aromatics, contemporary historical sources do not bear this point out. Western Han olfactory culture was a complex intermingling of the dominant sacrificial culture of the North China Plains and the adornment culture of the old state of Chu, ultimately finding expression in the ritual reforms of Emperor Wu.

4. The Shifting Smellscape of the Eastern Han and Early Six Dynasties

The world of the Western Han, especially during the long fifty-four-year reign of Emperor Wu, undoubtedly saw a significant shift in the elite consumption of material culture. Bird feathers, animal horns, furs, and woolen textiles were just some of the items reported as

arriving from distant lands. Yet, as we have seen, aromatics were not yet reported as a significant part of those interactions.[263] This would change during the Eastern Han. If we look to the *Book of Later Han* (*Hou Han shu* 後漢書) we find regions to the west and to the south start trading in fragrant commodities. Let us first turn to the south:

> The old lands of Jiaozhi produce many precious objects, like brilliant pearls, kingfisher feathers, rhinoceros horn, ivory, tortoise shells, strange aromatics, and beautiful woods. There is nothing [this region] does not export.[264]
> 舊交阯土多珍產。明璣，翠羽，犀，象，玳瑁，異香，美木之屬，莫不自出。

Jiaozhi 交阯 (also 交趾) was a name of a commandery established under the kingdom of Nanyue, but which fell to Emperor Wu's campaign of southern conquest. Jiaozhi comprised present-day northern Vietnam and was centered on the Red River Delta. Consequently, it was a critical entrepôt and strategic staging point for maritime trade that extended down into the South China Sea, a region that was known traditionally as the Southern Seas.[265]

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[263] Wang Gungwu highlights the fact that distant foreign embassies are noticeably missing from the *Book of Han*, with only a single tribute delegation recorded, from the mysterious Huangzhi 黃支 (possibly southern India) in 2 CE, nearly ninety years after Emperor Wu's passing, see Wang, "Nanhai Trade," 19–20 (citing HS:28.2.1671, see also HS:12.352). Some consider Chinese state relations with Huangzhi to have been initiated by Emperor Wu, see e.g. Wolters, *Indonesian Commerce*, 33. But most other scholars find Emperor Wu's role to be a later fiction, see Wang, "Nanhai Trade," 19–20; Luciano Petech, "On Huang-Chih," *East and West* 17, no. 3/4 (1967): 295–301. As noted by Ying-shih Yü, places such as Rome, Parthia, and India were well outside the reach of the tributary system established by the Han government intended to deal with regional tribes, see Yü, *Trade*, 151. Consequently, it should not be surprising that the Han court expressed regret that some foreigners who come to the capital were not tributary envoys, but merely foreign merchants looking to engage in trade. This specifically included the Kāśmīri and the Sogdians, see Hulsewé, *China in Central Asia*, 109, 128; see also the brief comments in Yü, *Trade*, 144–45. It would appear that the exchange of gifts on a state level during the Western Han were largely managed by Chinese embassies who, reportedly, were sent abroad as many as ten times a year, see Hulsewé, *China in Central Asia*, 85; see also Yü, *Trade*, 146–47.

[264] HHS:31.1111; cf. trans. Wang, "Nanhai Trade," 25; cf. trans. Milburn, "Aromas," 448. It is worth noting that the far south was known to the Chinese court as a major source of luxury goods since at least the second century BCE, and while items such as ivory, rhinoceros horn, and pearls were commonly attested as regional, aromatics were not previously mentioned, see relevant passages discussed in Wang, "Nanhai Trade," 8.

[265] For more on the strategic importance of Jiaozhi and the trade that ran through the Southern Seas in the early medieval period, see Wang, "Nanhai Trade," 29–30; Wolters, *Indonesian Trade*, 71–85; Rafe de Crespigny, *Generals of the South: The Foundation and Early History of the Three Kingdoms State of Wu*, Internet Edition (Canberra: Australian National University, 2018), 32–34. The economic importance of Jiaozhi is also tied to the order imposed by the Shi family, émigrés from Shandong, who established loose hegemony over the territory at the end of the Han, see Keith Weller Taylor, *The Birth of Vietnam* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1983), 55–62; de Crespginy, *Generals of the South*, 266–76.

According to the passage above, among the items imported into China from this region were "strange aromatics" (*yi xiang* 異香), a turn of phrase which should strike us as odd given that no other commodities are qualified in the same fashion. In the *Book of Han*, compiled at the end of the first century, the countries of the tropical far south, including the Malay Peninsula and southeastern India, were noted as being "very large, heavily populated, and full of strange things."[266] Moreover, the trade in strange things is said to have increased significantly since the death of Emperor Wu. These comments remind us of the various "oddities" Zhang Qian reported to Emperor Wu when describing the distant western frontiers that were once thought to be the abode of immortal beings and mythic beasts. In their totality, such comments serve to not only conceptually link the odd and fantastic with the reign of Emperor Wu, but also highlight aromatics as being the paradigmatic "strange thing" of distant realms.

The *Book of Later Han* also describes the interactions with regions to the west. In its discussion of India, the imperial history relays the following information:

> The land produces ivory, rhinoceros horn, tortoise shells, gold, silver, copper, iron, lead, and tin. It communicates to the west with the Roman empire[267] and so has the valuable goods of the Roman empire. It also has delicate fabric, fine woolen carpets, all sorts of aromatics, cane sugar, black pepper, ginger, and black salt.[268]
> 土出象，犀，瑇瑁，犀，瑇瑁，金，銀，銅，鐵，鉛，錫，西與大秦通，有大秦珍物。又有細布，好氍毹，諸香，石蜜，胡椒，薑，黑鹽。

[266] 廣大，戶口多，多異物。HS:28.2.1671.
[267] The Great Qin (Da Qin 大秦), is generally regarded as a reference to the Roman empire, although it is debated whether the name referred to a small subset of the territories (especially Roman Syria) or to the vast empire with Rome as its capital. It is also possible Chinese writers conflated "the Great Qin" with nearby regions that traded with Roman merchants, and thus the term really pointed to the larger "Roman world," see Wolters, *Indonesian Commerce*, 40.
[268] HHS:88.2921.

Most notable for our purposes is the citation here to "all sorts of aromatics" (*zhu xiang* 諸香). These were viewed as the products of India and possibly from regions further west.[269] We are left to speculate which specific items such reports envisioned. If general patterns of early Six Dynasties trade can be our guide, this may have included Mediterranean storax, Arabian frankincense, northern Indian saffron and costus root, and southern Indian sandalwood. Equally, the "strange aromatics" from the south could have included Moluccan cloves, Malayan and Indochinese aloeswood, and Malayan patchouli.

While this pair of passages from the *Book of Later Han* are important for chronicling the early supra-regional trade of aromatics, it is easy to overlook the fact that the term *xiang* no longer denotes the scents of sacrifice, but an abstracted category of "aromatics." The *Book of Later Han* was compiled by the scholar Fan Ye 范曄 (398–445) who himself had a personal interest in perfumery. He is credited with compiling two early blending manuals, the *Formulary of Superior Aromatics* (*shangxiang fang* 上香方) and the *Formulary for Miscellaneous Fragrant Pastes* (*Zaxiang gao fang* 雜香膏方), both of which were lost by the Sui.[270] Nevertheless, Fan Ye was not individually responsible for the shift in the meaning of *xiang*, this appears to have been an organic semantic evolution occurring over the span of several centuries.

It would be impossible to know precisely when and where *xiang* first started to shift from a fragrant quality to a second order taxon of scented materials. But there are a few

[269] The text is ambiguous as to whether the closing list of items were available through Roman traders. Items such as cane sugar, black pepper (Malabar pepper; *Piper nigrum*), and black salt (Himalayan black salt), were principally viewed as Indian products.
[270] SuiS:34.1043. I discuss these along with other early perfuming manuals in the introduction to the translation of the *Materia Aromatica*. The preface to the former work is still extant, see my translation and commentary to the Preface on Aromatics at HC#84.

important moments captured in our textual sources that are worth examining briefly to better contextualize works containing *xiang*-as-aromatics, such as the *Book of Later Han*, that reflect this long semantic shift. First, as we have seen in Chapter 1, *xiang* could be used as a metonym to refer to specific kinds of scented sacrificial offerings. In the *Book of Odes* it stood for a sacrificial libation, while in a tenth century BCE inscription it stood for a generic offering (perhaps grain).[271]

A second important moment was the adoption of *xiang* as one of the pentad of Five Odors (*wuchou* 五臭), a category itself that was developed as part the continuing elaboration of the Five Phases (*wuxing* 五行) cosmological theory. In Warring States texts we find frequent reference to the Five Colors (*wuse* 五色), Five Tastes (*wuwei* 五味), and Five Sounds (*wusheng* 五聲) (or Five Tones [*wuyin* 五音]) which represent systems of classifying visual, gustatory, and aural stimuli. A formal five-fold division of olfactory stimuli first appears in the monthly ordinances (*yueling* 月令), works that constitute a genre of early Chinese ritual almanac. These are first preserved in two sources of roughly equal age, the *Record of Rites* and *Mr. Lu's Spring and Autumn Annals* (*Lüshi chunqiu* 呂氏春秋), the latter of which can be dated to 239 BCE.[272] Drawing from the *Record of Rites*, the division of odors is as follows: gamey (*shan* 羶), burnt (*jiao* 焦), fragrant (*xiang*), bloody (*xing* 腥), and rotten (*xiu* 朽).[273] While these smell terms represent abstractions just as any of the individual

[271] See discussion in Chapter 1, Section 4.
[272] The details and dating of these works are summarized in Milburn, "Aromas," 450–53. As Milburn notes, this appears to be the earliest "osmological cycle" in Chinese literature, but this is far from the only osmology preserved in Warring States texts.
[273] LJZS:15.2947, LJZS:15.2955, LJZS:16.2971, LJZS:16.2972, LJZS:17.2990. A convenient abbreviated summary of the relevant passages can be found in Milburn, "Aromas," 451–52. With only minor modifications, I have followed Milburn's adroit translation of these difficult smell terms.

elements in the Five Colors, Five Tastes, and Five Sounds, I argue the Five Odors were motivated by the olfactory imagination of ancient state sacrifice and various cooked states of ritual food. Namely, bloody and gamey odors reflect uncooked flesh, burnt odors reflect over-cooked food, rotten odors reflect decaying food, and fragrant odors reflect properly cooked edible food.[274] The selection of individual smell terms reflects their salience within ancient ritual culture. In terms of *xiang*, Five Phase theory may have helped unmoor its meanings from the potentially narrow context of sacrifice.[275]

The abstraction of *xiang* into a generalized fragrant scent can also be seen in the *Song of Chu*, where it appears twice, but it is found in sections of the anthology that are now dated to the Han. On one occasion it refers to the fragrant scent of sweet basil and wild angelica attached to a belt-sash as a charm (the scent of which is consequently lost upon passing by a fish market).[276] The second occurrence appears in a poem long attributed to the scholar Liu Xiang 劉向 (77–6 BCE), a famed bibliographer who compiled an early edition of the *Songs of Chu* anthology.[277] In "Cherishing a Worthy" (*xi xian* 惜賢), Liu Xiang poetically laments over the life and political career of Qu Yuan 屈原 (ca. late 4th–early 3rd cent. BCE), the

[274] This is not the traditional interpretation of the Five Odors which are primarily correlated to the five directions (e.g., south=hot=burnt). Olivia Milburn suggests a correlation to the seasons (e.g., summer=burnt), for discussion of both interpretations, see Milburn, "Aromas," 452–53. My analysis is more concerned with theorizing why these particular smell terms were selected than with how they fit into the correlative matrix of the Five Phases. For comparison, one osmological system in India was primarily based on the kinds of regional aromatics derived from (tropical) trees, see McHugh, *Sandalwood and Carrion*, 41, 45; see also my comments to Jian Aromatic at HC#22. The selection of smell terms to build out osmologies is not accidental, is it rooted in smells that are culturally salient.

[275] The four smell terms outside of *xiang* each have a different semantic history that is not necessarily only correlated to sacrifice. A detailed analysis of their sematic history, along with many other basic smell terms, or "olfactemes," remains a desiderium.

[276] CC:13.239. This poem found in the "Seven Remonstrances" (*Qi jian* 七諫) collection, a likely product of the Han, see Sukhu, *Songs of Chu*, 217–18.

[277] For a *vita* of Liu Xiang and his role in editing the *Songs of Chu*, see David Hawkes, *The Songs of the South: An Ancient Chinese Anthology of Poems by Qu Yuan and Other Poets* (New York: Penguin Books, 1985), 280–82.

reputed author of "Encountering Sorrow." He describes Qu Yuan's activities as a virtuous member of the Chu court, noting that he "clutched fragrant scents (*fen xiang* 芬香) and clasped sweet basil."[278] Liu Xiang's use of *xiang* clearly borders upon its understanding as a fragrant scent and a class of fragrant odorants. Specifically, it is possible to read *xiang* functioning as a metonym – the fragrant part of a generic scented material, just as described above. Consequently, one could equally justify reading the above passage as stating Qu Yuan "clutched fragrant aromatics." Importantly, however, in neither of the two above cases drawn from the Han-era portions of the *Songs of Chu* is *xiang* contextually associated with the aromas of food sacrifice nor burning incense.

As a final example, the narrow use of *xiang* as a generic term for incense can be found in An Shigao's 安世高 (fl. 148–168) mid-second century translation of the *Buddha's Teaching of the Sutra on the Eightfold Noble Path* (*Foshuo bazhengdao jing* 佛說八正道經; T112). In what appears to be an interpolated comment to the base text, An Shigao defines Buddhist "sacrifice" to his Chinese audience as involving "burning incense" (*shao xiang* 燒香).[279] Overall, even with the use of *xiang* by Liu Xiang and An Shigao to refer to aromatics and incense, this new semantic layer was not widespread in the first and second centuries. For example, the Eastern Han exegetical tradition, and Zheng Xuan in particular, frequently

[278] 懷芬香而挾蕙。CC:16.295; cf. trans. Hawkes, *Songs of the South*, 292. Notably, this particular passage is strikingly similar to court protocols that were established during the Han detailing how Secretarial Court Gentlemen were to conduct business with the emperor. As they approached the courtyard leading to the emperor's palace to deliver documents, the courtiers were instructed to "clutch aromatics (*xiang*) and clasp thoroughwort"; see my comments to Clutched Aromatic at HC#88.

[279] T112:505a25–26. I return to a discussion of this passage in Chapter 4, Section 2. Another important text to mention in this regard is the enigmatic *Mr. Jiao's Forest of Changes* (*Jiaoshi yilin* 焦氏易林), a divination manual in tetrasyllabic verse possibly dating to the very late Western Han, see Christopher Gait, *The Forest of Changes: A Han Dynasty Compendium of Divination* (No Place: No Publisher, 2016), 10. This dating is contested and there remains little modern scholarship on this work, see David R. Knechtges and Taiping Chang, eds., *Ancient and Early Medieval Chinese Literature: A Reference Guide*, vol. 2 (Leiden: Brill, 2014), 998–99. It nevertheless contains a verse stating, "the incense burns without fragrance," see Gait, *Forest of Changes*, 282.

uses *xiang*, but a quick survey of its meaning in specific contexts shows that it was still regularly used as a qualifying adjective, such as we see with the many glosses of plants as "fragrant herbs" (*xiangcao* 香草).[280]

Turning back to the *Book of Later Han*, it is clear that this work is the first imperial history to discuss the importation of foreign "aromatics," the second-order taxon of *xiang*. That leaves us with two difficult questions: Is it possible to get a better grasp as to when supra-regional aromatics *first* entered China? Moreover, can we identify which specific items were imported? Neither of these can be answered with precision or confidence; the historical record is too sparse and too vague.

This has not stopped some scholars from espousing what I have termed the "Emperor Wu hypothesis," namely that supra-regional aromatics starting arriving in China during Emperor Wu's reign, but such a view can only be pure speculation. While some might argue for a utility in a form of "higher criticism," adducing from our historical sources that supra-regional aromatics trade *must have* or *most likely* occurred sometime before our sources first attest to such activity, I am unsure of the value this has for the historian of olfactory culture. Instead of trying to adduce speculative "absolute first causes," I suggest we reframe our questions to identify the "earliest documented effects."[281] What are the earliest, (relatively)

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[280] See, e.g., LJZY:17.2995 (gloss of *yun* 芸). We might also note Wang Chong's first century *Weighted Debates* where *xiang* appears a total of eleven times: three times as the scent of thoroughwort (LHJS:3.138, LHJS:6.268), twice as the scent of plants (LHJS:16.716, LHJS:14.638), once as the aroma of sacrificial ale (LHJS:5.223), once as the aroma of sacrificial millet mixed with animal fat (LHJS:25.1053), once as a generic odor that is sensed by the nose (LHJS:13.591), once as the aroma of food (LHJS:18.808), once as a metaphor for the virtue and fame of scholars (LHJS:13.604), and, lastly, once as a metonym for sacrificial offerings, but where the context makes clear the offerings were intended to consumed, not burned as incense (LHJS:15.680). This has not stopped scholars from attempting to read the incense into Wang Chong's treatise, see e.g., Susan N. Erickson, "Boshanlu: Mountain Censers of the Western Han Period: A Typological and Iconological Analysis," *Archives of Asian Art* 45 (1992): 15 (where the aroma of sacrificial ale is misinterpreted as incense).

[281] This might seem to be the natural approach for most textual historians, but the study of Chinese smell culture is often motivated by attempts to read ambiguous or historically suspect passages as convincing proofs for early trade in supra-regional aromatics.

reliably dated sources that attest to novel foreign aromatics? The answer to this question will not determine the earliest possible introduction of supra-regional goods, items which, like Sima Xiangru's grapes, could have entered China before their record in "official" documents. Nevertheless, it does something as equally as important – it gives us a grasp on cultural saliency. When aromatics are recorded in our sources, they must have passed over a conceptual threshold of social and cultural importance. The record of a "maverick" foreign aromatic in a single text may not tell us much, but if we can discern a pattern in numerous citations of many aromatics, we are in a better position to start making generalized observations about an overarching shift in the Chinese smellscape and the culture around smell.[282]

Based on textual evidence, it is clear China starts to experience a significant shift in its smellscape, or what we might call the landscape of salient smells, during the Eastern Han. This quickly leads to a growing knowledge of an expanding variety of novel aromatics throughout the third century. Arguably the earliest, unambiguous citation to a supra-regional aromatic comes in the form of a letter written by the first century historian Ban Gu 班固 (32–92) to his younger brother, Ban Chao 班超 (32–102). Around the age of forty, Ban Chao was stationed in the Western Regions, spending time in both Khotan and Kashgar along the southwestern part of the Tarim Basin, throughout the 70s and 80s. It was sometime during this period when his brother relayed a message from Dou Xian 竇憲 (d. 92), a powerful

[282] To be sure, several of the documents I discuss below are not without justified critical suspicion regarding their historicity, but they all fall within the scope of discernable patterns or trends of increasing knowledge and interest in foreign aromatics during the Eastern Han. Consequently, if we were to push the date of the most suspicious sources cited below back a few centuries, or eliminate them altogether from the medieval record, our broad interpretive understanding of the changing Eastern Han smellscape would not be altered considerably. By placing an emphasis on trends, there emerges an issue of what we might call "maverick" citations, that is, citations to certain aromatics that appear to break an

courtier and brother of the dowager empress, instructing Ban Chao to procure certain items from the region: "Palace Attendant Dou orders you to transport seven hundred bolts of variegated silk and three hundred bolts of white silk to trade for Yuezhi horses, storax, and woolen carpets."[283] Horses and woolen textiles were common imports from countries on the eastern side of the Pamirs during the Han, but this is the first time we encounter Suhe Aromatic (*suhe xiang* 蘇合香), or storax, a vibrant vanilla-scented oleoresin extracted from trees around the Mediterranean. Notably, storax is cited in the *Periplus Maris Erythraei*, a first century handbook of trade for Greco-Roman merchants, where it is said to have been exported from the Roman Empire to Indian ports at Barbarikon (present-day Karācī) and Barygaza (Bharuch).[284] The request of Dou Xian to procure such an aromatic at the end of the first century thus fits well with what we know of the contemporary trade in storax coming from the Mediterranean.[285]

Storax is also among the most commonly cited foreign aromatics in early medieval Chinese sources, many of which attest to its distant origin. For example, the *Supplement to the Book of Han* (*Xu Han shu* 續漢書), compiled by Sima Biao 司馬彪 (d. ca. 306), claims storax originated in the Roman Empire where it was the result of boiling all sorts of liquids

[283] 竇侍中令載雜彩七百匹，白素三百匹，欲以市月氏馬，蘇合香，騧毯。I am quoting the synoptic passage as cited in Liu, *Songdai Xiangpu*, 21; Sun, *Handai wuzhi wenhua*, 415. The relevant fragments of Ban Gu's letter are found in TPYL:7.814 and TPYL:8.982; both sections are cited in the sixteenth century *Cart of Aromatics* (*Xiang cheng* 香乘), see SKQS:844.382b.12–14. In another letter, Dou Xian again asks for more than ten multicolored woolen textiles in exchange for 800,000 in cash, see TPYL:7.816; this fragment is noted Yü, *Trade*, 194–95 and Hulsewé, *China in Central Asia*, 108n.218. For further discussion on early imported woolen textiles, see Laufer, *Sino-Iranica*, 492–93.

[284] Lionel Casson, *The Periplus Maris Erythraei Text with Introduction, Translation, and Commentary* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1989), 75, 81. The fact the Dou Xian requests storax in the letter to Ban Chao indicates the scented resin was already known to the Chinese court.

[285] It has been recently suggested that a team organized under a Macedonian Greek merchant, named Maes Titanus, reached the Han capital of Luoyang in the year 100. This is unlikely. The *Book of Han* only records

(*zhi* 汁) drawn from a blend of aromatics.[286] This story was later incorporated into Fan Ye's more widely circulating *Book of Later Han*.[287] The *Treatise on the Guang Region* (*Guang zhi* 廣志), a gazetteer compiled between 440 and 480, provides a pair of similar accounts. It notes that Suhe Aromatic was an export of the Roman Empire, but that some people instead claimed it came from the country of Suhe 蘇合. In terms of its production, it describes people collecting aromatics and pressing out (*zha* 搾) a liquid or sap to make a fragrant paste, of which the residual dregs were then sold to merchants. The *Treatise on the Guang Region* then provides the alternative explanation that storax was the boiled reduction of many aromatics, mirroring the claims of the above Chinese histories. The entry concludes by saying storax is "not a naturally occurring single substance."[288]

These stories seem to adequately, although not exactly, describe the processes for creating a product more generally known today as liquid storax from the *Liquidambar orientalis*.[289] In terms of modern processing, the tree's bark is stripped and either immediately pressed, so as to force the release of the storax, or boiled, whereby the storax can be skimmed off the top and then further pressed and extracted out of the softened bark

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[286] 大秦國，合諸香煎其汁，謂之蘇合。T2122:573a25-26, TPYL:8.982.860; cf. trans. Laufer, *Sino-Iranica*, 456.

[287] See HHS:78.2919, trans. Taishan Yu, *China and the Ancient Mediterranean World: A Survey of Ancient Chinese Source*, Sino-Platonic Papers Number 242 (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania, 2013), 70; see also Liu, *Songdai Xiangpu*, 21. The same story was also retold in the *Records of the Later Han* (*Hou Han ji* 後漢記), see Yu, 137.

[288] 出大秦國。或云。蘇合國。國人採之。搾其汁以爲香膏。乃賣其滓與賈客。或云。合諸香草煎爲蘇合。非自然一種物也。T2122:573a26-29; cf. TPYL:8.982.860; cf. trans. Laufer, *Sino-Iranica*, 456–57; cf. trans. Yu, *China and the Ancient Mediterranean*, 177; cf. trans. Stephen G. Haw, "Storax, Benzoin, and the Chinese Anxi Xiang," *East Asian Science, Technology, and Medicine* 49 (2019): 83–120. This same story was retold in the *Book of Liang*, with the added note that the final product that reached China was "not very fragrant," 不大香也。LS:54.48.798, see also Laufer, *Sino-Iranica*, 457; Liu, *Songdai Xiangpu*, 21; Yu, *China and the Ancient Mediterranean*, 118.

[289] There is much debate as to the identity of *suhe xiang* and the early botanical identity of *storax*/*styrax*. For my identification of these substances, see my comments to Suhe Aromatic at HC#5.

pieces. This produces an opaque, greyish black and viscous aromatic substance with the consistency of honey.[290] Unlike frankincense, myrrh, or gum guggul, the resin of the *L. orientalis* is not known as an exudate that flows from notches made in the tree's bark. Both modern sources and early medieval Chinese sources attest to the substantial effort required to produce storax. Storax would become one of the most popular of the foreign resins to circulate in medieval China, even developing a lore in the early third century – likely started by merchants to justify high prices – that it was the excrement of lions.

After Ban Gu's letter, other scented materials soon start to appear in medieval documents (see Table 2.2 below for overview). Unsurprisingly, it was Chinese poets – those who are closely attuned to the surrounding sensorium – who were some of the first to chronicle the appearance of novel smells. Oftentimes used to signify the strange and foreign, many of these exotic items remain unidentified, such as *dixiang* 狄香 ("barbarian incense"?), cited in Zhang Heng's 張衡 (78–139) "Song of Concordant Sounds" (*Tongsheng ge* 同聲哥) as well as *midie* 迷迭 (rosemary?), *aina* 艾納 (tree moss/Indian dill?), and *douliang* 都梁, all of which are cited in an anonymous Han-era poem. Unlike Sima Xiangru's "Rhapsody on Shanglin Park," Eastern Han poets could draw upon contemporary reports and first-hand experiences of fragrant exotica.

The changing smellscape is also charted in several regional gazetteers from the third century, especially those converging on the tropical far south. Such works catalogue an influx of strange and new aromatics arriving in the southern Chinese ports that would come to be governed by the Eastern Wu. This includes several items that emerged as important

[290] The modern name of liquid storax gives the impression that this substance is always viscid, but for use as incense it would have needed to be dried either by heating it with fire or, as is attested for other types of tree exudates, dried in the sun. Modern commercial liquid storax is often infused into charcoal chips.

luxury commodities, such as cloves, patchouli, and aloeswood. To these regional gazetteers we can add translated Buddhist scriptures which start to reveal the exotic Indian world of smell, highlighting sandalwood, aloeswood, and frankincense, as well as among many other kinds of sweet-smelling flowers, food aromas, and divine scents.

Table 2.2: Early Citations to Supra-Regional and Unidentified Aromatics (ca. 80–280) [291]

Item	**Source**	**Approx. Date**	**Possible Species (phytogeographic distribution)**	***Materia Aromatica* Entry**
storax (*suhe xiang* 蘇合香)	*Letter to Younger Brother Chao* (*Yu di Chao shu* 與弟超書)[292]	ca. 80	*Liquidambar orientalis* (Anatolian Peninsula)	HC#5
"barbarian incense"? (*dixiang* 狄香)[293]	"Song of Concordant Sounds" (*Tongsheng ge* 同聲歌)[294]	ca. 140	--	--

[291] Absent further contextualizing information, I have estimated the dates along their upper limits according to the approximate death of the author of the text or the end of the reign era or dynastic era in which the author is presumed to have compiled his work.

[292] TPYL:8.982.860.

[293] This may be related to *diti* below. *Di* 狄 (or 翟) was a generic ethnonym for the various nomadic peoples living to the north and northwest of a centralized and "civilized" Chinese society. In the context of the poem, the substance appears to be more of a foreign luxury good than a product of "uncultured" society, see following footnote.

[294] YTXY:1.28, trans. Birrell, *New Songs*, 44–45 ("savage scents"); Olivia Milburn, "Rhapsodies on Midiexiang: Jian'an Period Reflections on an Exotic Plant from Rome," *Early Medieval China* 22 (2016): 28 ("Western aromatics"). The context is cleaning garments, thus this aromatic was likely a type of incense; we will return to this point in Chapter 3, Section 4. For a *vita* of Zheng Heng, the reputed author of this poem, see David R. Knechtges, *Wen Xuan or Selections of Refined Literature, Volume One: Rhapsodies on Metropolises and Capitals* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1982), 481–83 and David R. Knechtges and Taiping Chang, *Ancient and Early Medieval Chinese Literature: A Reference Guide*, vol. 3 (Leiden: Brill, 2014), 2141–55. The authenticity of this work has been called into question since it first appears relatively late in the sixth century, see Knechtges and Chang, *Reference Guide*, Vol. 1, 1393–94.

Item	Source	Approx. Date	Possible Species (phytogeographic distribution)	*Materia Aromatica* Entry
sandalwood (*zhantang xiang* 栴檀香)[295]	**Yogācārabhūmi* (*Daodi jing* 道地經)[296]	ca. 170	*Santalum album* (Indonesian Archipelago, southern India)	HC#4
aloeswood (*mi xiang* 蜜香)	**Yogācārabhūmi*[297]	ca. 170	*Aquilaria* spp. (northeastern India, Malay Peninsula, Indochinese Peninsula, Indonesian Archipelago)	HC#3, HC#42
duohe xiang 多核香[298]	**Yogācārabhūmi*[299]	ca. 170	--	--
nati xiang 那替香[300]	**Yogācārabhūmi*[301]	ca. 170	--	--
cloves (*jishe xiang* 雞舌香)[302]	*Duties and Observances for Han Officials Selected for Use* (*Hanguan dianzhi yishi xuanyong* 漢官典職儀式選用)[303]	ca. 170	*Syzygium aromaticum* (Moluccas)	HC#8, HC#11

[295] This is the first item in a list of aromatics that refers to both specific scented materials and materials of a more generic nature. The four specific aromatics are all listed in this table: sandalwood, aloeswood, and two possible unknown transcriptions. In contrast to the Five Phase osmology of the Chinese, Indian Buddhists devised an osmological system based on tree products, thus the generic aromatics in the *Yogācārabhūmi* include root aromatics, bark aromatics, flower aromatics, fruit aromatics, and leaf aromatics, see T607:232c28–29. The subsequent Chinese translation of this text only includes root aromatics and flower aromatics, see T606:184c04. This osmological system is discussed in my comments to Jian Aromatic at HC#22.

[296] T607:232c27; also see T606:184c04. For other possible early references to sandalwood, see footnote 245 above.

[297] T607:232c27; cf. T606:184c04 (*mumi* 木櫁). Outside of translated Buddhist scriptures, aloeswood is first attested in the ambiguously titled *Treatise on Strange Things* which I understand to be the *Treatise on Strange Things of Funan* (ca. 250), see T2122:573c15–18; TPYL:8.982.863–864. Aloeswood is also cited in the *Treatise on Strange Things of the Southern Regions*, see T2122:573c24–29; TPYL:8.982.865.

[298] This term is a *hapax legomenon*.

[299] T607:232c27.

[300] This term is a *hapax legomenon*.

[301] T607:232c28.

[302] Cloves are also noted in the *Traditions of Foreign Countries during the Wu*, see T2122:573b02; TPYL:8.981.858. They are also noted in the *Treatise on Strange Things of the Southern Regions*, see T2122:573b07–08; TPYL:8.981.858. Cloves were also known the early third century warlord Cao Cao, see CCJ:3.69.

[303] TPYL:3.221, HGLZ:206.

Item	Source	Approx. Date	Possible Species (phytogeographic distribution)	*Materia Aromatica* Entry
saffron (*yujin* 鬱金)[304]	*Sutra of the Hundred Jewels of the Inner Treasury* (*Neizang bai bao jing* 內藏百寶經)[305]	ca. 190	*Crocus sativus* (Asia Minor, Iran, northern India)	HC#7
"fivefold tree aromatic" (*wumu xiang* 五木香)[306]	"Yuefu Song" (*Yuefu ge* 樂府歌)[307]	Han?	--	--
rosemary? (*midie* 迷迭)[308]	"Yuefu Song" [309]	Han?	[?] *Salvia rosmarinus* (Mediterranean)	HC#43
tree moss / Indian dill? (*aina* 艾納)[310]	"Yuefu Song" [311]	Han?	*Pseudevernia furfuracea* / [?] *Anethum graveolens* (Mediterranean, Central Asia, India)	HC#18

[304] *Yujin* may have also referred to imported turmeric, a less costly substitute for saffron. *Yujin* appears in both the *Abridged Account of Wei* and the *Treatise on Strange Things of the Southern Regions*, but description in the latter clearly indicates saffron, see SGZ:30.861 and TPYL:8.981.858, respectively. The *Systematic Materia Medica* incorrectly identifies the *Treatise on Strange Things of the Southern Regions* as the first century work of Yang Fu 楊孚 (ca. 75–90), see BCGM:1.896 [鬱金香].

[305] T807:752a04. According to Jan Nattier this is among of group of "second tier" texts that "still resemble [Lokakṣema's] language and style in overall terms," Jan Nattier, *Guide to the Earliest Chinese Buddhist Translations Texts from the Eastern Han and Three Kingdoms Periods* (Tokyo: The International Research Institute for Advanced Buddhology Soka University, 2008). 84.

[306] The later Daoist tradition treats a plant known as Fivefold Wood (*wumu* 五木) as synonymous with costus root, but I am skeptical this interpretation should be applied here, see my comments to Wood Aromatic at HC#16. If we consider this rhapsody a later product of medieval history, this term may refer to lore regarding a group of five aromatics taken from a single tree known as the Five Aromatics Tree (*wuxiang mu* 五香木), such as seen in the *Book of Sui*, see SuiS:82.1833; for more on this chimerical tree, see my comments to Jian Aromatic at HC#22.

[307] T2122:573c04–06; cf. TPYL:8.982.862 (*wuwei xiang* 五味香); cf. trans. Milburn, "Midiexiang," 28 ("spices").

[308] *Mimi* 迷迷, cited in the *Abridged Account of Wei*, is often considered synonymous with *midie*; see SGZ:30.861; see also T2122:574a06 (which cites the *Abridged Account of Wei*, but gives *midie*) and TPYL:8.982.866 (citing *Abridged Account of Wei*, but gives *misong* 迷送). For more on this aromatic in medieval poetry, see Milburn, "Midiexiang."

[309] T2122:573c04–06; cf. TPYL:8.982.862 (*misong* [see previous footnote]), trans. Milburn, "Aromas," 460n.86 and Milburn, "Midiexiang," 28 ("*midie*").

[310] *Aina* should not be confused with the camphoraceous oleoresin from the *Blumea balsamifera*. Distillation techniques necessary to produce this camphor were not known until the later medieval period.

[311] T2122:573c04–06; TPYL:8.982.862; cf. trans. Milburn, "Aromas," 460n.86 and Milburn, "Midiexiang," 28 ("sambong").

Item	Source	Approx. Date	Possible Species (phytogeographic distribution)	*Materia Aromatica* Entry
douliang 都梁[312]	"Yuefu Song" [313]	Han?	--	HC#34
Malayan patchouli (*huoxiang* 藿香)[314]	*Traditions of Foreign Countries during the Wu* (*Wu shi waiguo zhuan* 吳時外國傳)[315]	ca. 250	*Pogostemon cablin* (Malay Peninsula, Indonesian Archipelago, Philippines)	HC#38
sulfur (*liuhuang xiang* 流黃香)[316]	*Traditions of Foreign Countries during the Wu*[317]	ca. 250	--[318]	--

[312] Foreign *douliang,* of unknown identity, should not be confused with the native Chinese "Aromatic from Douliang," i.e., *Eupatorium* spp.

[313] T2122:573c04–06; TPYL:8.982.862; cf. trans. Milburn, "Aromas," 460n.86 and Milburn, "Midiexiang," 28 ("Eupatorium fortunei"). *Douliang* is also cited in *Treatise on Strange Things of the Southern Regions*, but it may refer to a native *Eupatorium* spp., see T2122:573c08–10; TPYL:8.982.863.

[314] *Huo xiang* (under the variant 霍香) appears in the late second century **Yogācārabhūmi*, but it is found in a passage discussing the different parts of a tree which yield aromatic materials, see footnote 295. This is likely due to *huo* initially referring to the leaves of a native Chinese plant. If we were to read *huo xiang* as referring to a particular "leaf aromatic" in the **Yogācārabhūmi*, it would most likely indicate Indian bay leaves. Patchouli also appears in the *Treatise on Strange Things of the Southern Regions*, see T2122:573c08–10, TPYL:8.982.863.

[315] T2122:573c07–08; TPYL:8.982.862.

[316] Sulfur was sometimes classified as an aromatic in medieval sources, thus I include it here. For example, the early fourth century alchemist Ge Hong lists sulfur among the aromatics known in Jiangnan, see DZ1185:12.8b and discussion in Chapter 5, Section 7.

[317] T2122:573b18; TPYL:8.982.861. Sulfur also appears in the *Treatise on Strange Things of the Southern Regions*, see T2122:573b18–19; TPYL:8.982.861.

[318] The *Traditions of Foreign Countries during the Wu* lists sulfur as an export of the Malay Peninsula. As a naturally occurring mineral found in China, it was, however, known since the Zhou, see Yunming Zhang, "Ancient Chinese Sulfur Manufacturing Processes," *Isis* 77, no. 3 (1986): 487–97. I note sulfur here because the suffix "aromatic" was added.

Item	Source	Approx. Date	Possible Species (phytogeographic distribution)	*Materia Aromatica* Entry
myrrh? / myrtle? (*weimu* 微木)[319]	*Abridged Account of Wei (Weilüe* 魏略)[320]	ca. 265	[?] *Commiphora* spp. (southern Arabian Peninsula, Somaliland) / [?] *Myrtus communis* (Mediterranean, Iran, elsewhere)	--
diti 狄提[321]	*Abridged Account of Wei* [322]	ca. 265	--	--
sal dammar? (*douna* 兜納)	*Abridged Account of Wei* [323]	ca. 265	[?] *Shorea robusta* (Indian subcontinent)	HC#40

[319] This Chinese nomenclature is never picked up in later histories, gazetteers, or medical works, so it remains something of a mystery. Chen Lianqi suggests a phonological connection of *weimu*, Late Han Chinese **mui-mok*, to myrrh (Greek *myrrha*), see Chen Lianqing, "Han-Jin zhi jishuru Zhongguo de xiangliao," *Shixue Jikan* 2 (1986): 12. Perhaps a hybrid transcription is more appropriate, giving us something like **mui*-tree, capturing the initial sound while also providing a reference to the type of plant from which myrrh originates. African and Arabian myrrh were common imports into Greece and Rome, thus it is reasonable to assume this oleogum could have be re-exported to China by the third century, as was frankincense. Yet, rather curiously, myrrh is not otherwise attested in early medieval Chinese sources and indeed may not have been known until the Song Dynasty, see Laufer, *Sino-Iranica*, 460–62; Yamada, *Tōa kōryō shi kenkyū*, 109–13, esp. 112. For more on the Mediterranean trade in myrrh, see Casson, *Periplus*, 16–17, 42, 118–20, 154–55, and sources cited therein. We might also propose **mui*-tree" as referring to Greek *myrtos*, or myrtle (*Myrtus communis*), a large shrub or small tree from which scented sprigs were fashioned into garlands. The ninth century *Miscellaneous Morsels from Youyang* (*Youyang zazu* 酉陽雜俎) apparently conflates myrtle with myrrh, suggesting linguistic confusion was acute surrounding these aromatics, see Laufer, *Sino-Iranica*, 461–62, Yamada, *Tōa kōryō shi kenkyū*, 110–11. It remains to be seen, however, if sprigs of myrtle were ever exported in sufficient quantity from the Mediterranean to presume they were known to the Chinese in the third century.

[320] SGZ:30.861. The proper parsing of the list of aromatics in the *Abridged Account of Wei* remains debated. At the end of a passage listing of products reportedly found in great quantities in the Roman Empire, a group of twelve aromatics are included. Only the first two are numbered, thus showing clear evidence of textual corruption. I follow the following parsing, which remains speculative and yields only nine foreign aromatics: "(One) myrrh?, (two) storax, *diti*, rosemary?, sal dammar?, *baifuzi*, frankincense, saffron, and rue are the twelve types of aromatics from fragrant plants and trees," 一微木，二蘇合，狄提，迷迷，兜納，白附子，薰陸，鬱金，薝膠，薰草木十二种香。SGZ:30.861. The last portion "fragrant plants and trees" is awkward and Chen Lianqing suggests a *xiang* 香 was dropped after the tree graph, *mu* 木, see Chen, "Han-Jin zhi jishuru Zhongguo de xiangliao," 16. This would allow us to add sweet basil (*xuncao* 薰草; HC#20) and costus root (*muxiang* 木香; HC#16) to the above list of nine. It is worth noting that the editors of the *Imperial Readings of the Taiping Era* encyclopedia read sweet basil (*xuncao*) as an individual aromatic, see TPYL:8.983.873. Yamada also underscores the difficulty in understanding this passage, see Yamada, *Tōa kōryō shi kenkyū*, 84, 118n13. Other attempts as identification can be found in Pelliot, "Deux itinéraires," 173n.3 as well as Yu, *China and the Ancient Mediterranean*, 98.

[321] *Diti*, Late Han Chinese **dek-de/te*, may be related to *dixiang* above; see also the comments in Yu, *China and the Ancient Mediterranean*, 104–05.

[322] SGZ:30.861.

[323] SGZ:30.861; T2122:573c02. *Douna* is also noted in the *Treatise on the Guang Region*, see T2122:573c02.

Item	Source	Approx. Date	Possible Species (phytogeographic distribution)	*Materia Aromatica* Entry
baifuzi 白附子[324]	*Abridged Account of Wei* [325]	ca. 265	--	--
frankincense (*xunlu* 薰陸)	*Abridged Account of Wei* [326]	ca. 265	*Boswellia sacra* (southern Arabian Peninsula), *B. frereana* (Somaliland), *B. papyrifera* (Sudan)	HC#9
common rue? (*yunjiao* 蕓膠)	*Abridged Account of Wei* [327]	ca. 265	[?] *Ruta graveolens* (Mediterranean)	HC#28
sweet basil? (*xuncao* 薰草)	*Abridged Account of Wei* [328]	ca. 265	[?] *Ocimum basilicum* (Mediterranean)	HC#20, HC#32
costus (*qingmu* 青木)	*Treatise on Strange Things of the Southern Regions* (*Nanzhou yiwu zhi* 南州異物志)[329]	ca. 280	*Saussurea costus* (subalpine Himalayas Western Ghats)	HC#16
onycha (*jia xiang* 甲香)	*Treatise on Strange Things of the Southern Regions*[330]	ca. 280	opercula of *Babylonia* spp. (southern coastal China)	HC#35
aloeswood (*jian xiang*[illegible]香) (lower-quality aloeswood)	*Treatise on Strange Things of the Southern Regions*[331]	ca. 280	*Aquilaria* spp. (northeastern India, Malay Peninsula, Indochinese Peninsula, Indonesian Archipelago)	HC#22

[324] Modern Chinese pharmaceutical references identify this as Korean monkshood, or *Aconitum coreanum*, see Linfu Hua, Paul D. Buell, and Paul U. Unschuld, *Dictionary of the Ben Cao Gang Mu: Geographical and Administrative Designations* (Oakland: University of California Press, 2017), 394 (#26); Nanjing zhongyiyao daxue, *Zhongyao da cidian* (#2004). The item above might refer to an imported species of *Aconitum*, often toxic, or a similar tuberous plant.
[325] SGZ:30.861.
[326] SGZ:30.861; T2122:573b13; TPYL:8.982.861. Frankincense is also noted in the *Treatise on Strange Things of the Southern Regions*, see T2122:573b13–16; TPYL:8.982.861.
[327] SGZ:30.861; TPYL:8.982.866. Rue gum is also noted in the *Treatise on the Guang Region*, see TPYL:8.982.867.
[328] SGZ:30.861; TPYL:8.983.873.
[329] T2122:573b22–23. It is plausible that costus root was imported into southwest China before this period, see my comments to Wood Aromatic at HC#16.
[330] TPYL:8.982.865–866. Onycha is also noted in the *Treatise on the Guang Region*, see T2122:574a04; TPYL:8.982.865.
[331] TPYL:8.982.865. *Jian* Aromatic is also noted in the *Treatise on the Guang Region*, see T2122:573c13–14.

By the middle of the third century, aromatics were arriving in Chinese ports and trading posts from the Arabian Peninsula, Mediterranean Sea, northern and southern India, the Malay Peninsula, the Indonesia Archipelago, and the Indochinese Peninsula. In almost all cases, these interactions were handled by regional merchants acting as middlemen. For example, early medieval trade through Central Asia was largely conducted by enterprising Sogdian trading firms. We know this in part because members of the Western Han court lamented that Sogdian envoys were not true state delegations, but comprised of independent merchants.[332] The best evidence of an early Sogdian trade in aromatics, however, comes to us in the form of the so-called *Sogdian Ancient Letters*. Of the five letters well preserved (Letter IV and several others are fragmentary), three were written by Sogdian merchants trading in the region around Dunhuang, on the eastern side of the Tarim Basin. On the basis of historical events explained in Letter II, the lot have been dated to the early part of the fourth century.[333] Letter VI makes note of camphor (Sogdian *kprwh*), suggesting the Southeast Asia oleoresin was among the commercial goods available in western China.[334] We can gather little else about the trade in camphor, but it implies a vast supra-regional trade network that could transfer materials westwards across the Bay of Bengal, possibly aboard ships of Sumatran Malays or South Indians, and into the hands of Sogdian merchants who eventually transported the goods through India and over the Pamirs into the emporiums of the Tarim Basin. Consequently, the Sogdians were also likely the trading partners of Ban Chao who

[332] Étienne de la Vaissière, *Sogdian Traders: A History* (Leiden: Brill, 2005), 37–41.
[333] For a discussion on these letters, their dating, and their importance to understanding fourth century Sogdian trade networks, see de la Vaissière, 43–70.
[334] For more on this letter and its importance for understanding early camphor trade, see my comments to camphor at HC#1.

was tasked with obtaining Roman storax while stationed in and around Khotan and Kashgar in the first century.

If we look at early medieval Chinese interactions with the kingdoms and peoples of the Southern Seas, this too was handled by non-Chinese merchants and middlemen. Specifically, early maritime trade involved the indigenous Yue of the southern coast, accomplished shipbuilders and sailors who also ran prosperous pearl markets along the Gulf of Tonkin since the Zhou Dynasty (1046–256 BCE).[335] The early medieval maritime route from India likely involved South Indian and Malay sailors who first crossed the Bay of Bengal to the Malay Peninsula. Upon arrival, the cargo could be portaged across the peninsula, possibly near the narrow Isthmus of Kra, before being transshipped along the coast of the Gulf of Thailand to the major entrepôt of Funan 扶南 (on the Vietnamese Mekong Delta). Alternatively, the cargo could be shipped south through the Malacca Straits to Funan directly, albeit involving time-consuming coastal sailing, adding perhaps four months to the total journey.[336] Archaeological excavations at the port of Óc Eo in

[335] Wang, "Nanhai Trade," 21, 23. While the Yue are sometimes treated as a distinct ethno-linguistic group, the term was mainly a "category of Chinese perception" that was "applied indiscriminately to all conquered peoples along the south coast," Keith Weller Taylor, *The Birth of Vietnam*, 33. For analysis on how the term Yue was variously deployed in ancient records and imperial histories, see Erica Brindley, "Barbarians or Not? Ethnicity and Changing Conceptions of the Ancient Yue (Viet) Peoples, ca. 400–50BC," *Asia Major*, Third, 16, no. 1 (2003): 15–29. Notably, in 1974, archaeologists discovered a large shipyard in Guangzhou, the ancient port of Panyu, that dates to the third century BCE, see Angela Schottenhammer, "The 'China Seas' in World History: A General Outline of the Role of Chinese and East Asian Maritime Space from Its Origins to c. 1800," *Journal of Marine and Island Cultures* 1, no. 2 (2012): 66 and citations therein; see also Guangzhou shi wenwu guanli weiyuanhui, *Nanyue wang mo*, Vol. 1, 326–28, 345.

[336] These two shipping itineraries are described in the *Book of Han*, see HS:28.2.1671. This much-quoted passage was first translated and discussed in Pelliot, "Chau Ju-kua," 457–60; see also Paul Wheatley, "Possible References to the Malay Peninsula in the Annals of the Former Han," *Journal of the Malayan Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society* 30, no. 1 (1957): 115–21; Wang, "Nanhai Trade," 19–20; Yü, *Trade*, 172–75; in addition, see passing comments in Wolters, *Indonesian Commerce*, 33–34; Schottenhammer, "The 'China Seas' in World History," 68–69. The time estimates for each itinerary are discussed in Wheatley, "Malay Peninsula in the Annals of the Former Han," 118–21. The importance of the overland passage also probably accounts for why the kingdoms of Indonesia, located along the oft-bypassed Malacca Strait, did not establish earlier contact with China, see Wolters, *Indonesian Commerce*, 47–48. It has alternatively been argued that the Sunda Strait first emerged as the preferential waterway for merchant ships, supplanting the trans-peninsular portage around the

southwestern Vietnam have recovered evidence of Roman, Indian, and Chinese commerce, proving Funan was a critical junction between the vast markets of China and regions further west.[337] Yue ships likely brought the goods up the eastern Indochinese coast before entering the southernmost ports of China.[338]

All indications are that trade with Funan increased greatly in the third century, especially as the newly established kingdom of the Eastern Wu was cut off from the old overland trade routes through Central Asia and sought to take advantage of the nascent maritime trade networks connecting to Indian ports.[339] The interest of the Wu court is reflected in the creation of a special envoy to Funan to survey the nature of international trade first hand. Sometimes during the late 240s, the emissaries Kang Tai 康泰 (ca. 250), of Sogdian descent, and Zhu Ying 朱應 (ca. 250) were dispatched to Funan and upon their return both wrote detailed accounts of their voyage.[340] Surviving portions of Kang Tai's

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turn of the fifth century, see discussion in Stephen G. Haw, "The Maritime Routes Between China and the Indian Ocean During the Second to Ninth Centuries C.E. ," *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain & Ireland* 27, no. 1 (2017): 53–81. Whatever the passage, the all-sea route displaced Funan, positioned on the Gulf of Thailand, as an important port of call as ships established harbors in Sumatra, Java, and along the eastern Vietnamese coast, see Kenneth R. Hall, "Economic History of Early Southeast Asia," in *The Cambridge History of Southeast Asia: Vol. I, Part I, From Early Times to C. 1500*, ed. Nicholas Tarling (Cambridge, 1999), 194.

[337] See Schottenhammer, "Maritime Power," 446–47; Sen, "Maritime Crossings," 20–21 and the citations therein. For discussion on how Funan emerged as the principal port for both Indian/Malay and Chinese/Yue ships, see Hall, "Economic History," 192–93.

[338] By the end of the Han, the pearl market ports of western Guangdong lost favor to the ports of Jiaozhi further west, which became the main center of Chinese trade with the Southern Seas, see Wang, "Nanhai Trade," 21, 29; Schottenhammer, "Maritime Power," 446. The unassimilated Yue may have controlled southern Chinese shipping routes up through the Tang, see Wang, "Nanhai Trade," 115n.2.

[339] Wang, "Nanhai Trade," 31–45; Wolters, *Indonesian Commerce*, 38–48.

[340] The envoy is recorded in the *Book of Liang*, see LS:54.783, 54.789, and 54.798; the pertinent passages are discussed in Paul Wheatley, "The Malay Peninsula as Known to the Chinese of the Third Century A.D.," *Journal of the Malayan Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society* 28, no. 1 (1955): 1–2. W.O. Wolters speculates the real interests of Kang Tai were not in the transshipment of products through Funan, but information pertaining to the shipping routes between India and the Roman Empire, see Wolters, *Indonesian Commerce*, 43, 59. Paul Pelliot was the first to propose the mission took place between 245 and 250, see Pelliot, "Fou-nan," 303. It appears an earlier embassy was sent to the south by Lü Dai 呂岱 (161–256), the regional inspector of Jiao prefecture, sometime between 226 and 231, see Pelliot, "Fou-nan," 251; Wang, "Nanhai Trade," 32–33; Wolters, *Indonesian Commerce*, 42–43; cf. Hui-Lin Li, *Nan-Fang Ts'ao-Mu Chuang: A Fourth Century Flora of Southeast Asia* (Hong Kong: Chinese University Press, 1979), 3–5; cf. Needham, Lu, and Huang, *Science*

Traditions of Foreign Countries during the Wu (*Wu shi waiguo zhuan* 吳時外國傳) includes discussion of aromatics, including Indonesian cloves (*jishe* 雞舌) and the earliest mention of Malayan patchouli (*houxiang* 藿香).[341] The *Treatise on Strange Things of Funan* (*Funan yiwu zhi* 扶南異物志) by Zhu Ying may provide the earliest Chinese account of aloeswood (*mumi xiang* 木蜜香) harvesting.[342] More impressive is the compilation of the *Treatise on Strange Things of the Southern Regions* (*Nanzhou yiwi zhi* 南州異物志) by Wan Zhen 萬震 (mid-to-late 3rd cent.), the governor (*taishou* 太守) of Danyang 丹陽 commandery, covering parts of present-day southern Anhui, western Jiangsu, and northern Zhejiang, under the state of Eastern Wu.[343] I conservatively place Wan Zhen's life around the fall of the Wu (around the year 280), but his report on the southern regions could in fact predate the reports of Kang Tai and Zhu Ying.[344] Wan Zhen's work is often cited for its careful description of pearl-

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and Civilisation, Vol. 6, Part 1, 444–45; cf. Jinsheng Zheng et al., *Dictionary of the Ben Cao Gang Mu: Persons and Literary Sources* (Oakland: University of California Press, 2018), 665 (the latter three all claiming Lü Dai sent Kang Tai and Zhu Ying on embassy). More recently, Chan Jiarong has performed a more thorough analysis on the surviving materials and confirms dates of travel between 245 and 251 as most preferable, see Chen Jiarong, "Zhu Ying, Kang Tai, chushi Funan he Wu shi waiguo zhuan kaolüe," *Zhongyang mizu xueyuan Xuebao* 4 (1978): 73–79. Kang Tai appears to have used a transcription system of a northern Chinese provenance, suggesting his ancestors may have come from Sogdia through Central Asia, see Paul Pelliot, "Quelques textes chinois concernant l'Indochine hindouisée," in *Etudes Asiatiques, publiées à l'occasion du 25e anniversaire de l'École française d'Extrême-Orient* (Hanoi: Impr. d'Extrême-Orient, 1925), 248, 251–52; Wolters, *Indonesian Commerce*, 271–72n.63, 274–75n.12.

[341] Editions of Kang Tai's work circulated under several titles, see Pelliot, "Fou-nan," 275; Wheatley, "Malay Peninsula as Known to the Chinese," 3.

[342] For brief comments on this work, see Pelliot, "Fou-nan," 276–77; Wheatley, "Malay Peninsula as Known to the Chinese," 3. For difficulty in attributing the description of aloeswood harvesting to Zhu Ying's work, see my comments to aloeswood at HC#42.

[343] All we can confirm about Wan Zhen's life is gleaned from the "Bibliographic Treatise" section compiled for the *Book of Sui* where it notes he was governor of Danyang under the Wu and author of the *Treatise on Strange Things of the Southern Regions*, see SuiS:33.983. Unlike Kang Tai and Zhu Ying, there is no evidence Wan Zhen travelled south. He likely collected reports in Danyang which was strategically located on the banks of the Yangze River with its capital at Jianye, the city which became the capital of the Eastern Wu in 229.

[344] It has been proposed that Wan Zhen was governor in the late 220s or early 230s, but I do not think this is tenable. Xiang Da, first writing in 1930, determined that Lü Fan 呂範 (d. 228) was the governor of Danyang sometime between 222 and his death in 228, while Zhuge Ke 諸葛恪 (203–253) assumed office in 234. Not knowing who assumed office between these two individuals, Xiang Da surmised it must have been Wan Zhen; see the discussion in Xiang Da, *Tang dai yu Chang'an wenming* (Shijiazhuang: Hebei jiaoyu chubanshe, [1957] 2000), 564–69. Da did not, however, settle who took office after Zhuge Ke up through the fall of the Eastern

diving operations in Hepu 合浦 commandery, in present-day Guangdong, and its portrayal of large, four mast foreign ships sailing the South China Sea – the earliest clear description we have of such nautical engineering.[345] Wan Zhen's treatise also identifies several luxury aromatics that we can presume were arriving in southern Chinese ports, perhaps aboard the same large ships he described. This includes (with the origins as noted by Wan Zhen himself): Javanese cloves, Malayan patchouli, Vietnamese aloeswood (*mu xiang* 木蜜, *chenxiang* 沈香), Kaśmīri saffron (*yujin* 鬱金), Roman frankincense (*xunlu* 薰陸), Indian costus root (*qingmu* 青木), and Malayan sulfur (*liuhuang xiang* 流黃香).

Chinese economic interest in the maritime south only intensified in the coming decades, especially after the fall of the Western Jin dynasty in 317. This spurred massive migrations to the south, including many of the most wealthy families.[346] As we will see in the following chapters, these families entered a southern culture that was already "obsessed" with regional aromatics and through maritime trade was increasingly exposed to more exotic

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Wu in 280, leaving open the possibility Wan Zhen's governorship was sometime during this period. Recently it has been shown that Gao Rui 高瑞 became head of Danyang after Lü Fan, thus casting Wan Zhen's period of governorship back into question; see Ye Zhoujie and Cai Dongzhong, "Sun Wu Yangzhou shibajun taishou kao," *Hubei wenli xueyuan xuebao* 37, no. 12 (2016): 6. Consequently, It is possible that Wan Zhen compiled the *Treatise on Strange Things of the Southern Regions* either before or after Kang Tai and Zhu Ying's mission to Funan in ca. 245–250. There is no evidence that any author copied from one another. Moreover, in contrast to Kang Tai, it has been suggested that Wan Zhen's transcriptions reflect more archaic features of the Wu dialect, see Wolters, *Indonesian Commerce*, 274–75n.12. Since the embassy to Funan had to occur before the death of Sun Quan 孫權 in 252 and Wang Zhen's treatise has a larger window for completion (up until 280), I provisionally treat Wang Zhen's work as a product of the third quarter of the third century, and consequently compiled subsequent to the reports of Kang Tai and Zhu Ying.

[345] For Wan Zhen's comments on pearl fishing, see Edward H. Schafer, "The Pearl Fisheries of Ho-p'u," *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 72, no. 4 (1952): 155–68; for his comments on foreign four mast ships, see Pelliot, "Indochine," 255–57; Wang, "Nanhai Trade," 38–40; Joseph Needham, Ling Wang, and Gwei-Djen Lu, *Science and Civilization in China, Vol 4, Physics and Physical Technology, Part III: Civil Engineering and Nautics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1971), 600–02. There is some ambiguity as to who built and navigated these ships. Pelliot points broadly to foreigners living south of Chinese borders, Wang presumes they are Indian or Malay sailors, and Needham argues for "foreign" Chinese Yue sailors.

[346] For convenient summary of the implications these migrations had on the southern economy, see Wolters *Indonesian Commerce*, 76. It was also during this period when Funan was increasingly bypassed by cargo ships as both mercantile goods and tributary gift were brought directly into Chinese harbors, see Hall, "Economic History," 195.

varieties arriving in coastal harbors. By the establishment of the Liu Song in 420, overland trade through central Asia had become precarious and the southern court subsequently established even stronger maritime connections.[347] Not surprisingly, it is during this period when Fan Ye, from present-day coastal Zhejiang, compiled that earliest known Chinese incense and perfume blending manuals noted above. Moreover, in the late fifth and early sixth centuries, we have the earliest textual evidence for the adoption of incense in state sacrifice as well as the requested use of incense during mourning periods for state officials, both being attested in the historical records of the south.[348]

In summation, by focusing on patters in the supra-regional trade of aromatics, both the "strange aromatics" and the "various aromatics" attested in the *Book of Later Han* were early harbingers for the profound changes in Chinese olfactory culture of the coming centuries. Mediterranean storax is the first to be attested in Chinese literary works and within two centuries and stunning range of foreign oleoresins, oleogums, oil-impregnated woods, pungent flowers buds, and scented leaves were being received in Chinese markets. During this transitional period, there is also an ongoing shift, or more specifically, a growing semantic range in the meaning of *xiang*, from the aroma of sacrifice, to a class of commercially traded scented materials, to ultimately its common medieval understanding as incense.

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[347] Wolters *Indonesian Commerce*, 77–78; I am less convinced by Kenneth Hall's claim that prior to effective closing of overland trade in 439 that "the southern market had been supplied, for the most part, by the overland routes," Hall, "Economic History," 196.

[348] We return to these points in Chapter 4, Section 10. It is worth noting that Sassanid Persian ships did not travel eastward beyond present-day Sri Lanka until after the mid-sixth century, see Wang, "Nanhai Trade," 21–23, 28, 43; Wolters, *Indonesian Commerce*, 146–48, 150–51. Sassanid Persian envoys visited China in 530, 533, and 535, but all of these delegations traveled overland through Central Asia, see Wang, "Nanhai Trade," 60. It is not certain when Persian ships first docked in China, but the monk Yijing claims to have boarded a Persian (Bosi) vessel in Guangzhou on his was to Sumatra, see Wang, 75n.18.

5. The Olfactory Imagination of the Six Dynasties: Emperor Wu's Strange Aromatics

When Olivia Milburn coined the term "perfume revolution" to signal the significant change between the ancient and medieval Chinese smellscape, she identified the role of Emperor Wu as ambiguous. On one hand, Milburn acknowledges that the emperor's vision of empire that was engaged with foreign trade "had an enormous impact" on later smell culture.[349] One the other hand, all of the sources that specifically speak to his personal reception of exotic perfumes and incense appear in medieval stories many centuries after his death.[350] Regardless of this latter point, Milburn takes it as largely unquestioned that foreign perfumes and aromatics were first imported into China during the Western Han or earlier, thus, it is only Emperor Wu's role in that process that remains undefined.[351]

I believe such a view is reflective of many scholars of Chinese olfactory culture who seem, in part, dazzled by the sheer volume of medieval tales of fantastic aromatics arriving during Emperor Wu's reign. Consequently, it may seem foolhardy to deny these stories collectively reveal some small "kernel" of historical truth that has been otherwise lost from early imperial recordkeeping. Again, instead of concerning ourselves with speculative first causes, I propose we read these medieval stories as transparent products of their time, fully shaped by contemporaneous cultural, social, and material forces. As I will argue, Emperor Wu's role in the context of olfactory culture is not ambiguous, his selection by medieval authors is both strategic and meaningful.

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[349] Milburn, "Aromas," 442.
[350] Milburn, 441. Milburn's abstract clearly states that it is only "later literature" that specifies the appearance of foreign aromatics under the reign of Emperor Wu. Milburn also notes that foreign aromatics do not appear in official histories, but are common in the tales of the strange genre, see Milburn, 460–61.
[351] Milburn, 463.

Most of the medieval stories noted above featuring Emperor Wu first appear during the Six Dynasties and eventually come to be classified among the genre known as accounts or tales of the strange (*zhiguai*). Attempts to define the scope or seminal characteristics of this genre have proven contentious, but in general, tales of the strange are comprised of an anthology of short episodes, presented in a matter-of-fact style, that function as records of strange customs, marvelous *flora* and *fauna*, and other odd phenomena concerning ghosts and spirits. Several works, in what might be considered a subclass of tales of the strange literature, sought to embellish the legacy of Emperor Wu. These include the *Tales of Emperor Wu of Han* (*Han Wudi gushi* 漢武帝故事), hereafter *Tales of Emperor Wu*, the *Records of Emperor Wu of Han and the Cavern Darkness of Separate Realms* (*Han Wudi bieguo dongming ji* 漢武帝別國洞冥記), hereafter *Records of Cavern Darkness*, and the *Records of the Ten Continents of the Inner Seas* (*Hainei shizhou ji* 海內十洲記; DZ598), hereafter *Records of the Ten Continents*. The latter work together with *Esoteric Biography of Emperor Wu of the Han* (*Han Wudi neizhuan* 漢武帝內傳; DZ292), hereafter *Esoteric Biography*, and the *Esoteric Biography of Emperor Wu* (*Han Wudi wai zhuan* 漢武帝外傳; DZ293), hereafter *Exoteric Biography*, originally formed a complete narrative.[352] The anecdotes preserved in these texts, as well as other individual episodes scattered throughout other tales of the strange works, established a pattern where Emperor Wu is cast as the frequent recipient of exotic and strange goods, among which a clear subcategory of gifts was

[352] These texts have been studied in depth by Thomas E. Smith, see Smith, "Ten Continents"; Smith, "Ritual"; and Thomas E. Smith, "Where Chinese Administrative Practices and Tales of the Strange Converge: The Meaning of *Gushi* in the *Han Wudi Gushi*," *Early Medieval China* 1 (1994): 1–33. The *Tales of Emperor Wu* is likely a product of the third or fourth century, while the *Exoteric Biography*, *Esoteric Biography*, and *Records of the Ten Continents* date to approximately the fifth century. The *Records of Cavern Darkness* is attributed to the master of methods Guo Xian 郭憲 (ca. 1st cent.), but likely dates to the sixth century. For more on the complex early medieval history of the tales of the strange genre, see Campany, *Strange Writing*.

supra-regional perfumes and incense (See Appendix 2 for a list of "strange aromatics" associated with Emperor Wu).

Before turning to role of Emperor Wu, let us first look to the types of aromatics that came into his possession and what this can tell us about the early medieval smellscape and the changing conceptions around aromatics. One early episode detailing the arrival of foreign incense is found in the *Treatise on the Investigation of Things* (*Bowu zhi* 博物志), compiled by the Jin official Zhang Hua 張華 (232–300). This work is widely regarded as one of the earliest examples of the tales of the strange genre.[353] Preserved in a section entitled "Strange Products" (*yichan* 異產), a division added by later redactors, we find the following story:

> In the time of Emperor Wu, there were people from a kingdom west of the Weak River who traversed the Weak River on a feather boat to present incense as tribute. The emperor claimed it was a common-place incense that was not lacking in China, thus he did not treat the envoy with courtesy and retained them for a long time. Once the emperor was visiting Shanglin Park and the Western envoy rode in cavalcade to seek his audience and present their incense again. The emperor took it and examined it. There were three pellets the size of swallows' eggs and resembled jujubes. The emperor was displeased and had them placed in the outer storehouse.
>
> Afterwards, there was a great epidemic in Chang'an and everyone in the palace fell sick with disease. The emperor could not maintain his spirits. The Western envoy begged for audience and asked to burn one pellet of the incense offered in tribute in order to dispel the miasma. The emperor, against his will, listened to them. By the dawn of the next day, all those sick in the palace were healed. In Chang'an, and for a hundred *li*, all could smell the scent of the incense. The fragrance endured for more than ninety days and its aroma was like it had never faded. Thereafter, the emperor [treated the envoy] with utmost generosity and sent them off with money.[354]
>
> 漢武帝時，弱水西國有人乘毛車以渡弱水來獻香者，帝謂是常香，非中國之所乏，不禮其使。留久之，帝幸上林苑，西使千乘輿聞，并奏其香。帝取之看，大如鸞卵，三枚，與棗相似。帝不悅，以付外庫。後長安中大疫，宮中皆疫病。帝不舉樂，西使乞見，請燒所貢香一枚，以辟疫氣。帝不得已，聽之，宮中病者登日並差。長安中百里咸聞香氣，芳積九十餘日，香猶不歇。帝乃厚禮發遣餞送。

[353] For the life of Zhang Hua, see Greatrex, *Bowu Zhi*, 5–16; for a discussion on the textual history of the *Treatise on the Investigation of Things*, see Greatrex, 49–68.
[354] BWZ:2.25–26. For different translations of this passage, see Greatrex, *Bowu Zhi*, 93–94; Milburn, "Aromas," 461.

In this episode we find a fascinating synthesis of lore concerning immortals, tributary politics, and magical medicine. The Weak River was customarily envisioned as part of a mythical geography located at the western extremity of the world, thus the tribute delegation would have been conceptually linked to the mythical Kunlun Mountains, known as the abode of the immortal Queen Mother of the West (Xiwangmu 西王母).[355] The use of a "feather boat" also subtlety hints as the divinity of the delegation members since immortals were envisioned as having the power of flight.[356] There is nothing in the beginning of the narrative, however, that suggests a supernatural quality to the incense offered as tribute. The passage instead clothes it in an aura of facticity, presenting it as an all-too-ordinary gift from a foreign state. The magical quality of the tribute is not revealed until the very end, when it is burned to dispel an epidemic besieging the capital. Moreover, it not only miraculously heals those in the palace, but also engulfs the distant surroundings of the city with its fragrance that does not subside for three months.

For comparison, let us turn to a different version of this episode found in the *Record of the Ten Continents* from around the fifth century. In summary, the text describes the arrival of a tribute delegation from Yuezhi who present a gift of four ounces of incense formed into pellets the size of sparrows' eggs and that are black like mulberries (*sangshen* 桑椹). Similar to the previous rendition, the tribute is initially dismissed by Emperor Wu, but

[355] The *Book of Han* preserves a curious claim that an anonymous "elder of Parthia" confirmed the existence of Queen Mother of the West and Weak River, but had never personally seen them, see Hulsewé, *China in Central Asia*, 114. In the later medieval period, the Chinese believed Weak River to be located west of the Roman Empire, see Hulsewé, *China in Central Asia*, 114n.260. It is worth nothing that from the late Warring States and through part of the Han the Queen Mother of the West was though to reside in the north or even northeast of China, see Jessica Rawson, "The Eternal Palaces of the Western Han: A New View of the Universe," *Artibus Asiae* 59, no. 1/2 (1999): 23.

[356] The *Records of the Ten Continents*, which draws upon this episode, claims that this river "cannot float a swan's feather or be crossed," Smith, "Ritual," 544. This again underscores the perceived impossibility of crossing this body of water and consequently the divine nature of this embassy.

the aromatic is eventually revealed to bear the name Spirit Incense (*shenxiang* 神香), elsewhere called Numinous Incense (*lingxiang* 靈香), which not only has an exceptionally strong fragrance when burned, but also the miraculous ability to revive the dead.[357] The story continues:

> In the first year of *houyuan* [88 BCE], within the city of Chang'an there were sick people numbering in the hundreds and more than half had died. The emperor tested the Spirit Incense from Yuezhi and burned it within the city. Those who were dead for less than three months all came alive. The fragrance lasted for three months without fading. Thereupon, [the emperor] trusted this as an object of the spirits and stashed away the remainder of the incense. The following morning it went missing. He examined the container and the seal was unbroken, yet the incense was not recovered. The emperor grew remorseful and was ashamed he did not treat the envoy with more decorum.[358]
> 後元元年，長安城內，病者數百，亡者太半。帝試取月支神香，燒之於城內。其死未三日者皆活，芳氣經三月不歇，於是信知其神物也。乃更秘録餘香。後一旦又失之，檢函封印如，故無復香也。帝愈懊恨恨。不禮待於使者。

It is clear the anonymous compiler of the *Record of the Ten Continents* took the initial anecdote from the earlier *Treatise on the Investigation of Things* and elaborated upon it. To further round out the narrative, the later medieval tale also provides a fantastical backstory to the tribute, claiming the aromatic originated from the mythic continent of Juku 聚窟, and specifically derived from a tree that resembled the Chinese liquidambar tree. We are told it is made by taking the roots and boiling them to produce a black tar-like substance that is rolled and made into pellets.[359] The connection between the pellets and the tribute from the Yuezhi delegation is made clear immediately after the above passage. According to the *Record of the Ten Continents*, following the loss of the magical incense, Emperor Wu grows increasingly despondent and eventually dies. The anonymous author muses that only had Emperor Wu

[357] Summarizing DZ598:6b, DZ598:7a, and DZ598:8a; the relevant passages are translated in Smith, "Ritual," 548, 549, and 551, respectively.
[358] DZ598:8b, trans. (with minor modifications) Smith, "Ritual," 552.
[359] Summarizing DZ598:8b, trans. Smith, "Ritual," 547–48; see also T2122:574a29–b06; TPYL:8.983.874. See also the entry for Rousing the Numina Aromatic at HC#48.

treated the Yuezhi envoy with respect, he might have been able to use the Numinous Incense from Juku at the end of his life to stave off death.[360]

It is worth taking stock in how the olfactory imagination of the Six Dynasties, as reflected in the above narratives, was shaped by a very different smellscape in comparison to the Western Han. The loosely torn bits of roots, stems, and flower buds as found at Mawangdui were replaced with a more highly processed material derived from a tree. Specifically, the manufacturing of Spirit Incense involved decocting the roots of a tree said to resemble the Chinese liquidambar (*Liquidambar acalycina* or *L. formosana*). This description is revealing for a pair of reasons. First, by at least the early third century, the tropical Chinese liquidambar was being tapped for its scented resin and used as incense, thus this tree's citation in the *Record of the Ten Continents* can be seen as reflecting this newly available aromatic material.[361] Second, the production of Spirit Incense mirrors early medieval ideas circulating about the manufacturing of Roman storax, as discussed above. In short, we can see elements of the new medieval smellscape encoded into these stories.

In addition, both episodes from the *Treatise on the Investigation of Things* and the *Record of the Ten Continents* explicitly mention the size, shape, and color of the aromatic material, aspects that were mostly overlooked for native, and presumably well-known, Chinese plants in older sources. The analogy made to swallows' eggs provides a sense of size, while the analogy to jujubes and mulberries provides as sense of shape or color. More so than before, the materiality of these exotic items is now seen as salient and worthy of discussion. This new saliency for materiality is seen elsewhere, such as in the description of

[360] DZ598:9b. This passage is not translated in Smith, "Ritual."
[361] For more on this oleoresin, see my comments to liquidambar at HC#33.

Doumo Incense (*doumo xiang* 兜末香), from the *Tales of Emperor Wu*, as resembling large beans, and Sinking Light Incense (*chenguang xiang* 沈光香), from the *Records of Cavern Darkness*, which is noted as being firm and difficult to crush.[362]

This newfound interest in aromatic production and materiality I believe is significant for two reasons. First, it underscores the shifting conception about how aromatics should look and feel. They are no longer solely comprised of lightly processed roots, stems, and leaves. These new medieval items are small, round, and hard. This potentially points to the influence of hardened tree resins which would have been in the shape of globules or "tears" as raw materials. Equally, these descriptions could also point to round pellets that were made after the raw materials were processed and blended into multi-ingredient compounds.

This brings us to the second point; this specific materiality is also connected to older Chinese practices of drug making. As noted in the medical manuscriptions recovered at Mawangdui, "small beans" (*da* 荅) were used as a metrological standard for making medicinal pills.[363] Moreover, these pills were shaped after the drugs were pulverized and sometimes mixed with sweet-smelling agglutinants like honey or jujube paste.[364] For comparison, the creation of incense blends in the late medieval period followed a similar procedure: raw materials were crushed with mortar and pestle, sifted through fine mesh to ensure a uniform size, formed into pellets with honey or jujube paste, and then cellared to mature the scent of the final product. It seems the steps of this rendering process were either entirely based on older Chinese drug making practices or were introduced into China,

[362] See the entries for Doumo Incense at HC#53 and Sinking Light Incense at HC#54, respectively.
[363] Harper, *Early*, 223n.5.
[364] The use of these agglutinants are noted in Harper, *Early*, 335, 365, and 366.

possibly through Buddhists and other foreign intermediaries, where they immediately found close affinity with domestic drug making procedures.[365]

The blurring of the boundaries between incense pellets and medicinal pills is exemplified in the story of Douyi Aromatic (*douyi xiang* 都夷香), found in the *Records of Cavern Darkness*, in which the anomalous aromatic is not burned, but consumed in order to miraculously satiate the hunger of an adept engaging in the religio-dietetic practice of grain abstention.[366] Similar directions for creating edible "incense pellets" are found in later medieval Buddhist manuscripts from Dunhuang, to which we will return in Chapter 4. The most evident connection of these strange aromatics to medical therapies is in their miraculous effects when burned. The *Treatise on the Investigation of Things* treats the foreign incense as a powerful drug to end an epidemic, while the *Record of the Ten Continents* treats it as means to reanimate the dead. Similar effects are ascribed to Doumo Incense, as well as Perfuming the Flesh Incense (*xun₁ji xiang* 熏肌香), as cited in the *Records of Cavern Darkness*, which reputedly prevents illness up thorough old age.[367]

Equally telling, although not as immediately apparent, is the fact that burning incense as a means to communicate with the spirits or other divine beings is not often the purpose of "strange aromatics." Limiting ourselves to the collection of Emperor Wu's aromatics, only very infrequently is incense used in a ritual or devotional setting. One of the most notable (we will turn to another below) is the use of the Hundred Blend Incense (*baihe zhi xiang* 百和之香) to initiate communication with Queen Mother of the West.[368]

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[365] We will return to a discussion of medieval incense blending practices in Chapter 3, Section 3.
[366] See the entry for Douyi Aromatic at HC#44.
[367] See also the entry for Perfuming the Flesh Incense at HC#64.
[368] DZ293:1b, trans. Schipper, *L'Empereur Wou*, 70; Smith, "Ritual," 482. For further context on blended incense with a large number of ingredients, see my comments to Thousand Blend Incense at HC#75.

In addition to how these anomalous aromatics were made and used, there is also a rather unique olfactory dimension to how they are described. Robert Campany's analysis of the tales of the strange genre has identified several "modes of anomaly" that allow for "boundary-stretching, boundary-straddling, and boundary crossing."[369] One of these modalities was "anomalies of degree," with a specific sub-category of "excess."[370] This modality works well to describe the olfactory qualities of many of these fragrant materials. Oftentimes, even in other tales of the strange unrelated to Emperor Wu, strange aromatics possess a wondrous smell that is excessive in terms of both scent duration (three months in the pair of anecdotes above) and scent projection (a hundred *li*). While such claims are undoubtedly part of the literary conventions of the genre, they can also suggest a new olfactory world where the smoke of burning roots and leaves has been increasingly replaced by tropically-sourced substances with higher concentrations of volatile oils, most especially tree resins, gums, or scented woods like aloeswood, sandalwood, and frankincense. Ultimately, it is possible the novelty of the scent of the new exotic imports appeared almost other-worldly.

Let us now turn to the specific role of Emperor Wu in these stories. While tales of the strange texts are sometimes portrayed as precursors to the later development of fictional works, this trivializes the fact that these medieval texts were portrayed by their own authors as factual and were conceived as a kind of non-canonical branch of history writing.[371] And while there are elements that we might deem fantastical, most of the contextual framing was rooted in believable, real-world trimmings, thus giving the entire account the aura of

[369] Campany, *Strange Writing*, 237.
[370] Campany, *Strange Writing*, 242.
[371] This argument is made in Campany, *Strange Writing*, 156–159, 163–164.

authenticity. Because of this, while it may be easy for us to dismiss the reality of an incense that can revive the dead, it is less so the case to dismiss the idea that foreign delegations arrived in the Chinese capital to present tribute.

But from what we know of actual Western Han diplomacy with distant nations, this too is a rather bold fabrication. Wang Gungwu highlights the fact that distant foreign embassies are noticeably missing from the *Book of Han*, with only a single tribute delegation recorded, from presumably southern India, in 2 CE, nearly ninety years after Emperor Wu's passing.[372] This is in contrast to a report in the same imperial history that the Western Han court sent out as many as ten embassies a year during the reign of Emperor Wu.[373] Thus, it is important to understand what these tales of the strange are trying to do rhetorically when recording these anecdotes, regardless of their apparent veneer of historicity. Very similar to the "Rhapsody on Shanglin Park," and indeed most of the Han rhapsody genre, these works are attempting to extol the Chinese state by highlighting the grandeur and magnitude of imperial holdings, especially in terms of the gifted exotica arriving from far-distant lands. According to Campany, the phenomena of "cosmographic collecting" was part of the pre-imperial Chinese understanding of centralized rule and it was this cosmographic tradition that Han and Six Dynasties tales of the strange compilers were drawing upon in their work.[374] The collection of abnormalities was a way to bring the anomalous periphery under control of the center.

I would also argue that stories of strange aromatics placed in the hand of Emperor Wu, were not only used to aggrandize a vision of emperor's control over his vast domain, but

[372] Wang, "Nanhai Trade," 20.
[373] Hulsewé, *China in Central Asia*, 85; see also Yü, *Trade*, 146–47.
[374] Campany, *Strange Writing*, 101–126.

were also used to symbolically domesticate the foreign, materially odd, and olfactorily pungent materials that were entering China at the time. This includes the olfactory practice of burning incense as part of religious communication and veneration. Turning back to the *Book of Han*, there is a curious story concerning the Western Han general Huo Qubing 霍去病 (140–177 BCE) that is instructive in this regard. In the summer of 121 BCE, he successfully routed the troops of a Xiongnu prince in the Hexi corridor, confiscating a golden (or gilded) statue of a man that was purportedly used by the prince to worship Heaven. This statue was brought to Emperor Wu and possibly installed in his Sweet Spring Palace, one of his favorite summer retreats. Little more is known about this statue or its ultimate fate, but it may have become the focus of sacrificial offerings.[375] Yet, the later medieval authors of the *Tales of Emperor Wu* take this episode from the official history and embellish it considerably:

> [The general Huo Qubing] confiscated the Heavenly Sacrifice[376] and Golden Man. Believing these to be great deities, His Highness placed them in a line in the Sweet Spring Palace. The [Golden] Man stood more than a *zhang* in height and was not given sacrificial offerings; only incense was burned as an offering. The Heavenly Sacrifice was more than eight *chi* in height and he held the sun and moon. Oxen were offered in sacrifice. His Highness ordered that they be worshipped in accord to the customs of [their native] regions, but because the masters of methods considered the barbarian deities as inappropriate for the Middle Kingdom, their worship was prohibited.[377]
> 獲天祭金人,上以為大神,列於甘泉宮.人率長丈餘,不祭祝,但燒香禮拜.天祭長八尺,擎日月,祭以牛,上令依其方俗禮之,方士皆以為夷狄鬼神,不宜在中,因乃止.

There were significant changes in imperial sacrificial religion under Emperor Wu, including the inauguration of sacrifices to Grand Unity (Taiyi 太一) in 113 BCE and the re-

[375] HS:55.2479, HS:68.2959, HS:68.2967. The "golden man" of the Xiongnu, see James R. Ware, "Once More the 'Golden Man,'" *T'oung Pao*, Second Series, 34 (1938): 174–78 and sources cited therein; see also passing comments in Knechtges, *Wen Xuan*, Vol. 2, 24; Zürcher, *Buddhist Conquest*, 21; Bujard, "State and Local Cults," 789–90. The old speculations of the statue's identity as the Buddha are in error, however, since the earliest anthropomorphic Indian Buddhist imagery appears only in the first century CE.
[376] The imperial histories of the Han only ever talk about a Golden Man statue, but this passage clearly identifies this as the name for a second statue.
[377] My translation slightly emends Smith, "Ritual," 401.

establishment sacrifices on Mt. Tai three years later, but in no case are we told that burning incense was instituted as part of the ritual program.[378] Equally, the hymn for the "Songs for the Suburban Sacrifices" we examined earlier was still predicated on older olfactory systems of cycles of nourishment and shamanic adornment of plant charms. The claim above that Emperor Wu suspended sacrificial offerings, and by implication, the means to draw down and nourish the spirits, when venerating the Golden Man can only be understood as the imagination of the medieval author(s) of the *Tales of Emperor Wu*.[379] Moreover, it can be viewed as an attempt to root novel olfactory practices, namely the burning of incense in ritual settings, in the glories of China's past and under the auspices of a famed emperor who had emerged as a powerful symbol of domesticating the anomalous.

6. Conclusion

In the four-hundred-year span of the Han dynasty, significant change occurred in regards to foreign relations and economic policy, thrusting open an era of increased contact with far-distant domains once *terra incognita*. During this period, members of the imperial court and other Han elite were slowly exposed to the goods produced in neighboring lands or to items piped through much larger commercial trade networks and originating in even more distant regions.

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[378] An overview of these sacrifices, and the role of Emperor Wu, can be found in Bujard, "State and Local Cults," 785–91.

[379] A depiction of Emperor Wu burning incense in front of a pair of statues can be found in Cave 323 of the Mogao Cave complex. Dating from the early Tang (late seventh or early eighth century), this mural depicts Emperor grasping a handheld censer, a common ritual implements of the medieval period. As we will see in Chapter 4, Section 10, the earliest evidence we have for the adoption of incense for formal state sacrifice occurs in the early sixth century, during the reign of the famous patron of Buddhism, Emperor Wu of the Liang.

Notable changes in the material culture of smell, however, are not documented as part of the Western Han contacts with these foreign nations. This is in spite of the fact that numerous kinds of supra-regional luxury goods are regularly attested. One could argue, based on a principle of irrelevancy, that foreign aromatics were so common during the Western Han that they were never deemed relevant for recording in imperial registers of tribute and trade. Such a stance, however, would then have to account for the reason why supra-regional aromatics were suddenly deemed salient in our sources during the Eastern Han, and moreover, why there appears to be a steady growth through the third century in the number of newly-relevant foreign aromatics. I believe, while still acknowledging the possibility that supra-regional aromatics were intermittently traded during the Western Han, that the most preferable reading of our surviving textual materials supports a view that aromatics rode on the backs of other luxury exotica that initially captured the interest of the Han elite. Items like ivory, horn, pearls, feathers, and woolen textiles seem to have been part of an initial wave of importation; aromatic exotica were a secondary development.

Consequently, in contrast to some scholarly presumption, the Western Han smellscape remained focused on regionally available plants, as we see from the archaeobotanical evidence from Mawangdui and the textual citations in "Rhapsody on Shanglin Park." But this does not mean there was no diversity among the scented *flora* of the early empire. Different vegetal belts produced substantial botanical biodiversity across the Han domain, with the sub-tropical and tropical south producing more highly-scented plants. These phytogeographic boundaries are echoed in a loose division between the northern and southern *flora* cited in pre-imperial poetic anthologies such as the *Book of Odes* and the *Songs of Chu*. Importantly, whether it is due to shared literary convention or active cross-

cultivation, several fragrant plants, including thoroughwort, sweet basil, wild angelica, Sichuan pepper, and cassia, frequently bridge this north-south divide. The practice of adorning the body with scenting sachets also crosses this boundary, but it appears to have been particularly popular in (or associated with) the south. The ultimate marriage of the olfactory imagination of the north, centered on the aromas of sacrifice, and the olfactory imagination of the south, centered on shamanic adornment, can be seen in the hymns of state sacrifice associated with Emperor Wu. The governing logics that motivated the use of ritual odorants in the north and south also formed a complimentary pairing: the aromas of grains, fats, and alcohol called the spirits to the sacrifice and provided them nourishment, while the fragrant scents of thoroughwort and wild angelica attested to the purity of the ritual participants and affirmed the presence of divine beings.

The earliest unambiguous textual reference to a "breakthrough" supra-regional aromatic in China is storax, which was known in medieval sources as originating in the Roman Empire. That such a substance could have been known to the Chinese is well within reason, as the contemporaneous *Periplus Maris Erythraei* attests to the Romans sending storax to the northeastern Indian ports along the Arabian Sea in the first century, precisely when it is first attested in Chinese documents. In the coming centuries, new aromatics would be recorded in Chinese textual sources, suggesting a slow breaching of commercial interest in fragrant commodities, and help ushering in a "scent revolution."

Finally, the changing material culture of smell would not go unnoticed by medieval compilers of regional gazetteers nor, significantly, compilers of tales of the strange. The *Book of Later Han* referred to the newly imported commodities of the south as "strange aromatics," and it appears aromatic exotica formed one clear subset of anomalies for tales of

the strange narratives. While at times these aromatics were identified by their "excessive" qualities of scent duration and scent projection, in addition to their miraculous therapeutic effects, there were also attempts to domesticate these "abhorrent" objects. Drawing upon an older literary tradition which described cosmographic collecting as a proper imperial project, these aromatics from the peripheries were tamed through their placement in the hand of Emperor Wu, a figure who was known historically as subjugating the margins of the Chinese empire. Moreover, the novel foreign aromatics also seem to have been viewed through a native Chinese lens of drug making, a conceptual framing that also made the foreign seem more familiar.

The next chapter will turn to an investigation of the material culture of burning incense, including the history of the chalice-shaped censer, an analysis of early censer use, and an examination of its social, political, and religious significance from the Western Han to early Six Dynasties.

Chapter Three – Vermillion Flames and Azure Smoke: Early Chinese Censers in Context

1. Introduction

The study of aromatics during the Song can be placed within a much larger intellectual trend of critically re-evaluating China's past. Motivated in part by ritual reforms at court, Song-era historiography moved beyond the textual study of the classics and imperial histories and sought to incorporate a careful analysis of antiquarian artifacts. This new attitude towards material culture and the "study of metal and stone" (*jinshi xue* 金石學) encouraged the development of new methods of archaeology, epigraphy, and collecting. In the process, these attitudes also gave birth to a new connoisseurship of antiquities and associated genres of writing.[380] One early antiquities expert, Zhao Xigu 趙希鵠 (ca. 1170–after 1242), composed a guidebook for elite taste, entitled the *Pure Registers of the Cavern Heavens* (*Dongtian qinglu* 洞天清錄).[381] In his section analyzing the styles and functions of classical Chinese bronzes, Zhao offers this insight about ancient incense burners:

> In antiquity, southernwood and mugwort were used to communicate with the spirits; incense was not burned, therefore, there were no incense burners. What are used as incense burners today were all used by the people of antiquity as sacrificial vessels in ancestral temples. The *jue*-shaped censer imitates the *jue*-goblet of antiquity; the *suanni*-shaped censer imitates the round-footed *dou*-chalice of antiquity; the scenting globe imitates the *qian*-cauldron of antiquity. These [examples] and others are not the same [in function]. Sometimes there are

[380] Song antiquarians were interested in identifying, categorizing, and dating old artifacts, but the main focus was the interpretation of inscriptions found on old bronzes and stone steles. The literature on the Song antiquarian movement is extensive; for a brief overview on the rise and development of *jinshi xue*, see Lothar Von Falkenhausen, "Antiquarianism in East Asia: A Preliminary Overview," in *World Antiquarianism: Comparative Perspectives*, ed. Schnapp Alain (Los Angeles: Getty Research Institute, 2014), 35-66; for a more recent comprehensive overview, see Yunchiahn C. Sena, *Bronze and Stone: The Cult of Antiquity in Song Dynasty China* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2019).

[381] The title is a word play on Daoist "registers," but here the text records various artifacts, not the names of deities.

> new castings, yet the shapes are archaistic. It is only with the *boshan* censer in the palaces of the Han crown princes that [censers] were used; the manufacturing of incense burners started with these. There are also counterfeits and these should be distinguished by the object's coloring.[382]
> 古以蕭艾達神明而不焚香，故無香爐。今所用香爐，皆以古人宗廟祭器為之。爵爐則古之爵，狻猊爐則古踽足豆，香毬則古之鬻，其等不一，或有新鑄而象古為之者。惟博山爐乃漢太子宮所用，香爐之制始於此。亦有僞者，當以物色辨之。

This passage provides a window into late Song antique collecting and the contemporary understanding of the ancient history of Chinese olfactory culture. Most notably, both incense and incense burners are not perceived as genuine artifacts of China's ancient past. Echoing the earlier claims of Ding Wei and Ye Tinggui from Chapter One, Zhao Xigu asserts that incense – or what we might read as being implied, "true" incense – was not burned in ancient China since those wishing to communicate with the spirits only had access to native herbaceous plants such as southernwood and mugwort. As a consequence of incense's absence, Zhao Xigu reasons that incense burners, too, were absent. To further underscore his point, he reveals that many of the censer shapes fashionable during the Song were not originally intended for burning incense in antiquity, but were for use at sacrificial banquets as goblets, chalices, and cauldrons. From Zhao Xigu's perspective, the origin of Chinese censers must be traced to the appearance of mountain-shaped *boshan* mountain censers during the Han, not earlier.[383] Finally, concluding his didactic history with a note of pragmatic advice, Zhao Xigu warns against newly cast censers imitating as authentic antiques (we might assume such counterfeits were widespread) and asks collectors to

[382] DTQL:235; cf. trans. Laufer, *Chinese* Pottery, 178–179.
[383] Zhao Xigu's mistaken claims about the origin of censers likely reflects the widespread, and equally mistaken, belief that Emperor Wu of the Han was responsible for the first trade in foreign aromatics, see discussion in Chapter 2, Section 5. Moreover, in the Six Dynasties period, the *boshan* censer was closely associated with the imperial family, especially the crown prince, see Zornica Kirkova, "Sacred Mountains, Abandoned Women, and Upright Officials: Facets of the Incense Burner in Early Medieval Chinese Poetry," *Early Medieval China* 24 (2018): esp. 61 (and discussion below). Both of these ideas likely motivated Zhao Xigu's beliefs expressed here.

distinguish them by their different "coloring," possibly referring to a lack of patina properly developed over the passage of many decades. Overall, Zhao Xigu relays a simple message: the history of Chinese censers is not as simple as it appears and collectors should be weary of new vessels being made to look like vintage artifacts.

For Zhao Xigu and his audience of elite connoisseurs, the interest in closely analyzing material objects of the distant past had been ongoing for well over a century. Outside the accumulation of cultural capital through the ownership of such items, archaistic vessels also expressed political power. Emperor Huizong 徽宗 (r. 1101–1125) was among the first who helped intensify an interest in antiquarian objects that eventually spread from the elites at court to local officials. Huizong's interest was motivated in part by the chance discovery of six Zhou era bronze bells in 1104. Since the Han, the accidental unearthing of old bronzes was conceived as an auspicious sign (*ruiying* 瑞應) from Heaven, and this set of bells was immediately interpreted by the chancellery as evidence for Heaven's support of Huizong's rule, yet another sign of the longstanding imperial practice of the cosmographic collecting of exotica.[384] In response, Huizong commissioned a set of bells to be cast and modeled on the form and décor of these ancient exemplars, a practice established by his predecessor Emperor Renzong 仁宗 (r. 1022–1063).[385] Furthermore, the newly cast bells were used as part of

[384] A discussion on the discovery of ancient bronzes from the Han through Tang can be found in Noel Barnard, "Records of Discoveries of Bronze Vessels in Literary Sources and Some Pertinent Remarks on Aspects of Chinese Historiography," *Journal of the Institute of Chinese Studies of the Chinese University of Hong Kong* 6, no. 2 (1973): 455–546. For the political and religious significance of such findings, especially during the Han, see Anna K. Seidel, "Imperial Treasures and Taoist Sacraments: Taoist Roots in the Apocrypha," in *Tantric and Taoist Studies in Honour of R.A. Stein, Vol. 2*, ed. Michel Strickmann and Rolf A. Stein (Bruxelles: Institut belge des hautes études chinoises, 1983), 291–371. For comments on the six bells discovered early in the reign of Huizong, see Jessica Rawson, "Novelties in Antiquarian Revivals: The Case of the Chinese Bronzes," *Gugong Xueshu Jikan* 22, no. 1 (2004): 17 and especially Sena, *Bronze and* Stone, 104–07. Lastly, for a general discussion on auspicious phenomena during the reign of Huizong, see Peter C. Sturman, "Cranes above Kaifeng: The Auspicious Image at the Court of Huizong," *Ars Orientalis* 20 (1990): 33–68.
[385] Ya-Hwei Hsu, "Antiquities, Ritual Reform, and the Shaping of New Taste at Huizong's Court," *Artibus Asiae* 73, no. 1 (2013): 146–47.

revised state rituals which were the product of larger program of ritual reform that sought to revive the solemn practices of past sage rulers whose august presence was made tangible through these material artifacts.

The objects that appropriated the formal features and design motifs of ancient prototypes are commonly referred to as archaistic objects, from *fangu qi* 仿古器, or "vessels imitating antiquity."[386] These items first appear in greater numbers in the early decades of the twelfth century and quickly became valued collector's objects in their own right. As described by Zhao Xigu, the production of archaistic censers meant ancient vessel forms were now being used in novel ways. For example, three-legged *ding*-cauldrons 鼎, originally designed as meat-stewing pots and used as offering vessels, were now repurposed to hold burning incense.[387]

Figure 3.1

Figure 3.1: Five-footed lidded censer (FD4:018), gilded silver, height 42 cm, Famen Temple Museum (image from Sen 2014).

[386] Jessica Rawson distinguishes between the "recreations" of ancient ritual objects, which were used in the same way as they were originally intended, and "archaism," where the new objects were used in patently new ways and primarily valued for their antiquated aesthetics, see Rawson, "Novelties," 15–19, 22–24. Yunchiahn Sena distinguishes three different modes of copying past models that fall along a spectrum of fidelity to the original form: first, the exact imitation in both form and function; second, the borrowing of formal features; and third, the mere borrowing of decorative motifs, see Sena, *Bronze and Stone*, 95–151.

[387] Modern scholarship will also point out that *ding*-cauldrons were one of the prototypes for early censers during the Western Han, but this censer type was exceedingly rare, see Yang Jindong, "Handai tong xunlu yanjiu," *Huaxia kaogu* 2 (2014): 85.

This evolution of a new type of archaistic censer is best illustrated by a cache of ceramics discovered at the Yaozhou 耀州 kiln site in Shaanxi. Since the ninth century, the Yaozhou kiln produced what was then a standard five-footed censer, similar in style to the roughly contemporaneous silver incense burners recovered from the fallen pagoda at Famen Temple in 1987 [Fig. 3.1].[388] Throughout the twelfth and early thirteenth centuries, however, production at the site shifted towards making archaistic *ding* shaped censers with decorative motifs that emulated Shang and Zhou bronzes.[389] In general, archaistic vessels continued to be used as a standard model for state rites, religious rituals, and domestic use throughout the Southern Song, Yuan, Ming, and Qing.[390] Indeed, Song antiquarian trends still find expression in today's Buddhist and Daoist temples where ancient Zhou inspired vessel shapes and motifs can easily be found on large bronze censers conspicuously positioned in the middle of temple courtyards for daily devotional use. While this particular aesthetic has its origins in the Northern Song, the visual appearance of the large archaistic censers evoke ideas of China's mythic past and simultaneously root the practice of burning incense within

[388] The significance of the Yaozhou kilns is discussed in Rawson, "Novelties," 22. The crypt under the Famen Temple pagoda was sealed for the final time in 874. When opened, a wide assortment of incense burners and scenting equipment was discovered. Among the most notable artifacts were three very large incense burners, all of which were placed in prominent positions in their respective chambers, for photographs of the censers in situ, see Shaanxi sheng wenwu kaogu yanjiusuo, *Famen si kaogu fajue baogao*, Vol. 2, (Beijing: Wenwu chubanshe, 2007), Plates 23, 25, 29. One was a gilded silver five-legged censer with openwork lid topped by a small figurine of Gaṇeśa (see Fig. 3.1). Another, dated to 869, was also a gilded silver five-legged censer topped with a lotus calyx. For more in the objects of Buddhist material culture at this site, see Tansen Sen, "Relic Worship at the Famen Temple and the Buddhist World of the Tang Dynasty," in *Secrets of the Fallen Pagoda: The Famen Temple and Tang Court Culture*, ed. Eugene Y. Wang (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2014).
[389] A chart showing these changes is reprinted in Rawson, "Novelties," 32.
[390] For the influence of Song porcelain archaistic censers on later designs, see Yang Zhishui, *Xiang shi* (Hong Kong: Xianggang zhonghe chuban youxian gongsi, 2011), 99–117. The importance of incense burners and specifically incense ash for building a sense of community among members of Chinese temples, especially during the Qing and later, has been covered extensively elsewhere. I would direct the reader to the overview and analysis in Habkirk and Chang, "Scents, Community, and Incense," and the sources cited therein. Unfortunately, their presentation on the early history of incense in China is fraught with errors.

that past. This anachronistic misunderstanding of incense was precisely what Zhao Xigu was trying to warn against.

This lengthy excursus into the Song world of antiquities collecting will hopefully shed light on the fact that some of the most visible material expressions of contemporary East Asian olfactory culture – incense burners – have an exceptionally complex history. Moreover, a core part of that history during the Northern Song involved strategic attempts to make it appear as if incense burning had a rightful place in distant Chinese antiquity. By making the past materially present through these objects, new censers could call back to China's illustrious history and traditional forms of symbolic power. For example, the display of a *ding*-shaped censer drew upon the classic lore of the Nine *Ding*-Cauldrons (*jiuding* 九鼎) which not only symbolized preferential access to the spirits, but also legitimated a ruler's authority.[391] In the context of a Buddhist and Daoist altar display, or the setting of a scholar's studio, these archaistic censers could metonymically signify political power (as part of a class of imperially created objects) as well as metaphorically function as a mark of cultured taste (as an expression of refinement). This ability of a censer to function as auspicious sign and as political tool will reappear again when we turn to the older design history of Han-era censers.

This chapter will explore the development of the traditional Chinese incense burner form and examine how this vessel was principally used, with the specific intent to explore how its use changed in the early medieval period. This investigation is hindered to some degree by the curious fact that incense burners appear in the archaeological record (from the

[391] For an examination on the *jiuding* and the political legitimacy granted through the ownership of bronzes and other objects, see Kwang-chih Chang, *Art, Myth, and Ritual: The Path to Political Authority in Ancient China* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1983), esp. pp. 95–106. Not all looked favorably upon this fashion of creating new censer designs. The famed Song poet, Fan Chengda 范成大 (1126–1193) lamented the repurposing of *ding*-cauldrons as censers in his "Ancient *Ding*-Cauldrons Fashioned as Incense Burners" (*Guding zuo xianglu* 古鼎作香爐), see Yang, *Xiang shi*, 99.

Warring States) several centuries before they are unambiguously cited in the surviving textual record (late Western Han to early Eastern Han), thus making it difficult to know to precisely what ends they were used in this early period. Too often, however, it is presumed the use of censers in antiquity is coterminous with how they were used in the medieval period and beyond –as tools of religious practice. This belief, for example, was expressed by Zhao Xigu who claimed that "southernwood and mugwort were used to communicate with the spirits." For the Song elite, there was no other way to envision the purpose behind the ancient practice of burning plants.

I will show that such assumptions are rooted in a "presentism" that projects contemporary uses of incense by practitioners of Buddhism, institutional Daoism, and other popular religions into the distant past without warrant. As we have seen in the first chapter, ancient Chinese sacrificial religion was animated by creating aromas to feed the spirits. In the second chapter we saw the same concern for spiritual alimentation persisted through the Western Han, with no reference to burning incense in order to "communicate with the spirits." This then leads us to an apparent "incense burner paradox": there is undeniable material proof for the ancient practice of burning incense, but apparently no religious or ritual principle to justify its practice.

This chapter will show that this paradox is merely apparent, as the ancient material record is in alignment with early textual descriptions revealing how incense burners were used: for fumigating and perfuming garments. This will be based on a material analysis of the items that were burned, the designs of early censers, their placement in Han tombs, and the often-overlooked auxiliary censer equipment. This thoroughly quotidian and hygienic use is

also clearly attested in the earliest unambiguous textual references to incense burners as cited in Han court protocol manuals and Eastern Han *belles lettres*.

This discussion will dovetail into a deeper examination of the famed *boshan* censers, objects often viewed as instruments for esoteric practice, especially in the quest for transcendence and bodily immortality. In addition to being devices for fumigating garments, the particular visual design and strategic use of smoke will suggest their use as materially auspicious objects designed to invite auspicious omens. As such, they also function as an index for political legitimacy. Their presumed instrumentality for religious or esoteric pursuits is not backed by evidence from the early medieval period.

Overall, this discussion will help underscore how the olfactory practice of incense burning changed considerably in its meaning throughout the Eastern Han and into the Six Dynasties periods, further allowing us to realize the deep impacts of the early medieval scent revolution of the second and third centuries. This change can be specifically charted in examining how *boshan* censers are depicted in early Chinese art, first as one among many auspicious symbols and later as part of an overall artistic program focusing on devotion to a central image. It is only in these later periods, with the spread of Buddhism and the development of regional healing cults, when clear evidence first starts to emerge concerning the more religious, devotional, and esoteric deployments of incense burning in China.

2. The Material Culture of Burning Incense: Early Censers and the Far South

The historical study of ancient Chinese incense burners is even more complicated than Zhao Xigu envisioned. The term *lu* 爐 (or 鑪) covers a rather wide range of devices used to heat or

burn materials, including cooking stoves, coal braziers, and smelting furnaces. When Song antiquarians formalized a conventional nomenclature for ancient ritual vessels and made delineations based on their shape and use, *lu* was not among the objects that received such attention.[392] Recalling Zhao Xigu's comments above, the censer was not identified as an ancient sacrificial vessel, thus it was not assigned a prototypical form similar to that of other ancient bronze objects.[393] In general, to classify an object as an incense burner, both in the pre-modern period and today, is to distinguish it through its imputed function, not necessarily by its formal shape. Thus, censers have historically exhibited an extraordinary breadth in terms of their design across the long medieval period.

Identifying the function of excavated vessels can often prove difficult. Because many ritual and funerary vessels have similar shapes, it can be challenging to differentiate between objects made for heating and serving food, for holding beverages, or in our case, for burning fragrant plant matter. Furthermore, only rarely are vessels found containing organic remains which can help identify the vessel's function, such as was the case for the pair of censers excavated at Mawangdui. Nevertheless, even when organic materials are interred within vessels, they are often heavily degraded or burnt to ash, sometimes causing the results of scientific analysis to be found inconclusive.[394]

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[392] Antiquarian Li Gonglin 李公麟 (d. 1106) was integral in establishing vessel nomenclature after scouring classical sources for information on their ritual significance, see Sena, *Bronze and Stone*, 20, 159–60.
[393] Notably, Song archaistic censers are distinguished according to their structural fidelity to older sacrificial vessels, such as *ding*-cauldrons, *li*-cauldrons 鬲, *gui*-tureens 簋, or other objects with wide mouths, see Rawson, "Novelties," 23; Yang, *Xiang shi*, 99; Sena, *Bronze and Stone*, 145. Song censers also took many other shapes, from detailed sculptures of animals, to spherical vessels with abstract openwork designs, to simple lidless cups, see Liu, *Songdai Xiangpu*, 331–401; Yang, *Xiang shi*, 53–117. Notably, ancient vessels with an upright design were typically repurposed as flower vases. Both archaistic censers and vases were adopted for Buddhist and Daoist altars, see Rawson, "Novelties," 22–24.
[394] Such is the case for the reputed discovery of Arabian frankincense in a second century BCE tomb that underwent spectroscopic analysis, see my comments to frankincense at HC#9. Moreover, different types of scientific analyses can sometimes lead to contradictory conclusions, such as the samples of scented woods recovered from the Song-era Quanzhou harbor shipwreck, see my comments to lakawood at HC#17. For a brief

Except for the few cases where the remains of scented *flora* have been recovered inside objects, the identification of an ancient vessel as an incense burner is based on an analysis of its design. Typically, this means looking for vessels that have a suitable basin for holding incendiary materials combined with venting apertures that allow for air circulation.[395] Moreover, and perhaps most significantly, there is a tendency to classify objects as censers only if they exhibit a clear morphological relationship to other objects previously identified as censers. As a result, many of the most commonly identified censer types and subtypes bear similar structural qualities. This means that unconventional censer designs, especially if there is no clear lineage connecting them to other forms, may remain unrecognized by contemporary archaeologists and historians of material culture.[396] Ultimately, the designation

discussion on the difficulty applying microchemical techniques to identify ancient organic compounds, see Patrick E. McGovern et al., "Chemical Identification and Cultural Implications of a Mixed Fermented Beverage from Late Prehistoric China," *Asian Perspectives* 44, no. 2 (2005): 258–59.

[395] Several scholars have reported on the discovery of a vessel, identified as a censer, in 1995 near Fengxian 鳳翔, Shaanxi on the site of the ancient Qin capital at Yong; see, for example, Helen Loveday, "Diversity in Eastern Zhou Bronze Casting: A Look at a Group of Openwork Vessels," *Journal of East Asian Archaeology* 4, no. 1 (2002): 111–13; Yang, "Handai tong xunlu yanjiu," 88; Milburn, "Aromas," 443 (and sources cited therein). This object is dated to between the mid-fifth to early fourth century BCE, thus many scholars consider this the oldest censer discovered to date. While many express no reservations with this identification, the object's structure does not suggest its function as a censer so readily. Notably, it has a double-walled construction with openwork lattice as a decorative outer shell, but with an inner wall that is solid. This does not seemingly allow for the necessary ventilation to burn plant matter inside the hollow inner vessel. Nevertheless, there are other strikingly similar vessels, possibly from the Han, that can be used for burning plant materials because they lack the solid inner wall, see for example Yang, *Xiang shi*, 59; Loveday, "Openwork Vessels," 112n.13, and especially Han Ming, "Wei-Jin Nanbeichao shiqi de tong xunlu – jianlun Wei-Jin Nanbeichao de shiqi xunxiang xisu," *Sichuan Wenwu* 2 (2021): 90–100. These latter objects may represent a repurposing of the Fengxian vessel shape to burn fragrant plants, but it seems doubtful the original Qin-era object should be considered a censer.

[396] This is a thorny issue that has not yet been systematically addressed in contemporary scholarship. For example, there have been attempts to trace incense burning equipment back to the neolithic Hongshan culture, Longshan culture, or Liangzhu culture, see my comments in Chapter 1, Section 1. Yet, many of these identifications are disregarded in spite of the fact that the vessels recovered could be used to bun plant matter and diffuse smoke. Other potential avenues of future inquiry include small legless bowls with air-intake holes, as noted by Milburn, "Aromas," 444, and tapered openwork cylinders, as noted by Jessica Rawson, "Chu Influences on the Development of Han Bronze Vessels," *Arts Asiatiques* 44 (1989): 93 and Jessica Rawson, "The Chinese Hill Censer, Boshan lu: A Note on Origins, Influences and Meanings," *Arts asiatiques* 61, no. 1 (2006): 75. A brief overview of several of these unconventional censer forms can be found in Cui Yezhou, "Wei-Jin Nanbeichao xianglu xanjiu" (Ph.D. dissertation, Shandong University, 2018), 2–3.

of a device as a "censer" remains a question of modern typology, not necessarily ancient technology.

We know the term *lu* referred to censers by the Western Han through a handful of inscriptions, including one that referred to the object on which it was inscribed as *xun₁lu* 熏卢 (=熏炉[爐]), "diffusion brazier" or "perfuming brazier."[397] Yet, we do not appear to have reliable textual citations to incense burners until the very end of the Western Han or early Eastern Han. This is in spite of the fact that the archaeological record contains ample evidence of censers (as conventionally defined) dating to the late Warring States period at a minimum.[398] Even more striking is the widespread distribution of censers throughout China by the end of the Eastern Han. Incense burning vessels have been excavated from tombs in Guangdong, Guangxi, Hunan, Hubei, Zhejiang, southern Jiangsu, Henan, Hebei, and Shanxi, as well as, but less frequently, in Sichuan, Chongqing, Yunnan, Shaanxi, and Shandong. The greatest concentration of censers have been recovered in the tropical far south, especially in Guangdong and Guangxi.

There is a general view among scholars that most early censer designs were adapted from older sacrificial vessels, thus the *dou*-chalice 豆, *ding*-cauldron, and *gui*-tureen 簋 are often viewed as structural prototypes.[399] The archetypal late Warring States-Han censer

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[397] This is found on the long-stemmed *boshan* censer from Maoling, an object we will turn to later. The full inscription is transcribed in Shao, "Boshan," 54. Two other censers recovered from a tomb in Changsha also beared the graph *lu*, see Erickson, "Boshanlu," 14 and Kirkova, "Sacred Mountains," 58n.12.

[398] For a recent survey and typology of 177 Han-era censers, see Yang, "Handai tong xunlu yanjiu." Yang Jindong reiterates that censers first appeared in the Warring States, see Yang, 88; see also Erickson, "Boshanlu," 6; Rawson, "Boshan lu," 75.

[399] See, for example, Sun, *Handai wuzhi wenhua*, 416; Yang, *Xiang shi*, 99; Zeng Weihua and Wang Mian, "Handai de xunlu," *Wenshi zhishi* 8 (2013): 122; Yang, "Handai tong xunlu yanjiu," 83–86. Jessica Rawson has suggested bronze openwork tapered cylinders, sometimes identified as *lian* 奁 (to be distinguished from cylindrical, lidded toiletry cases also identified as *lian*), recovered from tombs in the state of Chu functioned as early incense burners, see Rawson, "Chu Influences," 93 and Rawson, "Boshan lu," 75 (see also passing comments in Erickson, "Boshanlu," 7). Moreover, according to Rawson, "during the third century [BCE] these openwork cups [i.e., cylinders] seem to have given way to *dou*-shaped incense burners," Rawson, "Chu

design is commonly recognized as a single-footed rounded basin covered by a perforated or openwork lid, referred to as a *dou*-style censer (*douxing xianglu* 豆形香爐).[400] These ancient censers range in proportion from squat, nearly stemless vessels to taller chalices with high stems. Censer decorations can be varied; some bear decorative incisions or fine painted lines, such as the pair found in Tomb 1 at Mawangdui [Figs. 3.2, 3.3], while others are more spartan with simple, functional venting apertures. Others still can be designed with intricate openwork air vents, such as one recovered from the Shangwang cemetery in Linzi [Fig. 3.4]. Censers have been found both in bronze and ceramic, but by the Eastern Han most bronze specimens fashionable during the mid-Western Han were replaced by plain, painted, or glazed ceramic versions.[401] Censer lids can be domed or flat and are typically fashioned with a rounded knob, which is also oftentimes shaped as a seated bird. Generally, the retrieval of vented lids are crucial to confirming a vessel's identity as a censer since similar lidless objects were also used as beverage cups.

More exquisite examples of censer craftsmanship are found in a handful of sculptural subtypes dating to the mid-to-late Western Han. One prominent design is made in the shape of a standing bird with outstretched neck, sometimes identified as a phoenix.[402] The most famous sculptural subtype takes the shape of a craggy mountain with a lid forming its peak, an important symbolic form we will return to towards the second half of the chapter.

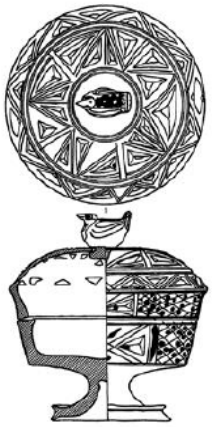
Influences," 93. It should be noted that not all objects recognized as censers can be so easily traced back to older sacrificial vessels, such as five high-footed vessels with four attached basins recovered from Zhao Mo's tomb in Guangzhou, see Zeng and Wang, "Handai de xunlu," 123; Yang, "Handai tong xunlu yanjiu," 86.

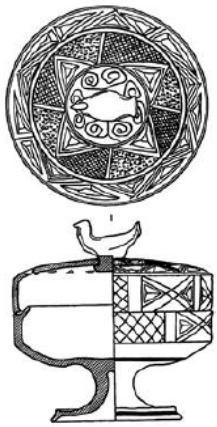
[400] Erickson calls this the "basic incense burner type," see Erickson, "Boshanlu," 6.

[401] Yang, "Handai tong xunlu yanjiu," 88; Xia Suying, "Hebei chutu Han dai xunlu yanjiu," *Wenwu chunqiu* 4 (2019): 31–39.

[402] The sculptural bird subtype is discussed in Liu, *Songdai Xiangpu*, 340–46; Sun, *Handai wuzhi wenhua*, 414–15 (Figs. 91-8 & 91-9); Yang, *Xiang shi*, 73–77; Yang, "Handai tong xunlu yanjiu," 85; Cui, "Xianglu yanjiu," 117–19; Han, "Wei-Jin Nanbeichao shiqi de tong xunlu," 93 (Fig. 1.D), 95 (Fig. 7).

Figure 3.2 **Figure 3.3** **Figure 3.4**





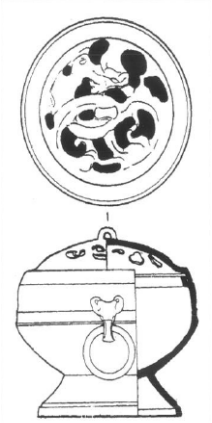


Figure 3.2. Censer (#286) with bird-shaped knob recovered from Mawangdui, Tomb 1 in Hunan, painted ceramic, 2nd c. BCE (from Huang 2015)
Figure 3.3. Censer (#433) with bird-shaped knob recovered from Mawangdui, Tomb 1 in Hunan, painted ceramic, 2nd c. BCE (from Huang 2015)
Figure 3.4. Censer with interlaced dragon openwork lid, recovered from Shangwang, Linzi in Shandong, bronze, 3rd–2nd c. BCE (from Rawson 2006)

The widely held belief is that vessels designed for burning aromatic plant matter originated in the far south. Yang Jindong has noted that the earliest known exemplars of *dou*-shaped censers appeared in the ancient state of Chu in tombs dating to the end of the Warring States.[403] The archaeological record also suggests a southern origin due to the total number of vessels excavated from southern tombs, especially in the regions of Hunan, Guangdong, and Guangxi. For perspective, one estimate claims that among the 409 Han era tombs excavated around Guangzhou, in Guangdong, approximately 100 ceramic and twelve bronze censers have been recovered (~27 percent recovery rate).[404] This stands in stark contrast to the

[403] Yang, "Handai tong xunlu yanjiu," 88. Nakamura Shingo cites the region around the Pearl River Delta, including Guangdong, Guangxi, and Hunan, as the origin of Chinese censers. Nakamura also confirms the oldest censer is from Changsha (in the state of Chu), see Nakamura, "Hakusanro no keisei," 70–71, 82 (Fig. 11); Cui, "Xianglu yanjiu," 3 (Fig. 0.3 [sic]). It should be underscored again that these claims are only relevant to the origin of the *dou*-shaped censer which emerged as the most common censer shape during the Han.
[404] Guangzhou shi wenwu guanli weiyuanhui and Guangzhou shi bowuguan, *Guangzhou Han mu*, Vol. 1. (Beijing: Wenwu chubanshe, 1981), 126, 478; these statistics are reiterated in Sun, *Handai wuzhi wenhua*, 417; Liu, *Songdai Xiangpu*, 27; Wang Yingzhu, Ma Qinglin, and Li Yanxiang, "Lüelun Qin-Han zhi liang Song shiqi de xiangliao," *Wenwu* 5 (2013): 71; Wang, Ma, and Li, "Zhongguo gudai xiangliao," 66–68. Additionally, the middle period of the Western Han signals a change from finding censers in only roughly ten percent of the excavated tombs in the south to finding them in approximately half of the tombs dating from the Eastern Han, see Guangzhou shi wenwu guanli weiyuanhui, *Guangzhou Han mu*, Vol. 1, 126; these statistics are reiterated in Zhao, "Xiang pu," 49; Liu, *Songdai Xiangpu*, 27; Chen and Li, "Mawangdui yi hao mu," 9–10.

approximately 220 Han era tombs excavated around Luoyang, in Henan, that have produced a total of only three censers (~1 percent recovery rate).[405] Thus, it is believed the basic *dou*-censer shape originated in the south and was adopted in the north by the early Western Han.[406]

The widespread disparity in censer distribution is not likely due to regional differences in funerary or entombment practices alone. Some have suggested the humid climate around the Tropic of Cancer motivated the invention of specialized devices to burn plants and diffuse smoke. Specifically, Yang Jindong speculates the wetter landscape of the far south forced the development of equipment to drive away mosquitoes, insects, and other vermin.[407] Furthermore, Deng Jingxi, He Qinghu, and Liu Chaosheng hypothesize the humid climate of the Chu region helped support the spread of epidemics and the growth of mold, thus specialized devices were developed as necessary tools for fumigation.[408] Lastly, in studying the development of censer designs in Hebei during the Han, Xia Suying demonstrates that the Chinese ruling elite were the first to adopt the southern censer form which then subsequently spread to lower-level officials by the end of the Western Han and

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[405] Luoyang qu kaogu fajuedui, *Luoyang shaogou Han mu* (Beijing: Kexue chubanshe, 1959), 137. The first to alert us to this disparity was Sun Ji, see Sun, *Handai wuzhi wenhua*, 417. Because Sun relied on reports from 1959 and 1981, these numbers are in need of revision. Nevertheless, the difference in the recovery rate of censers is so substantive, however, the present tally still remains informative.

[406] Sun, *Handai wuzhi wenhua*, 417; Chen, "Han-Jin zhi jishuru Zhongguo de xiangliao," 9; Nakamura, "Hakusanro no keisei," 71–72; Wang, Ma, and Li, "Lüelun Qin-Han zhi liang Song shiqi de xiangliao," 71; Wang, Ma, and Li, "Zhongguo gudai xiangliao," 68. As Nakamkura notes, it is generally believed that there are no *dou*-style censers in northern China that pre-date the Western Han. Notably, however, a censer found at the Shangwang cemetery, in the Linzi district of Zibo, Shandong, is dated on the cusp of the Warring States and Western Han, see Rawson, "Chu Influences," 93 and Rawson, "Boshan lu," 75 (and sources cited therein); see also Fig. 3.4 above.

[407] Yang, "Handai tong xunlu yanjiu," 88.

[408] Deng Jingxi , He Qinghu, and Liu Chaosheng, "Cong Mawangdui Han mu chutu xiangwu tantao Chu di xiang wenhua ji qi yixue yunyong," *unan Zhong yiyao daxue xuebao* 36, no. 6 (2016): 9. This comment is based in part by the famous Western Han essayist Jia Yi 賈誼 (ca. 200–169 BCE) who is reputed to have said that Changsha is low and wet, which are both not conducive to longevity (paraphrasing HS:48.2226). It remains curious, however, that burning plants and fumigation are passed over in silence in the *Songs of Chu*; see discussion in Chapter 2, Section 2.

beginning of the Eastern Han.[409] Overall, these geographic distribution patterns suggests the demand for specialized incense burning devices was not as pressing in the temperate north and was perhaps even initially viewed as a semi-exotic practice of the south that was first adopted by the northern Han elite.

This vision of the south as place of wonder has a long history in China. The far southern frontier inherited several toponyms throughout history, but the oldest is Nanyue ("Southern Yue"; Vietnamese: *Nam Việt*), a term encountered, for example, in *Master Zhuang* as name for the most southernly indigenous peoples who lacked the hallmarks of Chinese cultural sophistication and knowledge.[410] When Zhao Tuo 趙佗 (257–137 BCE), previously a general under the Qin, was recognized as a vassal king of the far south under the Western Han imperial court, he chose the name Nanyue to designate his new kingdom. The territory was established in 204 BCE and lasted until it was conquered by the expansion of Emperor Wu in 111 BCE. The name Nanyue remained an unofficial designation for the far south throughout the medieval period. Another common regional name was Lingnan 嶺南, the area "south of the mountain ranges." Today, these regions roughly cover what is modern Guangdong, Guangxi, the island of Hainan, and northern Vietnam.[411] In order to more generically refer to this region without needing to reference changes in political rule, I will call this area the far south or the tropical south.

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[409] Xia, "Han dai xunlu."

[410] ZZ:3.724. For an overview on the political complexities behind the terms Yue 越, Bai Yue 百越 , and Nanyue, see Brindley, "Barbarians or Not?," 10–15.

[411] The Chinese of the central plains identified five large mountain ranges (*wu ling* 五嶺) that ran through present-day Jiangxi, Hunan, Guangdong, and Guangxi and viewed these as forming a natural border with the far south, see Hua, Buell, and Unschuld, *Dictionary of the Ben Cao Gang Mu*, 309. For an overarching discussion of various names for the southern regions and its indigenous people, see Schafer, *Vermilion Bird*, 4–7.

As Edward Schafer details, the Chinese far south remained on the porous periphery of the early Chinese cultural sphere, serving as a semi-exotic land where not fully Chinese, yet not fully foreign peoples lived.[412] The far south was a place of wonder for the capitals in the north, inspiring several early medieval geographic treatises devoted to its curious customs, peoples, and products. We will turn to the conceptual significance of the far south *vis-à-vis* the olfactory practice of burning incense by Buddhists in the next chapter, but it appears the use of incense (or its use in certain contexts) may have been perceived as a semi-exotic, and perhaps even esoteric, southern practice by members of the Han court who resided in the north. If the miniscule amount of incense burners recovered from Han era tombs around Luoyang is proportionally indicative of the popularity of burning incense (and not just reflective of regional mortuary practices), the use of aromatics appears to have been far more widespread in the far south, even, as we will see, well into the Six Dynasties.

3. The Material Culture of Burning Incense: Plant Matter, Processing, and Blending

The processes for preparing and burning aromatic plants as incense, especially before the Six Dynasties, remains poorly understood. It is often presumed in the prehistory of China that scented *flora* were cast directly into open fires before specialized scenting equipment was invented. Early textual evidence, as discussed in the previous two chapter, does not necessarily support this position. In fact, our ancient textual sources tell us state ritualists mixed plants like southernwood with animal fat before being burned, resulting in what would

[412] Schafer, *Vermilion Bird*.

more likely be a hot cauldron of rendered suet or, perhaps, something similar to a tallow candle if a wick was used.

Better evidence comes to us from the archaeological record. Some Han-era tombs, for example, have revealed censers containing ash and the carbonized remnants of plants.[413] In such cases it would appear aromatics were ignited directly and left to smolder, thus sending out streams of smoke in the process. As a matter of practice, this would have required the selection of combustible plant materials that were dried prior to use. I will refer to this combustion method as the "direct burning method." Such a method would be ideal if fumigation was indeed the motivating factor for the creation and circulation of *dou*-censers in the tropical south.

A second combustion method involved casting aromatics atop hot charcoals (later prepared within a bed of ash[414]). Because this method is sometimes viewed as reflecting a more sophisticated art of perfumery, the adoption of specialized scenting equipment is often presumed, such as censers, brazier pans, or other wide-mouthed metal or clay basins that could withstand contact with the radiant heat of charcoals. Precisely when this "charcoal burning method" became widespread remains contested, with some scholars claiming this change only coincided with the arrival foreign, resin-based aromatics such as frankincense. The earliest textual reference I have found attesting to the use of charcoal in censers dates to

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413 See, *inter alia*, Guangzhou shi wenwu guanli weiyuanhui, *Guangzhou Han mu*, Vol. 1, 127, 139, 232; Erickson, "Boshanlu," 23n.43.

414 More sophisticated perfuming art employed thin silver sheets or pieces of mica to shield the incense pellets from direct contact with the burning charcoal. This avoided the creation of a strong burnt odor, see Yamada, *Tōa kōryō shi kenkyū*, 181; Guoli gugong bowuyuan, *Gugong lidai xiangju tulu* (Taibei: Guoli gugong bowuyuan, 1994), 26, 113n.63. The use of silver sheets (*yindie* 銀碟) appear to have first been mentioned in Hong Chu's *Materia Aromatica*, see the Method for Perfuming with Aromatics at HC#146 (cf. Satoru Horiguchi and Dinah Jung, "Kōdō — Its Spiritual and Game Elements and Its Interrelations with the Japanese Literary Arts," *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain & Ireland* 23, no. 1 (2013): 73n.18).

the early Six Dynasties.[415] Absent finding charcoal in excavated censers (evidence for which we have dating to the early Han) this combustion method has also been inferred through analyzing structural changes in censer design, a point we will return to below.

Directly related to combustion methods is the way in which plant matter was processed in preparation for burning. While the materia aromatica of the Song provide ample directions for turning raw materials into usable incense, detailed directions from the early medieval period (or earlier) have not survived.[416] Consequently, we must rely on a rather limited archaeological record for evidence of the earliest practices. For example, we know from one censer recovered at the second century BCE Tomb 1 at Mawangdui that plants were lightly torn, cut, or shredded before use. This censer specifically held the unburned rootstalks of sweet grass, galangal, and Sichuan lovage, as well as the broken buds of the Yulan magnolia. A second censer was excavated with burned sweetgrass roots and stems inside.[417] Extra reserves of sweetgrass were also found bundled inside a separate bamboo container.[418] Based on this evidence and aromatics recovered from other scenting equipment like scenting sachets and pillows, we can tentatively conclude that the rigorous processing

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[415] The earliest evidence is in the *Records of Ye* (*Yezhong ji* 鄴中記), attributed to Lu Hui 陸翽 (fl. 317), which remarks on the gold and silver censers used by the notorious Shi Hu 石虎 (295–349) as containing "stone carbon" (*shimo* 石墨), identified by Schafer as charcoal, see Edward H. Schafer, "The 'Yeh Chung Chi,'" *T'oung Pao*, Second Series, 76, no. 4/5 (1990): 177n.170. For a translation of the entire passage see Schafer, 185. A censer with charcoal is noted in Wu Jun's 吳均 (469–520) "Travelling the Road is Difficult" (*Xinglu nan* 行路難): "Gold censer's scented charcoals turn to ash" 金爐香炭變成灰, trans. Birrell, *New Songs*, 252. This passage is highlighted in Sun, *Handai wuzhi wenhua*, 415.

[416] For example, Chen Jing's 陳敬 (ca. 13th cent.) *Newly Compiled Materia Aromatica* (*Xinzuan xiang pu* 新纂香譜) of the late Song devotes a portion of the first *juan* to processing instructions for individual aromatics, see SKQS:844.263b12–266b01.

[417] See discussion in Chapter 2, Section 3. The Mawangdui medical manuscripts attest to the practice of mincing raw materials, see Harper, *Early*, 227n.1.

[418] Hunan sheng bowuguan, *Mawangdui yi hao Han mu*, Vol. 1, 114, 117, 188. The bamboo box is item 352. For more on the importance of this discovery, see my comments to sweet basil at HC#32 [sic].

and refining of plant matter was not yet practiced or deemed necessary in perfuming contexts.[419]

It is only during the late Eastern Han and Six Dynasties that we start to find textual evidence of a more complex perfuming culture, specifically where multi-aromatic blends of finely pulverized plant materials were processed into a powder, sifted through a cloth or fine mesh, and then formed into pellets or other compact shapes suitable for burning. For example, pulverized aromatics are first attested in the earliest strata of Chinese Buddhist translations, specifically with the use of sandalwood and aloeswood powder for offerings.[420] Crushing, cutting, and filing raw aromatic materials would become commonplace in later medieval perfuming arts. Yet, we need not assume these processes were entirely motivated by Buddhists or other external forces. The use of a mortar and pestle to crush materials into a powder was already well known in China before the arrival of Buddhism. These techniques were commonly used to manufacture drugs, as was shaping the finished product into a small, round bolus.[421] The use of a sieve is first noted in perfuming contexts by the fifth century; this also has earlier precedent in Chinese medicine.[422] Moreover, the Mawangdui medical

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[419] One exception might be the discovery of three incense burners (items C172, C173, and C174) next to two sets of mortars and pestles (items C168 and C169) in the tomb of King Zhao Mie 趙昧 of Nanyue (r. 137–122 BCE). Moreover, in the vicinity of these items were also found piles of five different colored minerals, including amethyst, sulfur, realgar, hematite, and turquoise, as well as a substance identified as a tree resin similar to frankincense, see Guangzhou shi wenwu guanli weiyuanhui, Zhongguo shehui kexueyuan kaogu yanjiusuo, and Guangdong sheng bowuguan, *Xi Han Nanyue wang mo*, Vol. 1. (Beijing: Wenwu chubanshe, 1991), 75, 82–84, and 141. None of the raw materials were pulverized into a fine powder, but the proximity of the mortars and pestles suggest they could have been prepared in such a manner. Equally, the presence of a tree resin and incense burners may indicate a similar processing for incense.

[420] As found in Lokakṣema's *Aṣṭasāhasrikā*, see T224:474c29.

[421] The Mawangdui medical manuscripts contain numerous prescriptions where ingredients are crushed and formed into small pellets for ingestion, see Harper, *Early*, 108, 141–42, 223, 223n.5, 334, 350, 352–53. In the perfuming are, a tindery incense powder, sometimes formed into a long tortuous line for keeping time, was also preoduced, see Silvio Bedini, "The Scent of Time: A Study of the Use of Fire and Incense for Time Measurement in Oriental Countries," *Transactions of the American Oriental Society* 53, no. 5 (1963): 1–51 and Bedini, *Trail of Time*, 53–66.

[422] As noted by Harper, sifting pulverized drugs was not commonplace until after the Han, see Harper, *Early*, 223n.6; it nevertheless appears once in the Mawangdui recipes, see Harper, 341n.3. Sifting aromatics is noted in

manuscripts of the second century BCE attest to the use of sweet-tasting agglutinants like honey or jujube paste, the latter of which is known to have been used for incense bending by the fifth century at the latest.[423] The more sophisticated arts of perfumery came to include cellaring, the process of aging incense underground in hermetically sealed jars to enhance the scent of the final product.[424] We find this directed, for example, in the Tang-era Daoist recipe for "Nine Blend Incense" (*jiuhe xiang* 九和香) and something similar is noted in a late sixth century Buddhist recipe for blended incense preserved in the *Sutra on the Spell of Five Thousand Five Hundred Buddha Names for Dispelling Obstructions and Extinguishing Sin* (*Wuqin wubai foming shenzhou chuzhang miezui jing* 五千五百佛名神呪除障滅罪經; T433).[425] This may not have been exclusive to perfumery, as cellaring was also relevant to drug making processes and is closely related luting and hermetically sealing alchemical crucibles.[426]

It is notable that every step of incense processing and blending has a close affinity to drug manufacturing and alchemy. Thus, the strong medieval relationship between incense and pharmacology is not only built upon their use of the same raw materials, as discussed in the previous chapter, but was inscribed through the very processes that turned them into their

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Fan Ye's Preface on Aromatics, see HC#84. A mesh made of horse tail hair is specified at the Recipe for Blended Incense from Tang Huadu Temple at HC#128.

[423] The use of jujube and honey for making medicinal pill can be found in Harper, *Early*, 335, 365, and 366. The use of both materials for perfumery is attested in Fan Ye's Preface on Aromatics at HC#84. The use of pale crystalized honey, not fresh gooey yellow honey, was sometimes explicitly prescribed, see the Recipe for Fumigating the Royal Clothing of the Kings of Shu at HC#126. For a broader discussion concerning the processing of aromatics, especially during the Song, see Guoli gugong bowuyuan, *Xiangju tulu*, 16–26; Liu, *Songdai Xiangpu*, 276–78.

[424] For more on cellaring incense, see the Method for Cellaring Aromatics at HC#145.

[425] See T443.337c18–338a06 (discussed in my comments to Method for Cellaring Aromatics at HC#145) and DZ1242.24a–b (recipe translated and discussed as Nine Blend Incense at HC#66), respectively.

[426] A process similar to cellaring, when a vessel is sealed and buried, is noted in the Mawangdui medical manuscripts, see Harper, *Early*, 335. For a description on luting an alchemical crucible, see Fabrizio Pregadio, *Great Clarity Daoism and Alchemy in Early Medieval China* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2005), 101–108.

finished forms – pellets and pills.[427] It is perhaps not surprising that the earliest hints we have for domestic Chinese incense blending comes in third century Jiangnan, a region deeply associated with alchemical arts.[428]

On might reasonably ask when incense was formed into sticks, as is prevalent throughout East Asia today. Notably, as demonstrated by Yang Zhishui, the appearance of elongated combustible incense sticks (*xian xiang* 線香, *bang xiang* 棒香) appear surprisingly late in our textual sources, with nothing definitively dated to before the Yuan (1231–1368).[429] For example, Chen Jing's 陳敬 (ca. 13th cent.) *Newly Compiled Materia Aromatica* (*Xinzuan xiang pu* 新纂香譜) of the late Song contains many directions for processing, pulverizing and blending aromatics, preparing agglutinants and adjuvants like honey and onycha, and burning incense in censers and for perfuming clothing, but noting is said about making incense sticks.[430]

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[427] Yamada Kentarō believes incense blends using agglutinants – which he calls *renkō* 煉香 – such as honey and the flesh of fruit only appear in the seventh and eight centuries with the documented increase in domestic honey and plum production, see Yamada, *Tōa kōryō shi kenkyū*, 177; see also Jung, "Cultural Biography of Agarwood," 109, 109n.33. I see no reason for such a conservative estimate in part because incense blending was so clearly developed on the back of drug manufacturing. It would seem that by the time the first known Chinese incense blending manuals were published in the fifth century the use of incense pellets would have been standard. Unfortunately, these work have been lost, yet the surviving preface of Fan Ye's manual lists jujube paste as an ingredient, suggesting he envisioned the creation of pellets, see the Preface on Aromatics at HC#84. For the use of honey in early drug manufacturing, see Liu, *Songdai Xiangpu*, 276.

[428] We will return to this point in Chapter 5, Section 7.

[429] Yang, *Xiang shi*, 27–28. Silvio Bedini's stance that "incense sticks were already in common use by the T'ang Dynasty" is patently mistaken, see Bedini, *Trail of Time*, 53. The only evidence Bedini marshals for his claim appears to be a poem by Pi Rixiu 皮日休 (834?–883) entitled "Impromptu on a Hangover" (*Jiubing ouzuo* 酒病偶作), which notes, in the translation of Burton Watson, "Burn a stick of heavy incense, nursing my hangover," see citation in Bedini, *Trail of Time*, 31. Bedini mistakenly identifies the incense stick cited here as *xiangbang* 香棒 ("incense stick"), while the Chinese original speaks of a "single piece," *yi zhu* 一炷 (literally a "single wick"). This should be understood as a pellet, or perhaps a short cone, but not something molded around a long support stick or extruded into an elongated shape. Later medieval Japanese understandings interpreted *yizhu* as referred to burning a single type of incense, not complex incense blends, see Horiguchi and Jung, "Kōdō," 73n.17.

[430] For these incense processing directions, see SKQS:844.263b12–266b01.

This rather late development is also supported by medieval artistic representations of incense burning. For example, early medieval art does not depict slender incense sticks, but pellets (or powder) that are pinched by the fingers and placed into censers, presumably atop charcoal. This pinching gesture is clearly seen in the early sixth century relief carving from Longmen depicting the imperial procession of Emperor Xiaowen 獻文 (r. 471–499), now held by the Metropolitan Museum of New York (Accession Number 35.146).[431] It can also be seen in the tenth century mural of two bodhisattvas burning incense in the Nelson-Atkin Museum of Art (Object number: 50-64 A).[432]

The rare exception appears to be the companion panel to the imperial procession of Emperor Xiaowen depicting the empress who appears to be holding an incense stick, also acquired by the Nelson-Atkin Museum of Art (Object number: 40-38). This relief needed extensive repairs when brought to the United States, but rubbings taken *in situ* before removal clearly show the empress holding a slender liner object.[433] Even if we consider this to be an incense stick, this remains an exceptionally rare outlier. The next oldest unambiguous depiction of incense sticks I have found thus far appears in a late tenth century mural of Avalokiteśvara painted in the passageway to Cave 39 of the Yulin Grottoes (Yulin ku 榆林窟). Avalokiteśvara is shown holding three individual sticks, presumably of incense, among a panoply of other ritual accoutrements [Figs. 3.5, 3.6].[434]

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[431] The panel can be viewed here: https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/42707.
[432] The mural can be viewed here: https://art.nelson-atkins.org/objects/6928/two-bodhisattvas-burning-ritual-incense.
[433] The panel can be viewed here: https://art.nelson-atkins.org/objects/8976/offering-procession-of-the-empress-as-donor-with-her-court; for more on the history of this panel and its restoration, see Fletcher Coleman, "Fragments and Traces: Reconstituting Offering Procession of the Empress as Donor with Her Court," *Orientations* 49, no. 3 (2018): 94–101.
[434] Marilyn Gridley, "Yulin Cave 39 and Uygur Patronage: Origin and Transmittal of the Theme of Guanyin with Luohans," *Journal of Inner Asian Art and Archaeology* 6 (2011): 169 (Plate 1); see the hand at the 10 o'clock position. Another discussion of a possible depiction of a Song-era incense stick, of which is ultimately dismissed, is noted in Guoli gugong bowuyuan, *Xiangju tulu*, 24–25.

Figure 3.5

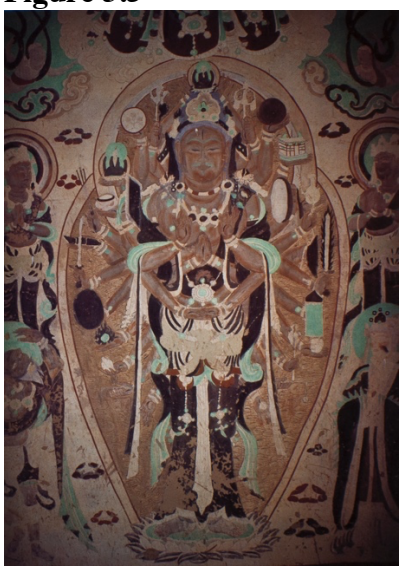

Figure 3.6

Figure 3.5: Avalokiteśvara, Cave 39 mural at Yulin Grottoes, 10th century (from Grindley 2011)
Figure 3.6 Close-up of Avalokiteśvara's hand holding sticks of incense

The rare use of stick incense can also be inferred from the widespread designs of incense burners produced during late Warring States up through the Song, many of which are fitted with lids that could not accommodate the vertical placement of long sticks. Even when lidless designs were introduced in various regions of China throughout the long medieval period, contemporaneous depictions of censers in use do not show incense sticks. For example, by the end of the third century, small lidless ceramic bowls with three legs emerge as the preferred censer type in the south, especially in the region of Jiangnan on the southeastern coast.[435] A pictorial brick from the Six Dynasties Jiajiachong 賈家沖 tomb in Hubei depicts such a vessel and shows curls of smoke emerging from the mouth of the bowl.[436] The molded lines of smoke are delicate enough that if the artist wanted to depict sticks of incense the medium would have allowed it to be done. Many other incense burners

[435] Cui, "Xianglu yanjiu," 53–56; Wang Qian, "Kaogu suojian liuchao ci xianglu yu xiang wenhua," *Meicheng zai jiu* 1 (2020): 41.
[436] See rubbing in Cui, "Xianglu yanjiu," 93 (Fig. 2.37). Another pictorial brick depicting smoke rising from a three-legged censer can also be found in Yang, *Xiang shi*, 6 (Fig. 1-5-2).

depicted in medieval art are shown with covers, often with streams of smoke spewing through lid apertures, such as can be seen in many depictions at Dunhaung. The Song-era adoption of archaistic censer forms modeled on ancient bronze vessels were typically designed without lids, thus possibly allowing for the development of long sticks of incense. Consequently, the seemingly ubiquitous appearance of large metal incense burners filled with incense sticks in most modern Buddhist and Daoist temples across East Asia should be viewed as the product of changes in the material culture of smell in the late Song. Ultimately, the origins of stick incense and the reasons for its later widespread popularity remain poorly understood.[437]

Lastly, from what the available early medieval textual record suggests, it appears the importation of supra-regional aromatics, especially tree resins and scented woods, may have spurred the Chinese to re-evaluate their own native habitats to look for aromatics that were not roots, leaves, and flowers. For example, we find liquidambar (*fengxiang* 楓香), the oleogum resin extracted from the indigenous *Liquidambar acalycina* and *L. formosana*, only first appearing in Chinese textual sources in the early third century.[438] Equally, it seems the importation of aloeswood from Rinan, in present-day central Vietnam, caused the Chinese to start harvesting the same product from the native *Aquilaria sinensis*, possibly as late as the fifth century.[439] Moreover, the extraction of common camphor from the *Cinnamomum camphora*, the principal source of worldwide camphor today, is not attested until the mid-to-

[437] On the basis of surviving tax regulations, incense sticks appear to have become commonplace by the Qing, see Guoli gugong bowuyuan, *Xiangju tulu*, 25. For a discussion on the modern Chinese process of making stick incense, see Needham and Lu, *Science and Civilisation in China,* Vol. 5, Part 2, 144–45 and Bedini, *Trail of Time*, 31–33.
[438] See my commentary to White Gum Aromatic at HC#33.
[439] See my commentary to Sinking in Water Aromatic at HC#3, Thousand Mu Aromatic at HC#49, and Fragrance Markets at HC#86.

late tenth century. This postdates the use of extraction methods using sublimation in Southeast Asia for Indonesian camphorwood or, possibly, ngai camphor from the *Blumea balsamifera*.[440] Thus, in spite of the fact that that *Liquidambar*, *A. sinensis*, *C. camphora* are endemic to China, there is no surviving documentation prior to the Six Dynasties suggesting these plants were systematically harvested to procure aromatic materials. Equally, while a substance like pine resin (*songzhi* 松脂) can be frequently encountered in pre-Buddhist materials, such as in the Mawangdui medical manuscripts, it is to be ingested, never burned.[441] It appears the change in the Chinese smellscape through imported aromatics forced a reconceptualization of the natural environment and the resources that could be derived from it.

Let us take stock of several of the most important issues raised here. By the Eastern Han, the *dou*-censer emerged as the most common incense burner shape and was found throughout China. Its origin, however, seems to have been in the far south, specifically in the state of Chu at the end of the Warring States. This is based on both the earliest recovered vessels and the overall higher concentration of *dou*-censers in the Chinese tropics. Furthermore, due to the type of aromatic plants selected for burning, including many plants with rhizomatic roots, and due to the mostly unrefined processing procedures of plant matter, the incineration of botanical materials likely produced a considerable amount of smoke. Moreover, based on the censers' origin in the far south, fragrant smoke may have functioned as an insecticide or fungicide. It remains uncertain if the sophisticated incense processing and blending techniques of the Six Dynasties were introduced from abroad, but they nevertheless

[440] See my commentary to Dragon Brain Aromatic at HC#1 and Aina Aromatic at HC#18.
[441] For recipes including pine resin, where it is often pulverized before being ingested, see Harper, *Early*, 330, 344, 350, and 410. One recipe is corrupt where it is pulverized before the text cuts off, see Harper, 363.

form a clear affinity with native drug manufacturing methods. There are two main points to draw from the above discussion. First, a vision of incense sticks jutting up from open-topped vessels needs to be replaced, at least on a generic level, with a vision of small round pellets enclosed within a lidded censer. Second, the material origins of early censers and the materiality of early medieval incense and incense blends all suggest a convergence around a similar type of activity: medicinal fumigation.

4. Of Bird, Myth, and Smoke: The Iconology of Early Censers

I want to turn to one very prominent decorative element found on many recovered censers from the Han, namely birds and other winged creatures.[442] Bird-shaped elements are commonly placed atop both bronze and ceramic censers, often acting as a knob to grasp the lid. The birds are represented most commonly as sitting with retracted wings [Figs. 3.2, 3.3], or alternatively, and especially with the finer specimens cast in bronze, as standing with splayed wings. Sometimes, as noted above, the entire censer is sculpted to look like a bird.

For reasons that are not immediately apparent, birds have a very close association with incense burning vessels. It should be noted that birds are among the most predominant zoomorphic decorative motifs of Shang and Zhou bronzes, thus their presence on censers in part represents a continuation of an aesthetic convention.[443] From a functional perspective, small birds were also commonly applied to a wide variety of vessels throughout the Han as

[442] Ornimorphic images have variously been identified as ducks, pigeons, sparrows, crows, ravens, and phoenixes, but all are speculative. Modern archaeological reports tend to just refer to "bird forms" (*niaoxing* 鳥形) when discussing excavated items.

[443] From the third millennium BCE, bird and mask motifs "became the dominant subjects of visual representation in eastern China," Wu Hung, "Rethinking Meaning in Early Chinese Art: Animal, Ancestor, and Man," *Critical Inquiry* 43, no. 1 (2016): 142.

knobs and handle pieces.[444] It is more common, however, for scholars to turn to "iconology" and attempt to situate the meaning of birds within a socio-historical context. In this fashion, ornimorphic images have been variously identified according to their perceived connection to *wu*-shamans and association with avian animals in the ethnogenesis myth of the Shang.[445] Furthermore, in Han mortuary contexts, birds are depicted as interacting with immortals, as divine messengers, or as a psychopomps to the deceased.[446] Consequently, from these broad historical contexts, birds represented a nexus point for an array of aesthetic, cosmological, ritual, and funerary significances. Moreover, due to this broad network of evocations, a singular understanding of bird elements across all censers is unnecessarily reductionistic.[447]

In addition to these considerations, I would include a further avenue of analysis that is less motivated by historical and social contexts, but instead by naturalistic observation. My view is indebted to the recent observations of Sarah Allan. She has argued the Western anthropological tradition assumes a tripartite division between myth, ritual, and art, whereby the former is the conceptual foundation upon which the latter two stand. From this perspective, ritual is often solely interpreted as the enactment or performance of myth, while art is envisioned as myth's plastic depiction. Thus, both art and ritual are viewed almost entirely through the prism of pre-existing myths and subsequently cannot be viewed as

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[444] Huang Qiuwen, "Shilun Han dai de niaoxing niu tao xunlu," *Guangxi Bowuguan Wenji* 1 (2015): 139–46.
[445] Scholarly opinion on the meaning of ancient zoomorphic imagery has long been divided. K. C. Chang is well-known for postulating that animals depicted on ancient bronzes functioned as aides for shamans trying to contact the spirit world, see Chang, *Art, Myth, and Ritual*, 61–72. Others have emphasized their purely decorative functions. For a review of these debates and an attempt to synthesize the best aspects of various theories, see Hung, "Rethinking Meaning in Early Chinese Art." For the importance of birds in the origin myth of the Shang, see Hung, 147–49. For a discussion on bird motifs specific to Chu that were derived from non-Chinese influence, see Sophia-Karin Psarras, "Shared Imagery: Eastern Zhou Decors and Iconographies," *Early China* 23/24 (1999–1998): 56–72.
[446] Pénélope Riboud, "Bird Priests in Central Asian Tombs of 6th-Century China and their Significance in the Funerary Realm," *Bulletin of the Asia Institute* 21 (2007): 11–14.
[447] As noted by Hung, To understand these images we need to treat their meanings as a specific historical, sociological, or theological problematic, Hung, "Rethinking Meaning in Early Chinese Art," 145.

generating any meaning unto themselves. In Allan's analysis of bird motifs in Shang art, she does not rely on myth to explain their presence, as is the normative scholarly practice, but views them as part of a "decorative vocabulary" that shares the same cosmological and conceptual framework as myth. For Allen, birds allude to shared concepts about a world above, in contrast to dragons and serpentine figures that allude to a watery world below.[448]

Because birds can be observed flying overhead by all people, their allusion to the sky and upward movement is not limited to the realm of ritual specialists or those well-versed in classical myth. I would argue that a shared cognitive framing such as this also motivates (in the Peircean sense) many other early Chinese myths about the bird as a solar symbol or as a representation of upward moving *yang* energy, or even a winged immortal's perceived ability to travel to distant realms.[449] The thread that ties all of these images together is not a theoretical (or long lost) *ur*-myth, but the simple observation that birds fly.

Because birds cue a sense of upward movement, they also train the eye to follow curls of smoke emitted from a censer. Reading the materiality of ancient censers in this way privileges the act of vision over olfaction and suggests the decorative design of these vessels, intended or not, moves attention towards the swirling smoke rising into the air. Scent is secondary, but not necessarily accidental, to this kind of censer's functioning. Even if artisans were simply following long-standing conventions in the application of bird-shaped elements, their incorporation would activate the same mental schema associated with upwards movement for any observer of the vessel.[450]

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[448] Sarah Allan, "The Taotie Motif on Early Chinese Ritual Bronzes," in *The Zoomorphic Imagination in Chinese Art and Culture*, ed. Jerome Silbergeld and Eugene Y. Wang (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2016), 31–33. For more analysis on the pairing of birds and aquatic animals in early Chinese sculpture and art, see Shao, "Boshan," 57–59.
[449] Sterckx, *Animal and Daemon*, 179.
[450] Allan also roots her claims in neurological foundations, see Allan, "Taotie Motif," 33.

Moreover, by reading censer bird motifs in a naturalistic manner, and thus moving away from funneling all of our interpretations through myth, we can dislodge ingrained views about incense burning being inherently religious in nature. In other words, the analysis of a censer decorated with birds need not force an interpretation of *wu*-shamans flying to distant realms or infer use by adepts seeking immortality.[451] Such specific religious or ritualistic uses, should they be taken seriously, must require some other kind of supporting historical evidence, but I have yet to find such evidence from the Western Han (or earlier).[452] This is important to the history of Chinese olfactory culture and religious practice on two fronts. First, this forces us to become inquisitive and look elsewhere for clues about how incense burners were used for most of the Han dynasty. The textual evidence available to us is both relatively clear and consistent: incense burning is never presented as part of state sacrifice to draw down the spirits or as part of some type of esoteric ritual. One may object in saying that not every ritual activity involving incense was necessarily captured in our surviving sources. This may be the case, but this should not blind us to the patterns of use

[451] On one hand, there is a distinction between determining the function of a vessel based on its structural design (i.e. venting apertures suggesting the function of a censer) and determining the purpose of a vessel based on its decorative elements (i.e. bird elements suggesting a ritual use). On another hand, decorative elements may provide weak, corroborative clues as to function, such that birds (associated through myth to the sun) could imply a heating function of the vessel. For comments on the connection between iconography and function, see Xiaolong Wu, "Bird-Pillar Basins and Cylindrical Vessels: Object Lineage in Ancient China," in *Memory and Agency in Ancient China*, ed. Francis Allard, Yan Sun, and Kathryn M. Linduff (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018), 167–169.

[452] Apart from the *yin*, *chai*, and *liao* sacrifices, one might also attempt to seek the ritual origins of incense burning in the religious activities of the ancient tribes to the northwest of China. For example, excavations of barrows (tomb mounds) in the Altai Krai region of Pazyryk dated to approximately 400 BCE revealed small cauldrons containing burned hemp seeds (Chinese objects were also excavated from the mounds). Similar cauldrons dating to the Late Western Zhou have also been found in China, proving there was early contact between these two cultural spheres, see Psarras, "Shared Imagery," 44–48; Rawson, "Eternal Palaces of the Western Han," 28. Yet, the use of these cauldrons as described by Herodotus, a source that has proven to be fairly accurate in his portrayal of Scythians, was not in the typical East Asian sense of burning incense, but as a bathing and purification practice performed under a small tent of woolen felts, see Sergei I. Rudenko, *Frozen Tombs of Siberia: The Pazyryk Burials of Iron Age Horsemen*, trans. M. W. Thompson (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1970), 284–86. As we will see, the early Chinese practice of burning scented plants (we have no evidence of burning hemp) was in service of fumigation and bodily hygiene.

that are captured in the texts under our nose. Moreover, a non-religious use of censers is also suggested by the archaeological record. Secondly, by seeking a different interpretation of early incense burning in China we can place renewed focus on the end of the Eastern Han and early Six Dynasties period. This is when incense burning is first clearly associated with a range of activities we might broadly define as religious or ritualistic in nature.

5. The Early Use of Incense and Incense Burners

Most often overlooked in the mundane materiality of incense burning is the early use of auxiliary scenting equipment that helped direct the flow of smoke. Known mainly to archaeologists as diffusion cages (*xun$_1$long* 熏籠) or diffusion hoods (*xun$_1$zhao* 熏罩), these devices may have played a role in the development of early censer design and provide important insight into concerns over olfactory hygiene and health. Diffusion cages are openwork frames designed to support textiles and fabrics over the top of a censer or brazier pan, thus allowing an even diffusion of heat and smoke to move through the articles. These devices were used to fumigate and scent a wide assortment of items, such as robes, undergarments, towels, and bedding. In addition to cleaning and scenting, diffusion cages could also help dry wet or damp fabric, prevent the growth of mold, and warm items just prior to use.[453]

[453] For more on the history and use of diffusion cages, see Zhou Wenzhi and Lian Ruoan, *Xishuo Zhongguo xiang wenhua,* (Beijing: Jiuzhou chubanshe, 2009): 55–56; Yang Haixia, "Han-Tang xunxiang fengsu dui xunxiangqi sheji de qiju," *Yishu yanjiu* 3 (2010): 66–67 (for a Ming depiction of diffusion cage in use, where a woman spreads the hem of her garment over the top, see Yang, 67 and Yang, *Xiang shi*, 79, 80).

Figure 3.7

Figure 3.8

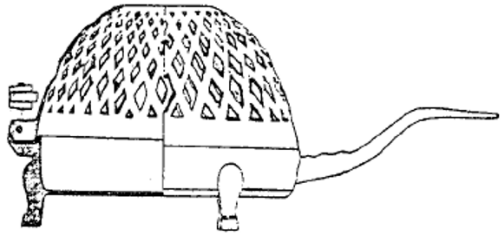

Figure 3.7: Large diffusion hood (item 417) recovered from Tomb 1 at Mawangdui; bamboo and silk; Hunan Provincial Museum (image from Hunan Museum 2011)
Figure 3.8: Diffusion brazier (item 1:5003) recovered from Tomb 1 at Mancheng; metal; (image from Zhongguo shehui kexueyuan kaogu yanjiusuo et al. 1980 (1): 67)

Two of these devices were recovered from Tomb 1 at Mawangdui, the same tomb where the pair of ceramic censers were found.[454] Both diffusion cages are made of interwoven bamboo strips shaped like a cone [Fig. 3.7]. The bases of each are large enough to cover over a single censer and it is clear their main function was to funnel smoke. Both cages were also found in the same storage compartment on the northern side of the crypt where one of the censers (item 433) was located. Sturdier versions of these implements have also been found cast in metal or, especially in the medieval period, formed in clay. In some cases, such as was found in the Mancheng 滿城 tomb of Liu Sheng 劉勝 (155–113 BCE), the vassal king of Zhongshan 中山, in present-day Hebei, an openwork metal top was directly fashioned to a brazier pan, thus combining the censer and diffusion cage into a single device [Fig. 3.8]. Found in the rear chamber next to the corpse of Liu Sheng, it was also cast with a long handle, thus making it easy to manipulate. The official archaeological report claims it was

[454] Hunan sheng bowuguan, *Mawangdui yi hao Han mu*, Vol. 1, 119. The larger cage has a base diameter of 30 centimeters, a top diameter of 10 centimeters, and a height of 21 centimeters (item 417); the smaller cage has a base diameter of 19 centimeters, a top diameter of 6.5 centimeters, and a height of 19 centimeters (item 418).

excavated containing the remnants of "fragrant incense" (*xunxiang* 薰香).[455] To confirm the use of such devices we can turn to the first century tombs excavated at Dahuting 打虎亭 in Henan which were constructed with vault-arched burial chambers decorated with murals showing scenes of daily life. Notably, the scenes depict diffusion cages alongside garments and quilts, underscoring their domestic use.[456]

Separate diffusion cages were also produced in different sizes to accommodate different types of fabric. For example, during the Eastern Jin, three different sets of diffusion cages were reputedly gifted to the crown prince upon his marriage, including versions designed for scenting and drying hand towels, large quilts, and clothing.[457] Throughout the medieval period these devices would also appear regularly in poetry, often as part of tranquil domestic settings.[458] Moreover, while not typically discussed among the scenting equipment excavated at Famen Temple, ornate gold and silver openwork baskets with openwork covers were also recovered that likely served a similar function for garment fumigation.[459] Diffusion

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[455] Zhongguo shehui kexueyuan kaogu yanjiusuo and Hebei sheng wenwu guanlichu, *Mancheng Han mu fajue baogao*, Vol. 1, (Beijing: Wenwu chubanshe, 1980), 66. *Xunxiang* also refers to sweet basil, but the report's later discussion of excavated tree and plant matter makes no mention of *Ocimum* spp. nor does there seem to have been an attempt to analyze and identify the remnants, see *ibid*. 404–408. The report names the device as a diffusion censer (*xunlu*; item 1:5003) and it was found placed inside larger metal carrying basket (*tilong* 提籠, also item 1:5003). This device also noted in Sun, *Handai wuzhi wenhua*, 415 (Fig. 91-11); Erickson, "Boshanlu," 12 (Fig. 9, "F"), 13–14; Nakamura, "Hakusanro no keisei," 68, 83 (Fig. 3). Based on its structure, Sun Ji claims the device was for burning native plant materials, while Jeon Young-rae (cited by Nakamura) believes it betrays the influence of foreign aromatics from the west. Erickson treats the device as derivative of *boshan* censers, a claim I believe warrants closer scrutiny; I will return to this below.

[456] As noted in Han, "Wei-Jin Nanbeichao shiqi de tong xunlu," 95.

[457] 太子納妃，有漆畫手巾熏籠二，大被熏籠三，衣熏籠三。As quoted in Yang, "Xunxiang fengsu," 66–67. The quote originates in the *Old Affairs of the Eastern* [*Jin*] *Palace* ([*Jin*] *donggong jiushi* [晉]東宮舊事); cf. TPYL:6.711; cf. Zhou and Lian, *Xiang wenhua*, 56 (with minor variations in cited quotation).

[458] See works cited in Zhou and Lian, *Xiang wenhua*, 56. For an analysis of similar devices made in clay during the Sui and Tang, see Yang Jie, Du Wen, and Zhang Xiu, "Sui-Tang longxing loudiao xunlu kaolüe: jianwei yijian Xi'an Beilin guanzang shike zhengming," *Wenbo* 5 (2010): 35–40.

[459] Shaanxi sheng wenwu kaogu yanjiusuo, *Famen si*, Vol. 2, Plates 70–71 (items FD5:70 and FD5:77). Their use as diffusion cages is suggested in Zhou and Lian, *Xiang wenhua*, 56.

cages and their various iterations remained integral for daily life throughout the Han and well into the later medieval period.

If we turn to early Chinese textual sources which talk of burning plants outside of state sacrifice (again, technically, there is no reference to burning incense, *xiang*, previous to the Eastern Han) we again find this practice in service to perfuming the body and largely domestic affairs. For example, the "Mountain of Persuasions" (*Shuishan xun* 說山訓[460]) chapter from the *Master of Huainan* (*Huainanzi* 淮南子), compiled in 139 BCE, contains the following pithy adage. We need not read the passage for its didactic moral message, but rather its description of presumably quotidian activities:

> To use what is pure and white to do what is filthy and disgusting is like bathing then mucking out a pigsty, or using sweet basil and a burning mirror and then carrying a pig.[461]
> 以潔白為污辱，譬猶沐浴而抒溷，薰燧而負豘。

This passage does not explicitly talk about censers or diffusion cages, but the act of using a special fire crafting device, sometimes referred to as a sun mirror (*taisui* 陽燧), clearly indicates the burning of plant material. In the case here, the plant in question is *xun* 薰, now often identified as sweet basil (*Ocimum basilicum*). The graph *xun*$_1$ without the grass radical means "to perfume" or "to diffuse," thus further deepening the connection of sweet basil with the act of perfuming and fumigation. This activity is repeated in the following chapter of the *Master of Huainan*, entitled "Forest of Persuasions" (*Shuilin xun* 說林訓):

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[460] The preference for reading *shui* 說 over *shuo* is noted in John S. Major et al., *The Huainanzi: A Guide to the Theory and Practice of Government in Early Han China* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2010), 617–19.

[461] HNZ:16.1131; cf. trans. Major et al., *Huainanzi*, 644 (which incorrectly translates *xun* as artemisia). The editors of the *Imperial Readings of the Taiping Era* encyclopedia add the following note to this passage: "Burning sweet basil makes oneself fragrant. The people of Chu call this using basil and a burning mirror," 燒薰自香，楚人謂之薰燧也。TPYL:8.983.873; see also HNZ:16.1131.

> To have rats rotting in the courtyard but to burn sweet basil in the palace…to embrace the odorous but to seek out the fragrant – even someone who is good at things cannot manage these.[462]
> 腐鼠在壇，燒薰于宮...懷臭而求芳，雖善者弗能為工。

Again, burning sweet basil (*xun*) is noted as a mundane domestic activity and portrayed aesthetically for covering over a pervasive foul stench.

We have seen in the previous chapter that sweet basil was known in both the temperate north and the subtropical south, but it seems to have had rather special importance in the south. The southern regional name for sweet basil, *hui* 蕙, appears two dozen times in the *Songs of Chu* anthology where it is described as an important bodily accoutrement and used as a charm tied to the belt-sash or placed inside a belt-worn scenting sachet.[463] It is also described as being cultivated in large gardens and used to cover sacrificial meat offerings.[464] These connections to the old state of Chu are important since the *Master of Huainan* was compiled in the court of the Liu An 劉安 (ca. 179–122 BCE), the prince of Huainan, an imperial fiefdom under the Western Han that covered terrain in the subtropical south bordering on the eastern side of Chu. It seems sweet basil was an important regional plant for both perfuming the body and its evocations of purity, thus possibly explaining its explicit citation in the *Master of Huainan*. Also notable is the fact that both the tombs at Mawangdui and Mancheng were sealed within a generation or two of the compilation of the *Master of Huainan*, suggesting that scenting equipment such as *dou*-censers and diffusion hoods could have been envisioned as necessary companion devices to the burning mirror.

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[462] HNZ:17.1217; cf. trans. Major et al., *Huainanzi*, 695 (which translates *xun* as incense).
[463] As discussed in Chapter 2, Section 2. For more on the history of sweet basil in early China, as well as the early medieval equation of *xun* with *hui*, see my comments to sweet basil at HC#32 and the Aromatic from Lingling at HC#20. Unfortunately, the identification of sweet basil (*Ocimum basilicum*) in ancient and early medieval textual accounts remains based on inconclusive, and sometimes contradictory, textual descriptions.
[464] See CC:1.10, trans. Sukhu, *Songs of Chu*, 36 and CC:2.55, trans. Sukhu, 6, respectively.

The earliest unambiguous textual citation to *incense* burners (*xianglu*) also combines the use of sweet basil and bodily perfuming practices.[465] It specifically appears in Wei Hong's 衛宏 (ca. 1st cent.) *Old Observances for Han Officials* (*Han guan jiuyi* 漢官舊儀), a work that was compiled in the first few decades of the common era and purportedly covered the court protocols of the Western Han. The passage specifically entails the duties of attendants around the Court Gentlemen of the Imperial Secretariat, officials who were in charge of drafting imperial documents, including all edicts and decrees. Consequently, men of this position were among the most influential figures at the court and often had direct access to the emperor. According to Wei Hong, the Court Gentlemen were assigned two escorts for travel as well as two female attendants who fumigated the courtiers' robes with sweet basil before they met with the emperor.[466] This specific duty was later reiterated by Ying Shao 應劭 (ca. 144–ca. 204) in his *Observances for Han Officials* (*Han guan yi* 漢官儀), which he compiled when the Han capital was sacked and the imperial archive destroyed, causing the court to flee to Xu 許 at the end of the second century. One version of the relevant passage from Ying Shao's text, with only surface changes to Wei Hong's earlier commentary, state the duties as follows:

> When the Secretarial Court Gentlemen enter the Pavilion [of the Imperial Secretariat] where they are assigned, they are provided two female attendants who are all chosen for being exemplary and upright. This is an assignment to follow the official. The female attendants

[465] There are, to be sure, other references to incense burners that purportedly date to the Western Han (or earlier), but many of these appear in later medieval sources. To give one rather famous example, there is a description of a gimbaled incense burner, reputedly created by the semi-mythical inventor Ding Huan, in the *Miscellaneous Records of the Western Capital* (*Xijing zaji* 西京雜記), a collection of anecdotes claimed to be about the Western Han capital of Chang'an. The text itself, however, most likely dates to the end of the Six Dynasties, see Knechtges and Chang, *Reference Guide*, Vol. 3, 1648–55. For more on Ding Huan's reputed invention, see Incense Burner Amid the Coverlets at HC#101.
[466] See HGLZ:33, 64.

> grasp incense burners and burn sweet basil, following the officials who enter into the Pavilion [of the Imperial Secretariat] to provide protection for their clothing.[467]
> 應劭漢官儀曰：尚書郎入直臺中，給女侍史二人，皆選端正，指使從直。女侍史執香爐，燒薰以從入臺中給使護衣。

If we look closely at the language of the court protocol, the two female censer attendants were specifically charged with "protecting the clothing" (*huyi* 護衣) of the courtiers, meaning their duty many not have only been safeguarding against the stench of a foul body, but also against the potential for spreading disease. This understanding tallies with the description of sweet basil in the *Guideways through the Mountains and Seas* (*Shanhai jing* 山海經), compiled during the Western Han, but likely edited through the Six Dynasties. This work consequently represents medical knowledge roughly contemporaneous with Wei Hong and Ying Shao's manuals. Specifically, the *Guideways through the Mountains and Seas* claims that "when [sweet basil] is worn [on a belt-sash], it has the ability to halt epidemics."[468] In addition, the *Supplementary Record by Famous Physicians* (*Mingyi bielu* 名醫別錄), a work compiling commentaries on the *Classic of Materia Medica of the Divine Husband* (*Shennong bencao jing* 神農本草經) by famous physicians of the Cao-Wei 曹魏 (220–265) and Jin 晉 (266–420) dynasties, provides similar insights. The medical text explains that sweet basil was effective in "driving away stench and malign *qi*."[469] Malign *qi* was a general pathogenic agent that could harm the human body, thus its expulsion was

[467] SKQS:844.229b. This passage is taken from Hong Chu's *Materia Aromatica*, see sweet basil censer at HC#87. Cf. TPYL:2.215.86; cf. HGLZ:143. See similar passages in HGLZ:33, 64, and 206.
[468] 佩之，可以已癘。SHJ:2.4698.
[469] 去臭惡氣。XXBC:20.834.

considered necessary for health and general well-being. A notable secondary meaning of malign *qi* was, simply, bad odor.[470]

It is important to underscore that all of these passages on sweet basil and burning incense do not draw upon the language of communication with spirits. The *raison d'être* for burning aromatic plants was as a safeguard against odor and illness. There are, to be certain, relevant conceptual connections between the adornment of scented plants in the *Songs of Chu* as a sign of the presence of divine spirits and the burning of scented plants as apotropaic protection against pathogenic agents. The ancient and medieval conceptions of religion, medicine, and hygiene are intertwined and mutually imbricated in ways that their modern etic terminology obscures. But to assume these systems are always coextensive and fully coterminous robs us of the ability to do close contextualized reading. Even in the later medieval period, not every act of burning incense was interpreted solely as a plea to a divine being – context mattered. In the cases above, the burning of sweet basil is not represented as an activity to breach the ream of the spirits nor is the incense burner represented as tool to help realize that goal; their import reflects concerns of this world, not the ancestral spirit world.

Other works attributed to the Eastern Han further speak of the mundane and domestic use of incense. Last chapter we saw that one of the earliest references to foreign aromatics in China was found in Zhang Heng's first century "Song of Concordant Sounds." Traditionally understood as being written in the voice of a bride professing her devotion to her new husband, the poem states: "I sprinkle and sweep, cleanse your pillow and mat; Perfume

[470] Zhibin Zhang and Paul U. Unschuld, eds., *Dictionary of the Ben Cao Gang Mu: Chinese Historical Illness Terminology* (Oakland: University of California Press, 2015), 142.

[your] slippers with *dixiang*."[471] *Dixiang* 狄香, possibly simply referring to foreign "barbarian incense," is used by the bride as a cleansing material for footwear and is given no special status as a religious item. Elsewhere, in a series of preserved letters between the Eastern Han official Qin Jia 秦嘉 (ca. 134–ca. 164) and his wife Xu Shu 徐淑 (d. ca. 165), we are informed that Qin Jia sent "four types of good incense" (*haoxing si zhong* 好香四種), among other precious gifts, to his beloved when he realized a meeting between them was not going to be possible. Notably, he specifically states that the incense can be used for "perfuming the body" (*fushen* 馥身).[472]

These above examples from Wei Hong, Ying Shao, Zhang Heng, and Qin Jia are not important merely because they articulate a use of incense that is relevant to health and hygiene – that understanding would continue well into the medieval period – but because these are among the very few textual references to incense that can be traced reliably to the first and second centuries.[473] More critically, they are unanimous in their descriptions of how incense was used: to safeguard the body against foul odor. The importance of this claim comes into high relief when we enter the later medieval period and references to burning incense in ritual contexts are ubiquitous; so ubiquitous in fact that incense burning becomes viewed as the very foundation of Chinese religious practice. If we are to look for similar

[471] 灑掃清枕席，鞮芬以狄香。YTXY:1.28, trans. (with minor changes) Birrell, *New Songs*, 44–45.
[472] TPYL:8.981.856, see also the commentary at YYXY:1.31. This set of correspondence, with a focus on aromatics, is discussed in Liu, *Songdai Xiangpu*, 20. I am reading *xiang* as incense due to the implication that the items were intended to be used to perfume and fumigate the body. It is also possible that they were intended to be worn in scenting sachets. There is also a set of famous poems reputedly shared between this husband and wife, see YYXY:1.31, trans. Birrell, *New Songs*, 45–46. For more on these works and the lives of the authors, see David R. Knechtges and Taiping Chang, eds., *Ancient and Early Medieval Chinese Literature: A Reference Guide*, vol. 1 (Leiden: Brill, 2010), 734–36.
[473] As we will see in the next chapter, late second century Buddhist references to burning incense are in the context of religious worship, as are a handful of other references that appear at the very end of the second century and start of the third century.

proclamations regarding a ritual use of incense previous to the second century, however, they are strikingly absent.

This point leads to a second related aspect of burning herbal materials. In addition to creating a pleasant-smelling environment, certain aromatic compounds were employed to kill insects or expel otherwise unwanted vermin. This pragmatic concern was noted earlier as one of the potential motivations for the invention of *dou*-censers in the south. The *locus classicus* for pest fumigation occurs in the *Book of Odes*, where the "changing of the year" (*gaisui* 改歲) celebration requires the doors and windows of a house to be sealed in order to "fumigate the rats" (*xun$_1$ shu* 熏鼠). The *circa* fourth century BCE *Master Guan* (*Guanzi* 管子) speaks of a similar practice by burning catalpa wood. Furthermore, the *Rites of Zhou* describes two different ritualists in charge of removing insects by burning special kinds of pesticidal grass.[474] It is sometimes suggested in secondary scholarship these practices were early examples of burning incense, a fair assessment only if the practice is firmly separated from attempts to call upon and nourish the spirits.

One aromatic in particular seems to have been a popular expellant in early Chinese sources: mugwort. A story contained in the *Master Zhuang* (*Zhuangzi* 莊子) and later recounted in the *Weighted Debates*, tells of the people of the state of Nanyue burning mugwort to smoke out their reluctant ruler from a cave where he is hiding.[475] The fifth

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[474] For these and other pertinent references, see Needham and Lu, *Science and Civilisation in China,* Vol. 5, Part 2*,* 148. With regards to the grasses noted in the *Rites of Zhou*, Needham identifies *mangcao* 莽草 as the known vermifuge *Illicium religiosum* or similar species and *jiacao* 嘉草 as the anthelmintic *Zingiber mioga* (Needham, Lu, and Huang, *Science and Civilisation,* Vol. 6, Part 1, 477–78 and 474, respectively); elsewhere *jiacao* is identified as a *Pyrethrum* species used as an insecticide (Needham and Lu, *Science and Civilisation in China,* Vol. 5, Part 2*,* 148).

[475] ZZ:5.28.1122, trans. Victor H. Mair, *Wandering on the Way: Early Taoist Tales and Parables of Chuang Tzu* (New York: Bantam Books, 1994), 286; cf. LHJS:1.26 (retelling the story, but omitting the specific use of mugwort).

century BCE *Master Mo* (*Mozi* 墨子) also frequently proposes burning mugwort to create toxic smoke that can be moved by a series of furnaces, bellows, and pipes to defend against a military siege.[476] Judging from these sources, it was fairly well known in the Warring States that the essential oils found in mugwort could be employed as an effective irritant to dislodge humans from entrenched positions.

Furthermore, in the context of early Chinese medical theories that envisioned disease as the result of attacking parasites or demonic bugs, fumigation techniques were also presented as suitable therapies. After analyzing the cache of medical manuscripts from Mawangdui, Donald Harper notes that fumigation and vermifugal roasting were considered among the "most potent demonifuges."[477] Even in the cases when disease pathology was not conceived as invasive parasitic influences, early Chinese medical treatments still turned to fumigation therapy, albeit far less frequently. For example, we are told the Western Han physician Chunyu Yi 淳于意 (216–ca. 150 BCE), an early expositor of vessel theory, fumigated (*xun*) the *yangming* 陽明 vessel to cure one of his patients.[478]

In the preceding discussion, I have referred to both perfuming and fumigating, two practices based on the divergent ideas of attracting and repelling. These differing olfactory

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[476] See translation and commentary in Ian Johnston, *The Mozi: A Complete Translation* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2010): 796–97, 800–01, 808–09, 812–13, 816–17, and 848–49.

[477] Harper, *Early*, 96–97. For a discussion of early bug etiology, see Donald Harper, "The Conception of Illness in Early Chinese Medicine, as Documented in Newly Discovered 3rd and 2nd Century B.C. Manuscripts (Part I)," *Sudhoffs Archiv* 74, no. 2 (1990): 225–26.

[478] Wang Zhihao, Zheng Xuxian, and Wang Yongxin, "Han dai qingtong xunlu ji qi yiliao baojian jiazhi de yanjiu," *Neimenggu Wenwu Kaogu* 1 (1994): 10; see SJ:105.2797. Harper understands Chunyu Yi's fumigation technique here as a type of cauterization (*jiu* 灸; often "moxibustion") or heat therapy, where the purpose is to apply heat to correct the pathogenic vapor inside the vessel, see Harper, *Early*, 93, 94n.3. It may be the case that Chunyu Yi, from the state of Qi in present-day Shandong, was influenced by the practices of local masters of methods; as we will see in Chapter 5, Section 2, a figure by the name of Yu Ji (or Gan Ji) at the end of the Eastern Han hails from the same region and was known for burning incense and performing esoteric healing rites. For more on the life of Chunyu Yi, see Harper, *Early*, 7–8, 55–67ff. and Gil Raz, *The Emergence of Daoism: Creation of Tradition* (New York: Routledge, 2012), 94–98.

practices are encapsulated by the single Chinese term, *xun*$_1$ 熏. It is very common for the positive olfactory valence of *xun*$_1$, "to perfume," to override its more noxious connotations, but the term in many cases appears to refer to a more generic sense of smoke diffusion. This is supported by Xu Shen's second century gloss on *xun*$_1$, noting that it refers to "the ascending smoke of fire."[479] Thus, perfuming most typically evokes an olfactory logic of hygiene, attraction, and purity, while the act of fumigation evokes an olfactory logic of repulsion, toxicity, and impurity, both of which can be symbolically articulated through burning aromatic materials.

This dual connotation of attraction and repulsion, as well as the focus on the visual aspect of smoke, will be partly obscured in the coming centuries with the importation and widespread circulation of sweetly scented foreign aromatics. This is best exemplified by the change in the popular nomenclature for censers from "diffusion braziers" (*xun*$_1$*lu*) – attested in Western Han inscriptions – to "incense burners" (*xianglu*). The early medieval olfactory practice of burning incense will almost entirely fall within the positive register of perfumery, while fumigation will become comparatively less important in mainstream medieval religious sources.[480] The burning of incense will primarily focus on allaying fragrance with divine presence as well as with the purity of the practitioner – olfactory themes that are more in line with the southern *wu*-shamans as seen in the *Songs of Chu*. The former concern of

[479] 火煙上出。SWJZ:1.10. See also the brief discussion in Yang, "Handai tong xunlu yanjiu," 87. Importantly, however, in the Western Han *xun*$_1$ did not necessarily infer combustion, as can be seen in the tomb inventory slip recovered at Mawangdui that lists *xun*$_1$*nang*, "perfuming sachets," among the tomb's contents, see Chapter 2, Section 3.

[480] To be certain, there will be continued use of apotropaic and exorcistic fumigation, but it remains to be seen what affect the widespread adoption of sweet-smelling incense (*xiang*) had on its prevalence. As noted by Harper, medical fumigation techniques were often tied to older bug etiologies, and more naturalist theories may have left fumigation as a less viable option, see Harper, *Early*, 96–97. Nevertheless, for a variety of examples where incense is used within the context of exorcism, see Michel Strickmann, *Chinese Magical Medicine* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2002), 123–94.

manifesting the presence of the divine will be a principal interest for Buddhists who have a long tradition of envisioning the Buddha as possessing a powerfully fragrant smell. The latter concern of expressing the purity of the practitioner will be a principal concern for the early medieval alchemical tradition and Supreme Purity priests, where hygiene – both physical and ritual – is considered integral to the success or failure of a ritual act. Both of these themes will be revisited in the subsequent two chapters.

5. Of Mountains, Clouds, and Auspicious Signs: The Practical and Indexical Function of the Boshan *Censer*

Arguably, among all the objects of early material smell culture, the one with the closest association to religious practice is that of the so-called *boshan* censer (*boshan lu* 博山爐), to which we will now turn our attention. The proper translation of the Chinese name has long been a point of debate. It remains undetermined if the name meant to refer to a specific mountain, an otherwise unknown Mount Bo, or was meant to be descriptive of generic "vast mountain," the literal rendition of the name *boshan*. More important to this question, however, is the fact that term *boshan* is not attested until the fourth century, almost six-hundred years after the earliest known mountain-shaped censers appear in the archaeological record. Thus, the term *boshan* properly derives from the cultural imagination of the Six Dynasties, not the Western Han when mountain censers first appear. Furthermore, despite widespread assumption, the mountain censer is not presented in medieval sources as representing the three isles of the immortals in the eastern seas, Penglai 蓬萊, Yingzhou 瀛

洲, and Fangzhang 方丈, nor Mt. Kunlun 崑崙山 in the west.[481] Given the long, and at times opaque, history of the term *boshan*, I have decided to keep it untranslated.[482]

No incense burners of this subtype have been discovered that date before the reign of Emperor Wu of the Western Han. Two of the most extraordinary exemplars of this type, which are also considered among the oldest, have been recovered from tombs whose occupants have direct relation to Emperor Wu and were likely commissioned by the imperial family.[483] One was discovered in the tomb of Liu Sheng at Mancheng and exhibits exquisite craftsmanship depicting a sculptural and jagged mountainscape crawling with beasts and human forms. The undulating topography obscures the holes from which the smoke would emanate [Fig. 3.9]. The second is a gilded *boshan* censer atop a long bamboo-shaped stem. It was recovered near the tomb of Emperor Wu at Maoling 茂陵 and bears an inscription noting it was cast in 137 BCE for the Weiyang Palace (*weiyang gong* 未央宮) near the ancient capital of Chang'an [Fig. 3.10].[484]

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[481] During the Six Dynasties, the term *boshan* was used to identify a generic mountain design motif applied to both clothing and architecture, see Zheng Xiang, "Shuangmian guanzhao–boshan lu: Chutu shiwu yu yongwushi de huzheng," *Liaoning shifan daxue xuebao (Shehui kexueban)* 36, no. 3 (2013): 396–97; Kirkova, "Sacred Mountains," 57. Additionally, as Zornica Kirkova has demonstrated, despite one poetic reference to Penglai in the late first century, the *boshan* censer is not firmly connected to the lands of the immortals or ecstatic journeys in their search throughout most of the long medieval period, see Kirkova, "Sacred Mountains." For a discussion connecting the physical characteristics of early mountain censers to textual descriptions of Mt. Kunlun (albeit several of a later medieval vintage), see Nakamura Shingo, "Hakusanro genkei kō: Konronzan to no kankei o chūshin ni," *Ajia No Rekishi to Bunka* 11 (2007): 57–75.

[482] I have followed both Susan Erickson and Kirkova who keep the name *boshan* untranslated. Notably, an inscription on the Weiyang censer simply refers to the object as a diffusion brazier (*xun1lu*).

[483] Erickson, "Boshanlu," 15.

[484] Both censers, considered among "the earliest mountain censers to be excavated," are described in Erickson, 7–8. The Weiyang censer was later bestowed to the elder sister of Emperor Wu, see Erickson, 15, 22n.24.

Figure 3.9

Figure 3.10

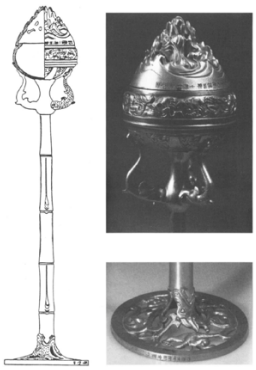

Figure 3.11

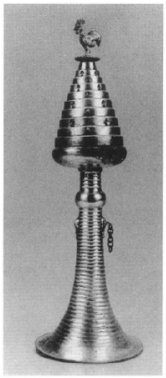

Figure 3.9: Bronze *boshan* censer with gold inlaid (item 1:5182), 2nd c. BCE, Hubei Provincial Museum (from Erickson 1992: 10)
Figure 3.10: Gilded bronze *boshan* censer, 2nd c. BCE (from Erickson 1992: 11)
Figure 3.11: Silver censer from Turkey (from Rawson 2006)

Because of their intricate craftsmanship and presumed association with the cults of mountain worship and immortality during the Western Han, *boshan* censers have received significant attention by scholars over the past century.[485] I reserve my comments for areas that have received less focus, especially in regards to its daily domestic use as well as its potential political significations.

There are two hypotheses regarding the origin of the *boshan* censer shape that are worth noting at the start, however, specifically because they are predicated on long-distance trade during the Western Han, if not earlier. While many once considered the *boshan* censer to be a native artistic evolution of the *dou*-shaped censer, art historian Jessica Rawson has hypothesized the form was significantly influenced by censers circulating in Western and Central Asia, especially the conical lidded Achaemenid type which is widely distributed across Asia [Fig. 3.11].[486] At the crux of Rawson's argument is that the *boshan* censer appeared relatively suddenly under the reign of Emperor Wu during a period in which foreign tribute and imported exotica were greatly welcomed by the imperial court. Moreover,

[485] See in particular Laufer, *Chinese Pottery*; A. G. Wenley, "The Question of the Po-Shan-Hsiang-Lu," *Archives of the Chinese Art Society of America* 3 (1949–1948): 5–12, Erickson, "Boshanlu,"; Rawson, "Boshan lu"; Nakamura, "Hakusanro no keisei"; Zhang, "Boshan lu"; Shao, "Boshan"; Kirkova, "Sacred Mountains."
[486] Rawson, "Boshan lu."

because the Achaemenid type censer predates the *boshan* form by several centuries, it remains plausible that the foreign design influenced Chinese artisans working for the Western Han court. Importantly, Rawson further argues the stepped geometric lids of the Achaemenid censers were transformed by Chinese "ideological and cosmological frameworks" into craggy mountain peaks.[487] Despite the fact that no Achaemenid type censers have been recovered from archaeological excavations in China, her hypothesis remains viable and intriguing.[488] I would underscore, however, that Rawson's claims do not necessarily presuppose a robust trade in supra-regional aromatics at the time.

The *boshan* censer has also attracted a different kind of interest from the scholar of material culture, Sun Ji. By observing that *boshan* censers were crafted with deeper and more expansive basins, as well as smaller venting apertures, Sun argues that such designs were intended to accommodate the use of charcoal. Furthermore, in Sun's view, this suggests these censers were specifically designed to burn foreign resin-based types of incense. This is in contrast to native Chinese botanicals which, when adequately dry, were combustible and needed no external fuel source to burn.[489] On its face, this is supported by the fact that several Han-era *boshan* censers have been excavated with remnants of what have been reported as charcoal inside them.[490] As I have already argued, I am skeptical the territorial expansion of

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[487] Rawson, 82.

[488] While Raswon attempts to trace various iconographic and morphological elements of *boshan* censers to foreign influence, it is also possible to treat the development of these elements within the framework of Chinese material culture. Most notably, Rawson claims the characteristic conical mountain cover likely derived from foreign exemplars. While many early Chinese *dou*-censers have low profile lids, diffusion hoods (as noted earlier in this chapter) exhibit the same conical profile as central Asian censers, a point I will return to below. It is possible such designs may have equally inspired Chinese craftsmen to create mountain shapes according to contemporary "ideological and cosmological frameworks."

[489] Sun, *Handai wuzhi wenhua*, 415–16. Sun notes that several other *dou*-censer designs also adopted deeper basins, see Sun, 416 (91-2, 91-3 to 91-7); see also Nakamura, "Hakusanro no keisei," 71–74, 83 (Figs. 15 & 16).

[490] See examples given in Erickson, "Boshanlu," 23n.43.

Emperor Wu led to a steady importation of foreign aromatics in the Western Han. While a sporadic international trade cannot be excluded, the nature of burning incense requires a regular stream of new imports to replace stock that has, literally, gone up in smoke. Given the widespread range of *boshan* censers recovered from Western Han tombs, the necessary quantity of non-native aromatic resins would have been rather immense and given the comparative silence in contemporary historical records of imported incense this seems rather unlikely. I therefore remain unconvinced the altered design of the *boshan* basins (and other censer types) necessarily reflects such a *steady* flow of foreign incense as is often presumed by Sun's hypothesis.

It is also possible these new deep-basin designs merely reflected a change in the practice of burning *native* Chinese aromatics with charcoal (if we are to interpret these structural changes as something more than aesthetic preferences). The benefits of using charcoal would have been well-known to the ancient Chinese. As a mostly self-regulating source of continuous heat, charcoal can affect a longer and more consistent burn of plant matter. We find, for example, charcoal used as part of a therapeutic fumigation in the Mawangdui medical texts. Specifically, it is used to burn an unidentified (and presumably native) plant to create smoke.[491] Perhaps more critically, Sun's hypothesis does not account for the oldest recovered *dou*-censer, found in a late Warring States tomb in Changsha; it was reportedly excavated containing the remnants of aromatic plants and charcoal powder (*tanmo* 炭末).[492] This discovery predates any recovered *boshan* censer. Moreover, as we have seen, the oldest textual references to Chinese censers, all of which postdate the structural changes

[491] Harper, *Early*, 273. For the regional availability of cited ingredients, see Harper, 100.
[492] See description in Cui, "Xianglu yanjiu," 3 and Fig. 0.3 [sic].

described by Sun, still speak of burning native plants such as sweet basil. Likewise, the oldest textual reference to a mountain-shaped censer, to be discussed below, refers to burning native thoroughwort.[493] Thus, while I tentatively agree with Sun's claims regarding the adoption of a "charcoal burning method," we need not infer a widespread use of foreign resin-based incense and woods as a result, just merely the adoption of a more effective burning method.

Turning now to visual matters, even a cursory inspection of *boshan* censers also reveals how they invite us to *look* at them. For example, the ornate designs of the mountainscape adorning the lid of the Mancheng censer, embellished with a menagerie of auspicious beasts and human forms, requests the viewer to enjoy a slow and deliberate examination. Fine specimens like the Mancheng censer also possess a three-dimensional sculptural quality that arguably outshines its function to burn incense.[494] Moreover, in the view of Rolf Stein, the *boshan* censer seems "without doubt, to be the ideological antecedent of miniature gardens," the artificial landscapes so highly valued for their visual aesthetic.[495]

Even the poetic ruminations of Western Han scholar Liu Xiang 劉向 (77–6 BCE) linger on the rich ornamentation of the *boshan* censer, the earliest figure to memorialize this vessel. Composed as a censer inscription, Liu Xiang describes the lofty mountain form and delicate craftsmanship of the vessel:

How excellent this proper vessel!	嘉此正氣[496]
Precipitous and rocky like a mountain.	嶄岩若山

[493] Many medieval poems about *boshan* censers also still use the idiom of the native Chinese smellscape; see for example the anonymous "Singing of the Incense Burner" at HC#120 and Liu Hui's "Poem on Singing of the *Boshan* Censer" at HC#121, both of which mention burning sweet basil.
[494] As noted by Erickson, "Boshanlu," 8.
[495] Rolf A. Stein, *The World in Miniature: Container Gardens and Dwellings in Far Eastern Religious Thought*, trans. Phyllis Brooks (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1990), 48.
[496] Reading 氣 as 器, following Kirkova, "Sacred Mountains," 66.

The top strings together Mt. Tai and Mt. Hua,	上貫太華
And yet is held by a bronze dish.[497]	承以銅盤
It contains thoroughwort and musk,	中有蘭綺[498]
Vermillion flames and azure smoke![499]	朱火青煙

By focusing on the various physical elements of the censer, as well as the flames and smoke that it produces, Liu Xiang's comments remain fully in the visual register. The vivid sensual language centering on the chromatic fire and smoke, tropes common to later medieval *boshan* poetry, tell us that Liu Xiang's primary interaction with the censer was through his eyes, not his nose. This again returns us to the importance of birds on early censers and their ability to point to rising smoke. Not surprisingly, birds were also depicted atop the peak of some *boshan* censers.[500] It is only later, in the Eastern Han and Six Dynasties, when poems start to elaborate more on the delicate aromas and sweet fragrances emitted by the *boshan* censer, a period in which foreign aromatics were more widely available.[501] The detailed, sculptural quality of the *boshan* censer combined with the use of smoky indigenous aromatics would have created a sensory hierarchy in which vision was emphasized over smell.

This dovetails into two separate functions of the *boshan* censer I wish to highlight, one practical and one symbolic. In the first case, similar to other Han-era incense burners, we can view *boshan* censers as practical devices for fumigating quilts to drive away vermin,

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[497] I have borrowed this reading from Richard Mather, see comment in Erickson, "Boshanlu," 15.
[498] Reading 綺 as 麝, following Kirkova, "Sacred Mountains," 67.
[499] I have profited from the translation of this inscription by Erickson, "Boshanlu," 15 and Kirkova, "Sacred Mountains," 66. A full translation and discussion of the inscription can be found in Schipper, *The Taoist Body*, 218n.12; Kirkova, "Sacred Mountains," 65–66. I have used the version of this poem preserved in Hong Chu's *Materia Aromatica* as the base text, see HC#123.
[500] See e.g., Erickson, "Boshanlu," 14 and Kirkova, "Sacred Mountains," 63.
[501] A poem by Li You 李尤 (ca. 60–140) appears to be the earliest to note the *fragrant* smoke and aromas produced by a *boshan* censer, see Kirkova, "Sacred Mountains," 66; for a pair of additional poems citing fragrant smells, see Kirkova, "Sacred Mountains," 67.

such as lice and bed bugs, or to saturate garments with a sweet scent. In 1948, A. G. Wenley pondered this very issue, asking if *boshan* censers of the past "were not used primarily for the destruction of any chance *Pediculus vestimenti* which might be lurking in the official garments, or else to render such garments more pleasing to the olfactory organs in lieu of washing."[502] In these cases, much like cone-shaped diffusion cages, the desired fabric could be held or draped over the top of the censer to allow smoke to pass through and perfume it.

This precise use is suggested by several devices, recognized by Susan Erickson as "variations" on the *boshan* censer design, that share unmistakable structural similarities with the brazier pan-diffusion cage combination recovered from the tomb of Liu Sheng at Mancheng. One such device, recognized in the official report as a *boshan* censer, was discovered in a Western Han tomb at Nanchang 南昌, in Jiangxi [Fig. 3.12].[503] Another similar device with a handle, identified this time as a lamp, was excavated from a tomb at Malingshan 瑪陵山, in Shandong [Fig. 3.13].[504] Notably, both Tomb 1 at Mancheng and the tomb at Malingshan were found to contain such brazier pans with conical openwork covers as well as more traditional *boshan* censers with mountainscape designs. Consequently, the lines of influence are not clear between these two forms and it may be the case that mountain-shaped *boshan* censers were influenced by conical diffusion cages, not the reverse as is implied by Erickson's analysis of these items.[505] At the very least, the design of such

[502] Wenley, "Po-Shan-Hsiang-Lu," 9.
[503] As discussed in Erickson, "Boshanlu," 13.
[504] Gong Yanxing, "Shandong Weishan xian Malingshan chutu yipi Han dai wenwu," *Wenwu* 5 (1985): 94; see also Erickson, "Boshanlu," 13. Another device similar to the one found at Mancheng is noted in Sun, *Handai wuzhi wenhua*, 91 (Fig. 91–10).
[505] Erickson notes that both types of vessels "share a common vocabulary," but still treats the examples above as a "variation" of the *boshan* censer form, see Erickson, "Boshanlu," 14. Erickson does not consider the pair of diffusion cages excavated at Mawangdui and while they postdate the earliest *boshan* censers, it would be difficult to argue they were merely extreme abstractions of the mountain censer form.

"*boshan*" censers recovered from Mancheng, Nanchang, and Malingshan underscore their practical utility more-so than their symbolic import as "mountains."

Figure 3.12

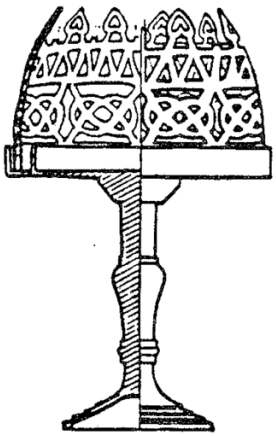

Figure 3.13

Figure 3.12: Metal *boshan* censer with openwork cover, Western Han (from Erickson 1992: 12)
Figure 3.13: Bronze lamp with openwork cover, Han (from Gong 1985: 94)

In addition to the structural similarities with diffusion cages, observing the placement of *boshan* censers within the context of a tomb arrangement can further suggest intended use. For example, the *boshan* censer recovered from Tomb 1 at Mancheng was not found in the main chamber with the sacrificial vessels, but placed in an auxiliary room off the rear chamber. The official excavation report identified this space as a symbolic wash room (*yushi* 浴室).[506] Wu Hung has shown that Western Han mausoleums such as those at Mancheng were modeled on contemporary household structures.[507] As further argued by Guolong Lai,

[506] Zhongguo shehui kexueyuan kaogu yanjiusuo, *Mancheng Han mu*, Vol. 1, 30. This interpretation is also noted in Zhang, "Boshan lu": 398; Yin Hang, "Boshanlu gongneng chutan," *Shenzhou minsu* 1 (2014): 53. Specifically, the *boshan* censer was found in a small annex (*ceshi* 側室) attached to the rear chamber (*houshi* 后室) where the body of Liu Sheng was entombed. Rawson notes that objects placed in this room appear to have been "for serving the occupant of the tomb," Rawson, "Chu Influences," 85, 98n.4. Guolong Lai notes "a small side room adjoining the coffin chamber…resembled a bath," Guolong Lai, *Excavating the Afterlife: The Archaeology of Early Chinese Religion* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2015), 91.
[507] Wu Hung, "From Temple to Tomb: Ancient Chinese Art and Religion in Transition," *Early China* 13 (1988): 96.

these underground crypts were not merely meant to replicate a house, but to provide the deceased with a "tame, familiar, comfortable space" where personal belongings could be "used as tokens of familiarity in constructing a place of safety."[508] A device for fumigating garments would be a natural addition to such a space of tame domesticity. It is also worth highlighting that the Mancheng censer is one of the most ornate of all surviving *boshan* censers of any era, complete with intricate gold inlay. In spite of such apparent opulence, the censer was entombed inside a small room with mundane items of daily use such as lamps, water jars (*lei* 罍), and a wash basin (*pen* 盆).[509]

In addition to homes and tombs, there is a third related structure that can provide further insight into the potential use of the *boshan* censer and censers more generally during this period. Previous to the Han, memorial shrine halls (*miao* 廟) for the deceased were outfitted with a "retiring chamber" (*qin* 寢) in the rear section, a division said to be modeled upon the private sleeping quarters (also *qin*) of the emperor at the rear of the audience hall (*chao* 朝).[510] Thus, there are clear architectural parallels between the rear chamber of a subterranean tomb where the body was interred, the retiring room of the above-ground shrine hall, and the sleeping quarters of the audience hall used while the emperor was alive.

There are two important points to note about the retiring room in particular. First, this was the room (and during the Han, a separate structure) where personal items of the emperor

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[508] Lai, *Excavating the Afterlife*, 77.
[509] For a map detailing the placement of objects, see Zhongguo shehui kexueyuan kaogu yanjiusuo, *Mancheng Han mu*, Vol. 1, 31. Note that a stone figure of a man, likely a depiction of a servant, was found at the doorway entrance to the side annex.
[510] As described by Cai Yong in the second century, see Hung, "Temple to Tomb," 95; Michael Loewe, "The Imperial Tombs of the Former Han Dynasty and Their Shrines," *T'oung Pao*, Second Series, 78, no. 4 (1992): 319. Michèle Pirazzoli-T'Serstevens specifically highlights the connection of the rear chamber of the tomb holding the coffin to the retiring room, see Michèle Pirazzoli-T'Serstevens, "Death and the Dead: Practices and Images in the Qin and the Han," in *Early Chinese Religion, Part One: Shang through Han (1250 BC-220 AD)*, ed. John Lagerwey and Marc Kalinowski, vol. 2 (Leiden: Brill, 2009), 952.

were stored, such as royal gowns, caps, and armrests.[511] More significantly, these were the items that were used as placeholders for the emperor when daily sacrifices were presented during mortuary observances. In addition, every month, the imperial robes and caps were carried on procession along a designated road to the temple to receive a different set of sacrificial offerings.[512] As we have seen, the dominant discourse on sacrifice focused on feeding the ancestors and spirits; burning scented plant matter would simply not have been conducive to these alimentary goals.[513] Nevertheless, if there was any hope in preserving old garments from the ravages of moths, insects, and other vermin, as well as keeping them clean and fresh for display, fumigation and perfuming would be a pragmatic necessity. It would seem quite natural for the retiring chamber, the structure where the imperial vestments were held, to also house fumigation apparatus.

There is a second point to raise that can further make this point clear. Michael Loewe has suggested the retiring room, which he calls the "sleeping chamber," emerged as the euphemistic name for the space where the corpse of the Son of Heaven was kept before interment. Ancient protocols of imperial burial required the corpse to only be entombed following a period of several months, consequently, the creation of a structure where the body could be temporarily laid to rest seems to offer, in Loewe's estimate, the "least offence to any scruples of sanctity or interruption of daily life."[514] As shown by Miranda Brown,

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[511] The separation of the retiring room from the shrine hall occurred during the Qin, see Hung, "Temple to Tomb," 94–95.
[512] Hung, 101; Loewe, "Imperial Tombs," 320–22; Bujard, "State and Local Cults," 796–97.
[513] For example, the four daily sacrifices at the retiring chamber involved food offerings, see Loewe, "Imperial Tombs," 320. On other occasions, jade and silk were presented, objects with a long history of sacrificial use; for further discussion of such offerings, see Chapter 1, Section 2.
[514] Loewe, "Imperial Tombs," 320; see also Lai, *Excavating the Afterlife*, 94. For calculations between the time of death and interment for the periods of the Eastern Zhou and Han, see Miranda Brown, "Did the Early Chinese Preserve Corpses? A Reconsideration of Elite Conceptions of Death," *Journal of East Asian Archaeology* 4, no. 1 (2002): 210–11.

there is no evidence of ancient Chinese attempts at embalming and scant support to indicate any significant interest in the preservation of a corpse during the Han, despite prevailing modern beliefs to the contrary.[515] A speedy decay (*suxiu* 速朽), which can also be read as a "speedy stench," was deemed most appropriate.[516] If Loewe is correct, the "sleeping chamber" temporarily housing the body of the deceased emperor would have also required frequent fumigation and perfuming to mitigate the "interruption of daily life."

Consequently, the placement of the ornate *boshan* censer in the rear chamber wash room of Liu Sheng's tomb also likely reflect its use in analogous above-ground structures as a device for fumigating royal garments and covering the stench of a corpse.[517] In this view, burning scented plants next to the corpse of the emperor or in service of cleaning his robes was not a formal part of sacrifice, but an indispensable ancillary activity that may have co-occurred with sacrifice in the same space. The purpose of "burning incense" in such contexts was not to open communication with the spirits and certainly not to feed them, but to preserve objects of highest reverence, the clothing and personal possessions of the emperor, and to make the ritual space hospitable to the officers of sacrifice.

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[515] Brown, "Corpses." Brown succinctly summarizes: "There is little in Han or pre-Han texts that would suggest that the early Chinese went to great lengths to preserve the body after death," Brown, 205.
[516] The wish for a speedy decay reflected the value in frugal burials, see Brown, 203–05.
[517] In contrast to the *boshan* censer, The diffusion brazier with openwork cover was not placed in the wash room annex, but was located in the rear chamber, next to the entombed body. Consequently, neither scenting device was placed in the main chamber of the tomb complex where almost all of the ritual vessels were located. The main chamber was also where it is believed postmortem memorial sacrifices were held for Liu Sheng and his deceased wife who were represented by empty spirit seats. It appears the tomb was either left open or was regularly unsealed for these sacrifices, see discussion in Lai, *Excavating the Afterlife*, 91–93. One vessel identified by the archaeological report as an incense burner was found in this main chamber (item 1:4097). It is a rather unconventional censer design, with a broad flat basin, supported on three legs, with rectangular holes on the bottom and a tray for catching falling ash. Curiously, three very similar devices, although not as ornate as the first, were also recovered from Tomb 1, but these were all identified as heating furnaces (*nuanlu* 暖爐)(items 1:5092, 1:3504, and 1:3505); see Zhongguo shehui kexueyuan kaogu yanjiusuo, *Mancheng Han mu*, Vol. 1, 66 and 101, respectively. Given the clear ritual context in which the reputed "censer" was discovered, I propose this highly unconventional censer design be reassessed as a heating or cooking vessel, in line with the identification of other similar vessels and in alignment with the ritual context in which it was found.

Since the fumigation of the deceased emperor's garments is never discussed in our surviving sources, we may presume such duties were performed more-or-less informally by lower-level members of the imperial court or, as I cautiously propose, by members of the imperial harem. For by the end of the Eastern Han we have evidence, albeit indirect, through the will of the warlord Cao Cao 曹操 (155–220) that women of the imperial house were using incense to perform sacrifices, possibly during mortuary rites. This is the earliest indication that the purpose of burning incense may have been envisioned as a tool for communicating with spirits (this might also be suggested through the contemporary Eastern Han depictions of censers in tombs, discussed in the next section). If this is indeed the case, the origins of such a practice may be related to perfuming royal robes in preparation for traditional sacrificial offerings of flesh, alcohol, and grain.[518] Notably, this forges a conceptual link between the old and new uses of incense that does not rely on external cultural influences such as the introduction of Buddhist ritual. Ultimately, both internal and external cultural factors should be taken into consideration in the full analysis of such a shift in practice and concomitant change in implicit ritual logic.

To underscore the older use of censers as fumigation devices, we find other Western Han tomb assemblages suggesting a similar usage. For example, the Western Han tomb at Tangjialing 湯家嶺 in Changsha revealed an incomplete *boshan* censer that was set directly next to a pan identified as wash basin (*yupan* 浴盤) and a water ewer (*hu* 壺).[519] This firmly places the censer in the context of domestic goods used for personal hygiene. Similar

[518] We will return to these points in Chapter 4, Section 10.
[519] Hunan sheng bowuguan, "Changsha Tangjialing Han mu qingli baogao," *Kaogu* 4 (1966): 181, 185 (items 2, 3, and 4), see also Yin, "Boshanlu gongneng chutan," 53. As we will see later in this chapter, a recently excavated late Western Han tomb contained a rare depictions of a *boshan* censer – it was shown in the context of domestic daily life for fumigating fabric.

contextualized groupings can also be identified for *dou*-censers. At Mawangdui, in Hung's analysis, the northern compartment was equivalent to the retiring room.[520] This was where a majority of scenting equipment was located, including one of the ceramic censers, both diffusion cages, a scenting sachet, cosmetics cases, and a pillow filled with thoroughwort.[521] Not all excavated incense burners and *boshan* censers can be so easily situated within a specific spatial and social context, thus further research will be necessary to determine the overarching contours of their use through time.[522] Importantly for our immediate concerns, the use of *boshan* censers as tools of hygiene appears to have persisted through the Song, when the minister Xu Jing 徐競 (1091–1153) commented on the *boshan* censer's utility for "fumigating garments" (*xunyi* 薰衣).[523]

Having discussed the practical functions of the *boshan* censer, let us now turn to the symbolic significance. Importantly, if *boshan* censers were used in a similar fashion to commonplace *dou*-censers, what was the purpose in crafting vessels as miniature mountains? Too often the mountain-shaped censer is read through the religious quest of Emperor Wu to locate the isles of the immortals. This avenue of interpretation is given credence because

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[520] Wu Hung, "Art in a Ritual Context: Rethinking Mawangdui," *Early China* 17 (1992): 135; see also Cook, *Death in Ancient China*, 55n.45. As noted by Lai, previous to Warring States burials of the Chu, different type of graves goods were not separated according to different compartments, se Lai, *Excavating the Afterlife*, 74.
[521] Hung argues that the western quadrant of the northern compartment, where most of the above materials were located, was designed as a spirit seat where the tomb occupant could be envisioned as residing, see Wu Hung, "Enlivening the Soul in Chinese Tombs," *Res: Anthropology and Aesthetics* 55–56 (2009): 23–24, see also Lai, *Excavating the Afterlife*, 84–86. The censer excavated with burned sweetgrass remnants was found in the southern compartment. According to Hung this was a replica of the household servant's quarters, see Hung, "Art in a Ritual Context," 138.
[522] Debates over the meaning of the main (central) chamber makes identifying the use of other *boshan* censers difficult, see comments in Zhang, "Boshan lu" 398. An analysis of the historical changes in the entombment practices of censers is a desiderium. For example, according to Wang Qian, a ceramic censer was placed between coffins of a husband and wife interred during the Eastern Jin, suggesting it was used in a mortuary ritual context, see Wang, "xianglu yu xiang wenhua," 42. Further investigation along these lines will prove essential to understanding the use of ancient Chinese censers.
[523] Cited in Kirkova, "Sacred Mountains," 64.

boshan censers appear for the first-time during Emperor Wu's life, with some of the earliest examples excavated from tombs of the extended royal family. In these cases, the *boshan* censer is viewed with ritual instrumentality, as a tool that, in the words of Erickson, "vivified the expected journey to immortality."[524] Additionally, Kristofer Schipper suggests the *boshan* censer was used as an aid for Daoist meditation, musing that by "looking at the coils of the smoke coming out of the holes (the grottoes) in the mountain-shaped cover, one could mentally reach those wonderous lands and become like the Immortals."[525] Furthermore, Rawson proposes that burning incense "invoked the search for contact with immortals."[526] A more direct material conduit has been suggested by Yang Liu, noting that "instead of entering the mountains, one could use at home a censer with hill formations on its conical cover to communicate with immortals," and receive drugs of immortality.[527] Moreover, as an object deposited in graves, the *boshan* censer could be seen as otherwise hastening the tomb occupant's ascent to the world of the immortals.

Recently, both Zhang Xiang and Zornica Kirkova have called these interpretations into question.[528] Based on their examinations we find medieval Chinese poets, from the Han through the Song, routinely omit references to immortals and the isles of immortality when discussing *boshan* censers. This is significant because motifs regarding the cult of immortality are otherwise found in a wide range of poems during the long medieval period, thus the absence of these motifs when addressing *boshan* censers is rather conspicuous. When *boshan* censers are referenced in medieval verse, they are used as metaphors for

[524] Erickson, "Boshanlu," 20; also quoted by Kirkova, "Sacred Mountains," 59–60.
[525] Schipper, *The Taoist Body*, 7; also quoted by Kirkova, "Sacred Mountains," 60.
[526] Rawson, "Boshan lu," 82.
[527] Liu Yang, "Manifestation of the Dao: A Study in Daoist Art from the Northern Dynasty to the Tang (5th–9th Centuries)" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of London, 1997), 166.
[528] Zhang, "Boshan lu"; Kirkova, "Sacred Mountains."

worldly concerns such as love, abandonment, and political adversity. As noted by Kirkova, these meanings "are conditioned not by the censer's inherent religious symbolism, but by its function as a vessel that contains fragrant plants and generates aromatic smoke."[529]

In addition to these insights, we can add that no scripture in the Ming-era Daoist canon implores adepts to use *boshan* censers in visualization practices, nor is there any sustained discussion about the use of *bohsan* censers in ritual contexts.[530] For example, the *Pearl Satchel of the Three Caverns* (*Sandong zhunang* 三洞珠囊; DZ1139) reports the adept Tao Hongjing 陶弘景 (456–536) as saying that "there is not much to say about incense burners, their form is standardized; the people of antiquity often used *boshan* and three-footed [censers]."[531] Judging by this statement, Tao Hongjing viewed *boshan* censers aesthetically as a type of antiquated censer form and not as tool of great significance to the quest of transcendence.

While the mountain censer is often portrayed by modern scholarship as practical expression of the Han cult of immortality, such aspects are passed over in silence our medieval textual materials. There is no evidence to support the ritual instrumentality of *boshan* censers to aid in vivifying, amplifying, or realizing an aspiration for immortality. Yet,

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[529] Kirkova, "Sacred Mountains," 81.

[530] A digital search of the *Zhentong daozang* 正統道藏 in the Kanseki Repository (www.kanripo.org) reveals exceedingly few references to the *boshan* censer (with the most search returns for *boshan* 博山, one for *boshan lu* 博山爐, and one for *boshan xianglu* 博山香爐). The *Declarations of the Perfected* (*Zhengao* 真誥; DZ1016) contains the sole hit for *boshan lu* where it is used as part of Tao Hongjing's interlinear commentary as a reference for "the people of today" (*jin ren* 今人) describing the glorious height of a mountain peak, see DZ1016.11.14b. This attests to the use of *boshan* as a generic mountain design motif in the fifth and sixth centuries, see footnote 481. It is also worth noting that Tao Hongjing references a generic incense burner – not a *boshan* censer – in his *Ten Gifts Bestowed on Lu Jingyou* (*Shou Lu Jingyou shilai wen* 授陸敬遊十賚文; DZ304), a work he composed to help his disciple, Lu Yichong 陸逸沖 (fl. late 5th/early 6th c.), known as Jingyou 敬遊, practice the Way, see DZ304.21.5a. A *boshan* incense burner is noted among the equipment in the *Lingbao Scripture on the Eight Daunters and Summoning the Dragon Deities* (*Taishang dongxuan lingbao bawei zhao long miaojing* 太上洞玄靈寶八威召龍妙經; DZ361) of the late sixth century, see DZ361.1.8b.

[531] 其燒香之鑪無言，其形範者，古人多用博山及三足也。DZ1139:4.9b.

we are left with the question as to why special censers were made to look like mountains. What is the significance of their elaborate and conspicuous design? The answer may be found in their visual and material elements, especially in their ability to produce smoke from the crags in the molded mountainscape.

Boshan censers combine two major strains of auspicious symbols (*xiangrui* 祥瑞) used widely throughout Han art: mountains and clouds. Clouds, or *yunqi* 雲氣 ("cloud-*qi*"), became the most common Han decorative element, with flowing curvilinear shapes surrounding and enveloping numerous objects represented in wide range of media including bronze castings, embroidered fabrics, and painted murals.[532] This iconographic form of *qi* developed during the Han when more visible and tangible expressions of this metaphysical substrate became preferable, even giving rise to a professional class of "*qi*-watchers" (*houqi* 侯氣). It was believed the appearance of auspicious signs, important to the legitimacy of rulers, was always accompanied by the presence of visible *qi*, appearing in the form of clouds above and around the object. Mountains, on the other hand, were an important liminal marker and intermediary between higher cosmic realms and served as a significant Han decorative motif and auspicious sign in their own regard.

Consequently, *boshan* censers were able to capitalize on the perceived power of auspicious signs by providing a miniaturized three-dimensional mountain form that would become enveloped and animated by curling clouds of smoke. This produced a stunningly visual effect that drew upon and enlivened widespread beliefs about the numinous qualities of distant mountains and cloud-*qi*. Wu Hung has underscored this aspect of *boshan* censers,

[532] See the discussion of *yunqi*, of which my following discussion is indebted, in Wu Hung, "A Sanpan Shan Chariot Ornament and the Xiangrui Design in Western Han Art," *Archives of Asian Art* 37 (1984): 46–48.

noting they provided "the most vivid combined expressions of Magical Mountains, *xiangrui*, and *yunqi*."[533]

Moreover, in the hands of the imperial family, possession of *boshan* censers could function as indices of Heavenly ordained sovereignty in addition to being used to aid in bodily hygiene. Throughout the Han, Heaven's will was expressed through the appearance of auspicious signs that confirmed the approval and beneficence of the ruler. This likely explains why the *Old Affairs of the Eastern Jin Palace* (*Jin donggong jiushi* 晉東宮舊事), often dated to the Jin, describes gifting a *boshan* censer to the crown prince when he was formally designated the heir apparent and again when he was married and ready to start his own family.[534] These episodes pertain to the maintenance of the imperial lineage and can be considered important liminal events that need the symbolic sanctification of Heaven. The bestowal of an auspicious object, like a *boshan* censer, to the prince during these periods could connote a future of prosperous and righteous sovereignty.

Furthermore, it is believed artisans worked the iconography of auspicious signs, including mountains and clouds, into their art to materialize the appearance of real signs in a practice called "invoking auspiciousness" (*farui* 發瑞) as noted in the *Records of the Grand Historian*.[535] During the reign of Emperor Wu, the incorporation of such imagery, especially

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[533] Hung, 48.

[534] See relevant quotations translated in Kirkova, "Sacred Mountains," 61. One must be careful to project Eastern Jin beliefs onto the Han, but Six Dynasties depictions of the *boshan* routinely associate it with royalty, thus given the direct connection of early *boshan* censers to the royal family, it appears this association could be quite old.

[535] SJ:28.1387. This practice is noted in the context of the appearance of white deer in Emperor Wu's hunting preserve, after which he used their hides to make a type of currency in the hope of invoking auspiciousness. This is linked to the creation of cloud motifs in Hung, "Sanpan Shan Chariot Ornament," 45; see also Rawson, "Eternal Palaces of the Western Han," 17.

on clothing and objects of the palace, was proclaimed to be among the most efficacious.[536] Perhaps not incidentally, the more elaborate *boshan* censers from the Western Han incorporate a cavalcade of extraordinary creatures, such as dragons, camels, tigers, and phoenixes, forming a train around the edge of the lid, with hunting scenes interspersed among the upper mountain crevices.[537] Thus, the possession of a *boshan* censer, in addition to potentially functioning as a sign of political legitimacy, could also invite further favorable responses from Heaven. During the five decade reign of Emperor Wu, the miraculous appearance of animals, including the famed capturing of a *lin*-unicorn 麟 in 123 BCE, became part of the historical lore attesting to his just rule. It would make sense that objects decorated with fantastic *fauna* likely reflected such visions of proper sovereignty.[538]

Additionally, specific to the imperialist goals of Emperor Wu, the collection of objects such as the *boshan* censer also fall within the interests of symbolic dominion over a vast kingdom. As discussed in Chapter 2, Sima Xianru's "Rhapsody on Shanglin Park" was depicted as stocked with an assortment of exotic *flora* and *fauna* and was conceived as a vast microcosm over which Emperor Wu ruled. The mountain censer could be envisioned both as an item among the imperial collection of exotica and as a symbolic topographic model for the vast territory ruled by the Western Han emperor. Moreover, as with our discussion about bird

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[536] SJ:28.1388, see also Hung, "Sanpan Shan Chariot Ornament," 45; Rawson, "Eternal Palaces of the Western Han," 17. These instructions are placed into the mouth of the famous master of methods Li Shaoweng 李少翁, accordingly Emperor Wu creates a set of chariots with cloud designs on them.

[537] A convenient illustration of such censers can be seen in Stein, *World in Miniature*, 46–47. Notably, Hung considers Han hunting scene motifs, distinct from their earlier more combative depictions in the Warring States, to be kind of *xiangrui*, see Hung, "Sanpan Shan Chariot Ornament," 39. The illustration of belligerent animals on ancient bronze vessels has also been interpreted as a talismanic and apotropaic device to protect people from encountering such creatures in real life, see the discussion in Eugene Y. Wang, *Shaping the Lotus Sutra: Buddhist Visual Culture in Medieval China* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2005), 206–219.

[538] For analysis of the omens appearing during Emperor Wu's reign, see Martin Kern, "Religious Anxiety and Political Interest in Western Han Omen Interpretation-The Case of the Han Wudi Period (141-87 B.C.)," *Chūgoku Shigaku* 10 (2000): 1–31.

elements on early *dou*-censers, the *boshan* censer need not be understood as a plastic expression of the myths regarding mountain abiding immortals, but a key to understanding larger conceptual issues of might, power, and distance which also animated ideas about long-lived beings who were rarely encountered.

In lieu of a ritual instrumentality that could bring an adept closer to the world of immortals, *boshan* censers appear to have had a far simpler function: to fumigate cloth and garments. While this was a practical function of all early censers, especially when fitted with diffusion hoods, the careful attention given to the visual and sculptural qualities of the *boshan* censer suggest its design also served an important symbolic purpose. Given the vessel's association with the imperial line, the mountain-shaped censer, animated by swirls of smoke, functioned as a metonym of auspiciousness and, correspondingly, Heavenly sanctioned imperial rule. Moreover, as a material expression of auspicious signs, including both mountains and clouds, the *boshan* censer could also bring further good fortune to its possessors, stabilizing the imperial lineage or inviting the appearance of other beneficent creatures and phenomenon. This political meaning behind the material objects of smell culture would last through the long medieval period, extending, as we saw at the beginning of the chapter, to the emperors of the Song who sought to create archaistic objects, or "vessels imitating antiquity," to help legitimate their rule.

6. Representing Mountains: Medieval Chinese Depictions of Boshan *Censers*

By examining the contexts in which *boshan* censer are depicted in early medieval art we can begin to get a sense of how additional layers of signification were ascribed to these objects. To set a point of comparison, let of first turn to the Western Han. Tombs of this era rarely

depict *boshan* censers, but a recent excavation of a late Western Han tomb near Xi'an in 2008 was found with decorated multi-colored murals, among which there was painting of a woman carrying a *boshan* censer on the southern wall.[539] As noted in the archaeological report, murals of this period rarely show scenes of daily domestic life and are mostly focused on scenes of the afterlife or highly-orchestrated occasions such as hunting or feasting.[540] The women carrying the censer, likely a servant due to her short statue in comparison to other figures, walks behind another female servant carrying a very large red sack slung over her shoulder. Given the size of the bag (and the presumption of realism), it could only contain relatively light-weight, high-volume items, such as garments, bedding, or other similar goods. We might reasonably presume the *boshan* censer would have been utilized to clean such fabrics. Overall, this representation this generally coincides with our understanding of censers as a sundry item of daily use.

These representations start to change during the Eastern Han. In tombs from the early Eastern Han, but only in northern Shaanxi, images of *boshan* censers started to be incorporated into low-relief carvings that decorated the doorways, walls, and ceilings [Fig. 3.14, 3.15]. In a review of forty *boshan* images that appeared in such tombs, Dong Xueying has shown how they were used as part of an overall visual program articulating various signs of auspiciousness.[541] Most typically depicted on the sides of the tomb entrance or on upright wall slabs or horizontal ceiling slabs, images of *boshan* censers are often part of larger scenes depicting the Queen Mother of the West and her consort, Royal Duke of the East

[539] Xi'an shi wenwu baohu kaogu suo, "Xi'an qu jiangcuizhu yuan Xi Han bihua mu fajue jianbao," *Wenbo* 1 (2010): 32 (Fig. 17), 35.
[540] Xi'an shi wenwu baohu kaogu suo, 38–39.
[541] Dong Xueying, "Shanbei diqu Han huaxiangshi zhong de boshanlu tuxiang chutan," *Wenwu shijie* 3 (2014): 17.

(Dongwanggong 東王公). These two figures are believed to represent the generative cosmic forces of *yin* and *yang* and are associated with the cult of immortality.[542]

Figure 3.14

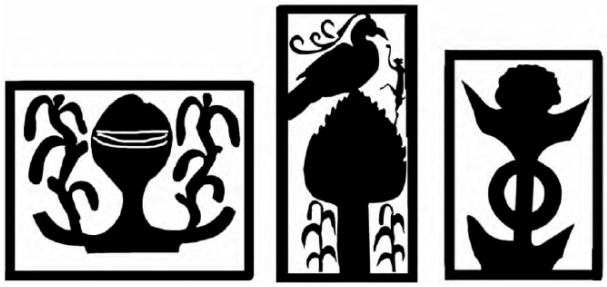

Figure 3.15

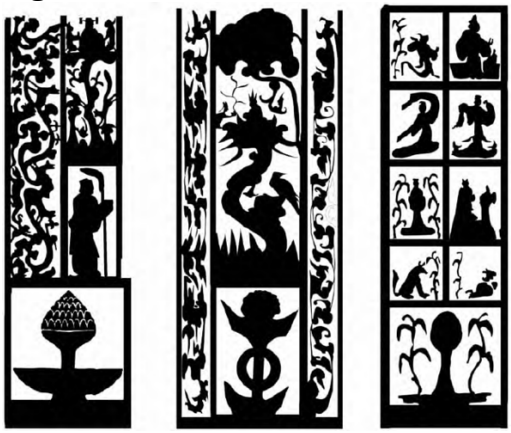

Figure 3.14: Relief carvings of *boshan* censers in Eastern Han tombs (from Dong 2014: 16)
Figure 3.15: Relief carvings of *boshan* censers in Eastern Han tombs (from Dong 2014: 17)

In closer proximity to the *boshan* censers, often within the same register, images of auspicious grain (*jiahe* 嘉禾; sometimes identified as the drug or fungus of immortality), *bi*-discs 璧, winged creatures, and swirling clouds are frequently portrayed. These clustered compositions underscore the significance of the *boshan* censer as one among many decorative motifs used to signify auspicious omens. In a funerary context, these images can be read as emblems to protect the deceased during their voyages to the other world or to protect those who participated in the mortuary rituals.[543] One might imagine the censer

[542] For more on these two figures in northern Shaanxi tombs, see Jean M. James, "An Iconographic Study of Xiwangmu during the Han Dynasty," *Artibus Asiae* 55, no. 1/2 (1995): 23–24.
[543] Pirazzoli-T'Serstevens, "Death and the Dead," 953–56, 987. In an interpretation offered by Liu Yang, the placement of a *boshan* censer underneath an image of Queen Mother of the West, "possibly suggests an intermediary connecting the earth and the heaven, as the smoke of the censer would carry heavenward the wishes of the deceased aspiring for immortality," see Liu, "Study in Daoist Art," 37. This interpretation again relies on an instrumental understanding of the *boshan* censer to open communication with the divine and deliver people to the world of the immortals. I would place no greater weight in the ability of an image of a *boshan* censer to "transport" the dead to the world of immortals than other symbols and related figures carved on the walls. They all evoke the same aspiration for the tomb occupant.

evoked upward movement as with the birds, clouds, growing stalks of grain, but there is little evidence that it held a special position among these items in opening communication with the immortals or working as an instrument to deliver the deceased to the empyrean. This is supported in part by the curious fact that none of the Shaanxi tombs with *boshan* censers motifs were also found contained real physical specimens of a mountain-shaped censer.[544] If such objects were seen as hastening the tomb occupant's ascent in the afterlife, we might imagine more interest would be placed in the entombment of real artifacts.

Nevertheless, we must admit such combinations of imagery on tomb walls remains curious. Incense burners and heavenly figures are easily conceptually related, even if simply by their shared association as symbols of auspiciousness.[545] As noted by Caroline Gyss-Vermande, the Queen Mother of the West was the principal figure of the growing Han pantheon of immortals most closely associated with divine emissaries (*shizhe* 使者).[546] As we will see, figures known as Emissaries to the Incense Office (*xiangguan shizhe* 香官使者) would later become indispensable to the efficacy of Daoist ritual in only a century or two, built upon a bureaucratic logic of using smoke to convey messages petitioning heavenly beings. It might be the case that the Eastern Han tombs in northern Shaanxi reflect a nascent shifting attitude towards the ritual utility of incense burners.

In comparison, let us turn to the distinctive depiction of *boshan* censers in Six Dynasties art when there is a clear change in the signification of their artistic representation.

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[544] Dong, "Boshanlu tuxiang," 18. There is a similar disparity in the south in the coming centuries, where relatively realistic depictions of *boshan* censers are found in Six Dynasties tomb art, yet no exemplars have thus been found, see Cui, "Xianglu yanjiu," 95.

[545] Pirazzoli-T'Serstevens also notes the difficulty in distinguishing between these images of censers as auspicious omens or as reflecting tools for heavenly contact. Such a shift is perhaps more clear by the end of the Eastern Han: "the status of celestial message is, however, entirely clear in certain tombs and offering shrines of the 2nd century AD," Pirazzoli-T'Serstevens, "Death and the Dead," 987.

[546] Caroline Gyss-Vermande, "Les Messagers divins et leur iconographie," *Arts Asiatiques* 4 (1991): 107–08.

The Daoist stele tradition, with its origins in the late fifth and early sixth centuries, is often cited as the earliest material evidence for the anthropomorphic representation of major Daoist deities like Laojun 老君, the apotheosis of Laozi 老子.[547] A large majority of these stele, with several dozen carved between 482 and 578 (excluding the disputed Wei Wenlang 魏文朗 stele from 424), were produced in present-day Shanxi, home to the ancient capital of the Northern Wei (386–534) at Datong and place of residence for Kou Qianzhi 寇謙之 (365–448), the leader of the New (or Northern) Celestial Masters (*Xin tianshi dai* 新天師道).[548]

Figure 3.16

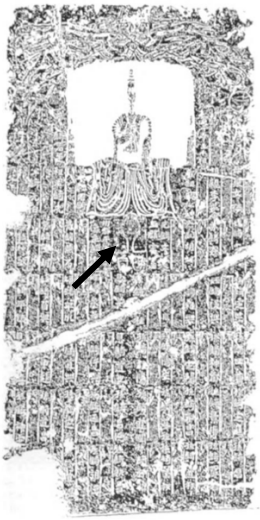

Figure 3.17

Figure 3.18

Figure 3.16: Qi Maren limestone stele, dated to 521, note the *boshan* censer under the main figure
Figure 3.17: Seated Maitreya, Cave 11 (east wall), Yungang, note the *boshan* censer flanked by attendants in the lower register
Figure 3.18: Standing Buddha, private collection, note the fire-altar flanked by attendants in the lower register (from Verardi 1994)

[547] In referring to the following art forms as "Daoist steles" I am simply following established convention, the specific religious or sectarian motivations for their production remains ambiguous.
[548] Estimates for the total number of Daoist (and Buddho-Daoist) steles vary, but I have used the number provided in Xunliao Zhang, "Daoist Stele of the Northern Dynasty," in *Early Chinese Religion, Part Two: The Period of Division (220–589 AD)*, ed. John Lagerwey and Pengzhi Lü, vol. 1 (Leiden: Brill, 2010), 446–56; also see comments in Stanley K. Abe, "Northern Wei Daoist Sculpture from Shaanxi Province," *Cahiers d'Extrême-Asie* 9, no. 1 (1996): 69–83; and Yoshiko Kamitsuka, "Lao-Tzu in Six Dynasties Taoist Sculpture," in *Lao-Tzu and the Tao-Te-Ching*, ed. Livia Kohn and Michael LaFargue (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1998), 63–85. So called Buddho-Daoist stele incorporate both identifiable Buddhist and Daoist figures, but as Stephen Bokenkamp has suggested, this may be an expression of the "boundary-crossing" also prevalent in the Numinous Treasure tradition, see Stephen R. Bokenkamp, "The Yao Boduo Stele as Evidence for the 'Dao-Buddhism' of the Early Lingbao Scriptures," *Cahiers d'Extrême-Asie* 9, no. 1 (1996): 55–67.

There is much debate regarding the origins of Northern Daoist iconography and I will limit my comments to the incorporation of *boshan* censer imagery into this visual genre.[549] Carved in low relief, several of the stele with Daoist inspired images include a single censer near the base of the throne upon which the principal deity is seated. Such an example is found in the Qi Maren 錡麻仁 (fl. 6th cent.) stele dated to 521 and named after its main donor [Fig. 3.16]. The basin and lid of the censer is depicted with an almond or calyx shape supported by narrow stem and wide a supporting plate. This design has clear precedents with some of the *boshan* censers adorning the tombs in the neighboring Shaanxi province. The main difference with the older tomb art is the censers' placement within the total iconographic program. In Eastern Han tombs, the *boshan* censer was often placed near the bottom of an arrangement of objects and figures with no special visual relationship to the principal deities; it was one among several auspicious symbols. In the stele tradition, however, the *boshan* censer is almost universally placed immediately below the central icon, centered symmetrically in line with the frontward facing deity. In several compositions, figures flank the censer, creating what may be considered a simple narrative episode of people worshipping at the enshrined icon. Curiously, while such Daoist steles appear to depict an act of worship to a central deity, thus far no freestanding Daoist statues have been recovered to which such acts of devotion could have been directed in real life.[550]

[549] A synopsis of the debate regarding the role of Buddhist imagery in motivating or influencing Daoist anthropomorphic imagery is found in Liu Yang, "Origins of Daoist Iconography," *Ars Orientalis* 31 (2001): 31–64.

[550] This lack of freestanding statues is noted in Zhang, "Daoist Stele," 539. There is textual evidence to suggest statues of Laozi were erected around the Northern Wei capital in the first decade of the fifth century and that Kou Qianzhi made images of Daoist deities around 430, see Jean M. James, "Some Iconographic Problems in Early Daoist-Buddhist Sculptures in China," *Archives of Asian Art* 42 (1989): 71.

While many iconographic elements of Daoist stele have clear precedents in native Chinese artistic traditions, the particular configuration of elements is undoubtedly influenced by Indian Buddhist material culture. The most historically proximate influence comes from the Buddhist images at the Yungang Grottoes, located in the vicinity of Datong and carved between 460 and 525. These opulent caves with lush high-relief carvings consists of thousands of Buddhist images in over fifty main caves. Many niches containing Buddhist figures incorporated a small censer at the center of the register just below the main image, oftentimes flanked by attendants.[551] One such example is found on the east wall of Cave 11, depicting Maitreya in his standard posture (*asana*) with crossed legs [Fig. 3.17]. This cave is estimated to have been carved between 471 and 494, and finished just before the Wei court relocated to Luoyang. The censer, large in relationship to the surrounding attendants, is depicted with a wide bottom plate, common to the iconographic tradition of Chinese *boshan* censers from Shaanxi during the Eastern Han. The placement of such censers at Yungang, which number in the several dozen, have an earlier precedent now known through the 1982 discovery of a sandstone seated Buddha from Hebei and dated to 444.[552] It is known that craftsman and skilled laborers from Hebei were among those resettled in the Northern Wei capital at the end of the fourth century. Moreover, when the Northern Liang (397–439) kingdom was annexed in 439, is it believed more artisans, possibly even foreign craftsmen, were drafted to work on Northern Wei projects.[553] This slowly pushes the origin of influence further west.

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[551] A list of censers depicted at Yungang can be found in Cui, "Xianglu yanjiu," 66–69.
[552] See description in Dorothy C. Wong, *Chinese Steles: Pre-Buddhist and Buddhist Use of a Symbolic Form* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2004), 47–48. A more recent discovery of a Buddhist stele from Xi'an depicting a *boshan* censer and dated to 411 is noted in Cui, "Xianglu yanjiu," 75.
[553] Wong, *Chinese Steles*, 47.

Ultimately, the compositional influences of Yungang can be traced to earlier periods in northwestern India. By the second century, during the Kaniṣka era, the lower register of Buddhist votive imagery, often described as the base of the throne, regularly depicted objects related to the practice of religious worship known generally in Sanskrit as *pūjā*.[554] Giovanni Verardi has surveyed over two dozen Indian carvings from this period or later and demonstrated that fire-altars (based on the *thymiateria* of the Greco-Roman world) for *homa* offerings and incense burners for worship were among the principal graphic elements used to decorate this space. On one hand, chalice-shaped incense burners could be easily identified by their high domed lids, offering a strikingly similar profile to Chinese *boshan* censers. On the other hand, fire-altars were depicted as a basin or broad bowl and were distinguished from censers by the lack of a cover or lid.[555] To the untrained eye, however, the cone of flames emitting from the *homa* sacrifice appear very similar in shape to the domed lids of the incense burner and sometimes their disambiguation can be difficult. For example, one image of a standing Buddha held in a private collection shows two couples performing oblations at a *homa* fire which appears very similar to Indian depictions of censers [Fig. 3.18]. According to A.D.H. Bivar, however, several of the Buddhist votive sculptures studied by Verardi depict scenes that cannot be so easily traced to Buddhist or Brahmanical practices and should instead be seen as influenced by Zoroastrian worship with fire-altars.[556] In such scenes where a characteristic Zoroastrian fire-altar is depicted, Bivar still reads the lower register, due to

[554] Giovanni Verardi, *Homa and Other Fire Rituals in Gandhāra* (Napoli, 1994), 16.
[555] Verardi, *Homa*, 24, 28, 31–33.
[556] A.D.H. Bivar, "'Fire-Altar' Subjects in the Art of Gandhāra," *East and West* 55, no. 1/4 (2005): 35–39.

the large image of the Buddha or bodhisattva who adorns the top of the sculpture, as a visual depiction of the abstract Buddhist concept of Awakening or Enlightenment.[557]

To return to the Daoist steles carved in the fifth and sixth centuries, we find these objects to be at the confluence of two artistic traditions. In one case, the mountain (or calyx-shaped) censer has served as an auspicious symbol for Chinese tombs in Shaanxi since the Eastern Han. In the other case, the configuration placing a censer or fire-altar at the base of the main icon served as a means to express veneration and piety, if not serve as a visual representation of ritual praxis.[558] How are we then to understand the censer as expressed on these Daoist steles? By focusing on the visual syntax of the overall artistic program, it is preferable to read the new context of the *boshan* censer, one element of the Chinese visual lexicon, as expressing a ritual use of the censer.[559] This means diluting the older reading of the censer as an auspicious sign and viewing it as a tool of worship for communicating with the divine.

While this may seem to reflect a default reading of incense burners, and of the *boshan* censer in particular, it bears remembering that in the Western Han there is no evidence for such an interpretation. And even in the Eastern Han tombs, the *boshan* censer was just one among many symbols used to protect the tomb occupant; there seems to have been no special devotional relationship between the censer and the Queen Mother of the West (although one

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[557] Bivar, "Fire-Altar," 36. We will see in the following chapter that much of Buddhist worship was not focused on representing the abstract concept of Awakening, but in signaling the presence of the Buddhist through sweet smells.

[558] Verardi is at times ambiguous in his interpretation of the Indian forms. Regarding one carving, he seems to imply it depicts a scene of ritual practice, where the individuals below are addressing the Buddha image above, see Verardi, *Homa*, 23. Just a few paragraphs later, however, he acknowledges another scene on a lower register "appears to be independent," although the carving does have significant damage, see Verardi, 24.

[559] The Qi Maren Daoist stele, illustrated above in Fig. 3.16, does not identify the central icon, who is depicted with a long beard and tall hat, see brief discussion in Wong, *Chinese Steles*, 114–15. The stele inscription expresses the desire for the donor and his ancestors to ascend to the Purple Tenuity Palace (*ziweigong* 紫微宫) long thought to reside at the center of the circumpolar stars.

may tentatively read a connection to the ideas the Queen Mother of the West and her heavenly emissaries). With the appearance of Daoist steles in the Six Dynasties, which were informed by a devotional representation of censers in Buddhist art (likely depicting real acts of reverence), the *boshan* censer could now be said to reflect a new layer of signification as a devotional object used in worshipping and communicating with the divine.

7. Conclusion

This chapter addressed what I have termed the "incense burner paradox," namely that there is ample archaeological evidence for the use of incense burners throughout the Han, yet there is no apparent corresponding textual justification for their use during sacrifice. The resolution of this paradox comes first from a better understanding of the early material culture of smell and the ritual logics that motivate the selection of certain kinds of odorants. It also requires deeper insight into how ritual olfactory practices changed substantially in the early medieval period. Ultimately, this paradox is only apparent because censers were not originally part of the state sacrificial repertoire for communicating with the ancestors or spirits; they were instead used as domestic tools to perfume robes, scent the environment, and clear away miasmatic vapors.

The hygienic use of censers continued throughout the long medieval period.[560] It is only towards the end of the Eastern Han and in the early Six Dynasties when we find clear textual evidence for their use as tools of esoteric practice. Additionally, it is also during the

[560] We know this due to the continued use and evolution of the diffusion cage, see Yang, Du, and Zhang, "Xunlu kaolüe."

Six Dynasties when this relatively recent adoption is obscured and portrayed as an ancient practice. This is due in part to the authors of tales of the strange who situated the ritual burning of incense in distant antiquity, such as with cultural heroes like the Yellow Emperor, or with famous figures of the more recent past, such as Emperor Wu. Thus, a millennium later in the early thirteenth century, Zhao Xigu could assert that southernwood and mugwort were used to communicate with the realm of the divine, just as aloeswood and frankincense was used in his time, without drawing critique from his contemporaries. This view also found support through Zhao Xigu's belief that the use of true incense, that is, the use of foreign aromatics, did not begin until the invention of the *boshan* censer, an object that by the Northern Song was intimately associated with the isles of the immortals. On its face, by the late medieval period, the burning of both native Chinese plants and foreign aromatics appeared to have an unassailable instrumentality in connecting humans to the world of spirits, immortals, and other figures beyond the limits of the mundane world.

Such beliefs, however, do not find support in the textual portrayals of incense during the Western Han or earlier and, in many cases, well into the Eastern Han. Our sources from these periods are uniform in reporting that burning scented plant matter was intended to perfume and fumigate garments in service of protecting them or rendering them fragrant. An important step in fully understanding these claims is to understand the materiality of Han smell culture. Based on archaeological evidence, *dou*-censers appear to have originated in the far south at the end of the Warring States and then moved northwards into the hands of the Han elite before spreading to other social classes. It has been theorized the invention of specialized scenting equipment was motivated by the hotter and wetter climate of the south, beleaguered by mosquitoes, epidemics, and mold. The use of combustible plant materials and

auxiliary equipment like diffusion cages together point to a primary concern for the creation of smoke that can be filtered through draped fabric. This combination would be most effective as a pesticide and fungicide.

These understandings are countenanced by early textual references to burning plant matter and the use of censers. Of special importance (even if only the result of literary convention) was sweet basil (*xun*/*hui*), a pungent herbaceous plant that was actively cultivated in the subtropical south and used to adorn and perfume the body. Most notably, this plant was identified as the principal material burned to protect the garments of the Imperial Secretariat of the Han court. Correspondingly, sweet basil was also recognized in contemporary materia medica as effective in covering bad odor and driving away malignant forces that cause illness. Despite the claims of later medieval authorities and the presumption of modern scholarship, documents of this period are silent on the use of incense and incense burners as tools for divine communication.

What I have painted as the "mundane" use of early censers is also inferred through their placement in Western Han tombs. As we have seen, they can be found in proximity to other apparatus related to personal hygiene as well stored in separate compartments or rooms that may have been symbolic washrooms. Extrapolating from their use as perfuming and fumigation devices we can speculate how censers might have been used in settings and contexts adjacent to formal sacrifice. For example, Han postmortem practices may have necessitated the fumigation of the retiring room where the corpse of the emperor was kept before interment. Equally, after burial, the continued ritual importance of the imperial robes likely necessitated their regular cleansing with perfumed smoke. If such speculations are correct, incense burning formed an important ancillary activity to imperial mortuary

sacrifices. This could have helped form a conceptual bridge to the eventual use of incense in opening lines of communication with the ancestors and spirits.

This characterization also helps contextualize the use of *boshan* censers, which are too often regarded as instruments that aid in vivifying or realizing an adept's aspiration for immortality. On a basic level, *boshan* censers continued the function of their generic antecedents as fumigators. Moreover, instead of reading the mountain motif as an expression of quest of transcendence, it is preferable to envision it within the broader context of contemporary Han art where mountains were deployed as auspicious symbols and used as indices of imperial authority. Importantly, the innovative representation of auspicious cloud-*qi* as moving swirls of smoke covering the miniature mountainscape only served to enhance the perception of the *boshan* censer as a particularly powerful object that beckons auspicious signs in real life. Given that nearly all medieval references connecting the *boshan* censer to the isle of the immortals appear in the Northern Song, and the striking absence of references to the *boshan* censer in the Daoist canon, the interpretation of this famed mountain censer as tool for esoteric practice during the Han should be rejected.

The significance of the *boshan* censer as an auspicious sign continued into the Eastern Han where it was incorporated into the tomb art of northern Shaanxi. It was combined with images of auspicious grains, *bi*-discs, and birds, which in the context of Han funerary art were utilized to protect the deceased during their transition to the other world. An ambiguity in meaning was also revealed in regards to the inclusion of the Queen Mother of the West in these artistic programs. This figure was closely associated with divine emissaries, thus the inclusion of *boshan* censers might have helped inspire a belief, or perhaps reflected an already nascent belief, that censers could be used to send messages

heavenwards. During the Six Dynasties, when the *boshan* censer form was adopted into the iconography of Daoist steles of the north, the newer meaning of the vessel was fully realized. By following the artistic conventions of Indian Buddhist votive carvings that placed the fire-altar or censer at the base of a religious icon, the *boshan* censer came to symbolize acts of reverence to a deity, a layer of signification that was absent in earlier periods.

The Eastern Han was an important transitional period for Chinese smell culture. The unification of the north and south under the Western Han saw the development of new sacrificial programs, underscoring the constant evolution of Chinese attitudes towards smell and smelly items. But the Eastern Han would see the introduction of novel forms of Indian Buddhist worship, conceptually predicated by different olfactory and ritual logics and founded upon vastly different kinds of scented materials derived from tropical climates. The next chapter will explore the new olfactory practices introduced by Buddhists and analyze how they were integrated into Chinese scent culture and religious practice.

Chapter Four – Powders, Pastes, and Incense: Buddhist Olfactory Practices in Early Medieval China

1. Introduction

In the ninth and tenth centuries, two events placed a substantial strain on the relationship between the Chinese state and Buddhist *saṃgha*. This involved a pair of state persecutions under Emperor Wuzong 武宗 (r.840–846) of the Tang and Emperor Shizong 世宗 (r.954–959) of the Later Zhou. Both were justified under reputed charges of clerical corruption. These tragic events not only drastically reduced monastic membership, but also left the Chinese Buddhist community bereft of its once sizeable landholdings.[561] While subsequent emperors rescinded several of the more restrictive anti-Buddhist policies, the state continued to closely supervise Buddhist activities throughout the Song. Not long after Emperor Taizong 太宗 (r. 976–997) ascended the throne, he commissioned a monk by the name of Zanning 贊寧 (919–1001) to compile a report detailing the long history of Buddhism in China that could inform the emperor and other members of the chancellery about its role in Chinese political, religious, and cultural domains. The work Zanning produced, the *Great Song Historical Digest of the Saṃgha* (*Da Song seng shilūe* 大宋僧史略; T2126), was a wide-ranging defense of the Chinese Buddhist institution and set the stage for more amicable state-*saṃgha* relations.

[561] For more information on this influential period of Chinese Buddhist history, see Albert Welter, "A Buddhist Response to the Confucian Revival: Tsan-Ning and the Debate Over Wen in the Early Sung," in *Buddhism in the Sung*, ed. Peter N. Gregory and Daniel Getz (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1999), 21–61; Douglas Skonicki, "Using History to Defend Buddhism's Place in the Socio-Political Order: An Analysis of Zanning's Sengshilüe *," *Monumenta Serica* 64, no. 1 (2016): 47–71.

Among the numerous topics addressed in Zanning's report was the role Buddhist rituals played in state ceremonies. In the section entitled "Offering Incense and Expounding the Dharma" (*xingxiang changdao* 行香唱導), hereafter: "Offering Incense,"[562] Zanning outlined the crux of a debate that was ongoing since the ninth century: should government officials make offerings of incense? According to Albert Welter, a different question lurking in the background animated interested in this debate, namely the question of whether a foreign religious practice should rightly shape the protocols of the Chinese court.[563]

Zanning begins "Offering Incense" with an offensive salvo meant to reframe the nature of the ongoing discussions:

> It is incense that dispels filth and diffuses fragrant aromas. It causes people joy when they smell it. The origins are found with the people of Zhou who valued smell. This was in deep accord with the Western regions who also esteemed incense. The Buddha appeared [in India] during the reign of the Ji clan [i.e., the Zhou Dynasty], and although they were distant from one another they were in agreement [on this point].[564]
> 香也者解穢流芬。令人樂聞也。原其周人尚臭。冥合西域重香。佛出姬朝。遠同符契矣。

Zanning's strategy was to appeal to his audiences' sense of tradition. His claims about the Zhou valuation of smell is drawn directly from the "Suburban Sacrifice" chapter of the *Record of Rites*. This also calls to mind the long history of Chinese ritual exegesis originating in the influential commentary of Zheng Xuan that established this particular passage as foundational to understanding the nature of ancient state sacrifice. It is also worth remembering that Zheng Xuan was critical in construing the aromas of sacrifice as including

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[562] According to Albert Welter, this section can be divided into two halves, with the second section devoted to a defense of chanting rituals where the Dharma is expounded vegetarian banquets sponsored by lay donors. The entirety of this chapter has been translated in Welter, *Administration*, 301–21.
[563] Albert Welter, "Buddhist Ritual and the State," in *Religions of China in Practice*, ed. Donald S. Lopez, Jr. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996), 390–96; Welter, "Buddhist Response."
[564] T2126:241b27–28. Also see translation in Welter, *Administration*, 301. I have slightly amended Welter's wording so as to better match the vocabulary and ideas I am using throughout this work.

the smell of fragrant smoke, thus helping to bolster a belief that ritualized incense burning had an ancient pedigree related to state sacrifice.[565] By connecting the storied history of ritual aromas in China to the high esteem of incense held by Indian Buddhists, Zanning attempted to bridge what he argued was only a superficial cultural and religious divide. The implication was clear; portraying the act of offering incense as a custom alien to Chinese culture and tradition was deeply uninformed.

The rest of "Offering Incense" gives further insight into the history of the "incense debates" at court and offers pointed rebuttals to arguments put forth by past officials. A rather stirring moment occurs when Zanning recounts the petition of the Imperial Secretary Cui Li 崔蠡 (fl. 810–839), who according to Zanning was the first to rebuke the court sanctioned use of incense during national memorial ceremonies (*guoji* 國忌). Cui Li's argument was straightforward and claimed that his investigation of the classics found no authorization for the offering of incense during such events. Consequently, he requested the practice to be abolished. Cui Li was successful in his petition, although it was revived by the subsequent emperor and in the process revealed the endless vicissitudes of the court on this subject.[566]

Perhaps knowing Cui Li's claims to be true, Zanning, tried a different strategy against his now long-deceased interlocutor. Instead of inferring a connection between contemporary court practice and Chinese antiquity, he underscored a break. He asks why the classics should be taken as authoritative when imperial mandates and statutes, by necessity, continuously respond to new affairs that change with the passing of time. For Zanning, the absence of

[565] See discussion in Chapter 1, Section 2.
[566] Welter, *Administration*, 305. The practice was briefly abated again with the collapse of the Tang and resurrected again a few years late, see Welter, 305, 319n38.

evidence for a practice in classical texts does not necessarily forbid the later adoption of that practice. Furthermore, Zanning asks why the evaluation of rituals such as offering incense should be determined by a cadre of ritual specialists versed in the Chinese classics (i.e., Classicists, *rujia* 儒家) when the origin of such practices are indisputably Buddhist. Consequently, Zanning affirms such practices should instead be judged by reference to Buddhist works.[567]

I believe Zanning's two lines of argument seen above reflected a deep ambiguity about incense among the Chinese elite during the Norther Song – incense was viewed as having roots in both Chinese culture and Buddhist practice, points of origin often portrayed as incommensurate. As we have seen in earlier chapters, the scholar officials Ding Wei, Ye Tinggui, and Zhao Xigu all acknowledged the distinctly different smellscape of ancient China where rituals were awash with the scent of blood, cooked grain, and flowing alcohol. Importantly, however, native southernwood and mugwort were also offered as exemplars of traditional ritual odorants by these scholars, in spite of the fact that neither was used in the same fashion or with the same purpose as incense during the Song.[568] Nevertheless, these two species of *Artemisia* were better analogues to the most cherished materials of Song perfumery sourced from trees and other plants than the grisly offerings of blood sacrifice. Ultimately, by underscoring the ancient performance of the smoke sacrifices, such as the *yin*, *chai*, and *liao*, and furthermore citing indigenous plants named in the classics, Song scholars

[567] Summarizing T2126:241c12–23. My understanding of this passage was greatly assisted by Welter, *Administration*, 303–04.
[568] As discussed in Chapter 1, Section 3, southernwood was always mixed with animal fat or grain before being burned as a food offering, while mugwort was not valued for is fragrance, but the semi-noxious smoke it made when incinerated.

could reasonably portray the origin of Song incense burning as having roots within ancient Chinese sacrifice.

But the Song world of aromatics and perfumes, especially among the cultured elite, was steeped in commodities brought from overseas. The Tang had witnessed a rapid growth in maritime trade that was buoyed by imperial decrees favorable to merchants, thus guaranteeing the continued flow of foreign luxury goods into Chinese ports. Once the Song government took a more active role in overseeing maritime commerce, the Tang-era mercantile networks were expanded considerably.[569] Among the items that had the largest and most inelastic demand – and that were the most expensive relative to their weight – were *xiangyao*, "aromatic drugs," which included many materials used for incense. These staples of long-distance trade included aloeswood, sandalwood, frankincense, and camphor.[570] Part of this demand was generated by the Buddhist community who followed ritual prescriptions outlined in Buddhist scriptures, many of which directed the use of aromatics locally sourced (or more easily available) in India. Additional evidence comes through incense blending recipes preserved in Hong Chu's *Materia Aromatica*. One recipe, claiming to originate from Huadu Temple (Huadu si 化度寺) in northwest Chang'an, includes sandalwood, storax, and camphor as ingredients, all items that were not found native to China.[571] Another recipe, used to make a fragrant moistened paste offered to Buddha, included frankincense, an oleoresin imported from the Arabian Peninsula and East African coast.[572]

[569] Schottenhammer, "Maritime Power," 460–62.
[570] Sen, *Buddhism, Diplomacy, Trade*, 192–93.
[571] See recipe as HC#128. The earliest evidence for domestic Chinese camphor production dates to the mid-to-late eleventh century, see my comments to camphor at HC#1.
[572] See recipe as HC#131.

While luxury aromatics undoubtedly also garnered a large market of elite clientele outside of the Buddhist community, the perceived relationship between Buddhists, non-native aromatics, and incense burning was often difficult to disentangle. For example, even more to core concern of the aforementioned incense debates was the method of "offering incense" (*xing xiang* 行香), a practice that had its origins in monastic protocols created in the late fourth century. According to Zanning, the state procedure for offering incense during national memorial ceremonies ultimately had its origins with the Dao'an 道安 (312–385), who devised them a means to supplement the scarcity of Indian resources detailing proper monastic conduct.[573] All of these factors outlined above allowed Zanning to claim that burning incense was both a practice in agreement with the intentions of the ancient Zhou and as an activity which only Buddhist scriptures explicitly support.

This chapter will explore the early medieval foundations of these divided views on incense burning and the use of ritual aromatics. On one level, it will focus on the introduction of novel olfactory practices into China, specifically examining the selection of aromatic raw materials, their preparation and processing, and the multifaceted ways in which they were used during Buddhist ritual. This will be set against a deeper backdrop that looks to investigate the different views and presumptive ritual logics held by Indian and Central Asian Buddhist émigrés and how the display of fragrant aromatics was strategically deployed to vivify and realize sacred presence. Scenting the air, perfuming the body, and rendering a ritual space fragrant were not insignificant gestures; they spoke to a deep belief in the

[573] Welter, *Administration*, 302. Also see discussion in Yifa, *The Origins of Buddhist Monastic Codes in China: An Annotated Translation and Study of the Chanyuan Qinggui* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2002), 10–16; John Kieschnick, "Buddhist Monasticism," in *Early Chinese Religion, Part Two: The Period of Division (220–589 AD)*, ed. John Lagerwey and Pengzhi Lü, vol. 1 (Leiden: Brill, 2010), 556 and sources cited therein.

efficacy of smell to evoke the proper framing of Buddhist offering rituals and make the Buddha and his supermundane powers available to the devotee.

As we will see, incense burning was only one of the ways in which the olfactory pathway was evoked through Buddhist practice. Scented powders and fragrant pastes were arguably more important in early Buddhist scriptures even though burning incense would soon emerge as the most dominant expression of basic worship. Ultimately, numerous kinds of odorants, including powders, pastes, and incense, as well as aromatic pills and cow manure, played integral roles in the evolving medieval Chinese olfactory imagination.

2. Chinese State Sacrifice and Buddhist Pūjā Offerings

During the first century of the common era, monastics, merchants, and other migrants were already bringing Buddhist teachings to China. In the process, not only were novel religious beliefs introduced, but new methods of ritual practice also started to circulate. As described by Erik Zürcher, the first clear historical evidence of a Buddhist community in China involves new kinds of rituals performed in Pengcheng 彭城, an important hub of early maritime commerce in present-day Xuzhou, Jiangsu. As recorded in an imperial edict from 65 CE, the emperor bestows praise upon Liu Ying 劉英 (d. 71), the enfeoffed vassal king of Chu, who "recites the subtle words of Huang-Lao and reveres the humane sacrifices of the Buddha."[574] The edict does not elaborate upon the regional court activities in detail. We know Huang-Lao referred to an imperial cult drawn from myths about the Yellow Emperor

[574] 誦黃老之微言，尚浮屠之仁祠。HHS:42.1428, trans., with minor modifications, Erik Zürcher, *The Buddhist Conquest of China: The Spread and Adaptation of Buddhism in Early Medieval China* (Leiden: Brill, 2007), 27. For more on the activities of Liu Ying, see Zürcher, 26–27.

(Huangdi 黃帝) and Laozi 老子, but specific ritual practices related to this cult remain unclear.[575] The "humane sacrifices" (*ren ci* 仁祠) of the Buddha are also undefined, but the phrasing suggests Liu Ying was not performing traditional state rites involving blood sacrifice.[576] Evidence for a "Buddhist inspired" rite finds support in the fact that that edict elsewhere reveals the presence of (no doubt foreign) Buddhist figures at Pengcheng, including both monastic *śramaṇa* (*sangmen* 桑門) and lay *upāsaka* (*yipusai* 伊蒲塞), who could have provided the necessary guidance.[577] Moreover, the edict reports Liu Ying's commitment to purifying himself in accord with various abstinences (*zhai* 齋), which arguably could have been patterned on Buddhist principles of non-harm.[578] Taken together, it

[575] For a history of the Huang-Lao school, see Anna Seidel, "The Emperor and His Councillor: Laozi and Han Dynasty Taoism," trans. Lothar von Falkenhausen, *Cahiers d'Extrême-Asie* 17, no. 1 (2008): 125–65. Timothy Barrett suggests the epithet "yellow" (*huang*) did not refer to the Yellow Emperor during the Eastern Han, but to the shadowy spirit world. Consequently, Huang-Lao might best be understood as "Laozi of the Spirits" which refers to Laozi's fully deified form, see T.H. Barrett, "Religious Change under the Eastern Han and Its Successors: Some Current Perspectives and Problems," in *China's Early Empires: A Re-Appraisal*, ed. Michael Nylan and Michael Loewe (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 439–40. Speaking to events during the later period of the Eastern Han, Anna Seidel argues Huang-Lao only referred to Laozi, or "Laozi enthroned in the Yellow Court," see Seidel, "Emperor and His Councillor," 162; see similar remarks made by Henri Maspero in Zürcher, *Buddhist Conquest*, 326n.42. In regards to the use of "subtle words" (*weiyan* 微言), Barbara Hendrischke suggests this points to the ritual recitation of the *Laozi*, in which subtle sayings are construed as the most sacred kind of utterances, see Barbara Hendrischke, *The Scripture on Great Peace: The Taiping Jing and the Beginnings of Daoism* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006), 29, 81n.19. Hendrischke also notes that in the Han exegetical tradition subtle sayings referred to the hidden meanings behind a text, often providing prognostic revelations. In the later medieval period, Tao Hongjing considers "subtle" (*wei* 微) to indicate, in the context of the Supreme Purity tradition, the whispering or silent mouthing of words, see Chapter 5, Section 4.

[576] The bloodless nature of these sacrifices is supported by the fact early Buddhist translators adopted the traditional Confucian virtue of "humaneness" to signify the first precept of not killing, see comments in Eric M. Greene, "A Reassessment of the Early History of Chinese Buddhist Vegetarianism," *Asia Major*, Third Series, 29, no. 1 (2016): 35–36n.104. The classical *ci*-sacrifice was performed in the spring, but *ci* carries a more general meaning of sacrifice in the discussion below. In some contexts, *ci* also refers to a shrine or temple, see Zürcher, *Buddhist Conquest*, 39, 327n.49.

[577] Zürcher, *Buddhist Conquest*, 27.

[578] It is difficult to adduce what *zhai* would have meant in this period and under these circumstances. In Buddhist contexts, *zhai* is taken as a rendering of the Indic term [*u*]*poṣadha*, referring to a period of special observances and intensification of practices undertaken by both Buddhist monastics and (to different degrees) by laypeople. By the late fourth century, at least among the Chinese gentry in the south, *zhai* meant vegetarianism, see John Kieschnick, "Buddhist Vegetarianism in China," in *Of Tripod and Palate: Food, Politics, and Religion in Traditional China* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), 196. It is possible that this is the meaning here. For further discussion on *zhai* and vegetarianism in early medieval China, see Sylvie

is plausible the language of "humane sacrifices" points to bloodless *pūjā*-style rites originating from the Indian cultural sphere.[579]

If we take this to be the case, the olfactory dimension of the sacrifice would not have involved the aromas of meat or the scent of spiced *chang*-ale, but possibly the fragrances of aromatic plants rendered into incense, powders, and pastes. It must be underscored, however, the exclusive use of such items would run counter to the traditional motivation of state sacrifice to nourish the spirits with food and alcohol. As discussed in the previous chapter, the earliest textual evidence for the use of aromatics, and incense in particular, as part of private Chinese religious rites comes from the activities of the Northern Wei imperial harem in the early third century.[580] If we presume the use of aromatics at Pengcheng in the first century, we cannot exclude the possibility of Buddhist inspired rites informing those practices a little over a century later.

While a full understanding of the ritual program performed at Pengcheng remains beyond our reach, we can turn to the surviving corpus of translated Buddhist scriptures to search for clues regarding what might have transpired, and more specifically, what types of

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Hureau, "Buddhist Rituals," in *Early Chinese Religion, Part Two: The Period of Division (220–589 AD)*, ed. John Lagerwey and Pengzhi Lü, vol. 2 (Leiden: Brill, 2010), 1213–30; Robert F. Campany, *Signs from the Unseen Realm: Buddhist Miracle Tales from Early Medieval China* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2012), 51–55; Greene, "Buddhist Vegetarianism."

[579] Zürcher suggests the sacrifice was "probably no more than a variation of existing Daoist practices," but makes no comment if the rites were bloodless, see Zürcher, *Buddhist Conquest*, 27. Generally, scholars presume Liu Ying's court adopted basic *pūjā*-style rites, see e.g., John Kieschnick, "Buddhism," in *Cambridge History of China, Volume 2: The Six Dynasties, 220–589*, ed. Albert E. Dien and Keith N. Knapp (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019), 531. A century later, the scholar Xiang Kai 襄楷 (fl. 166) presented a memorial acknowledging that sacrifices (*ci*) had recently been performed to Huang-Lao and the Buddha by the emperor. He further claims that devotion to these figures required the rejection of animal slaughter, but that the emperor had violated this ethical restriction. At the very least, this memorial presupposes an understanding that sacrifice to the Buddha was bloodless, even if it was not followed in practice. For translation and analysis of Xiang Kai's memorial, see Rafe de Crespigny, *Portents of Protest in the Later Han Dynasty: The Memorials of Hsiang K'ai to Emperor Huan* (Canberra: Australian National University Press, 1976); for discussion of portions relevant to Buddhism, see Zürcher, *Buddhist Conquest*, 36–38.

[580] See discussion in Chapter 3, Section 5; we will return to this point below in Section 10.

materials were normatively prescribed as items that could offered (S. *deyadhamra*, C. *suoshiwu* 所施物) as part of ritual worship. One might presume that Buddhist offering practices remained relatively stable through time, but a closer reading of historical materials suggests otherwise. For example, as Jan Nattier has noted, the use of food and fruit offerings, commonplace in medieval and modern Buddhist practice, is "strikingly absent" from early sutras.[581] In the same vein, we will see that incense, omnipresent throughout East Asia today, appears to have been less valued according to some early works translated into Chinese.

The grand project of Chinese translation began in earnest about a century after Liu Ying's sacrifices, with the first center of activity taking place in the capital of Luoyang. Most of the surviving Han translations, however, focus on articulating complex Buddhist doctrine or describing practices associated with meditation. A detailed register of basic elements of Buddhist worship are often passed over in silence.[582] This is certainly the case for the corpus of texts that can be most reliably attributed to An Shigao 安世高 (fl. 148–168), the first celebrated translator to arrive in Luoyang in the middle of the second century. Nevertheless, there is one very short and somewhat unexpected passage among An Shigao's works that provides critical insight into how late second century Chinese Buddhists were informed regarding basic rites of worship. In a section from the *Buddha's Teaching of the Sutra on the*

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[581] Jan Nattier, *A Few Good Men: The Bodhisattva Path According to the Inquiry of Ugra (Ugraparipṛcchā)* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2003), 165n.62. Einoo Shingo suggests that Vedic food offerings, known as *bali*, were incorporated into bloodless *pūjā* practice, crystalizing as the *pañca-upcāra*, or the "five services" of fragrant pastes, flowers, incense, lamps, and food as found in the larger Hindu ritual tradition. Einoo notes that *bali* offerings can be found in the Jātakas, but they are exclusively given to *yakṣas* and other demon-like beings, see Shingo Einoo, "Hindu Rituals and Buddhist Rituals," *Acta Asiatica* 108 (2015): 85. Such a strong association of food with non-Buddhist offerings may have caused early Buddhists to be hesitant to add an item such as fruit to their early *pūjā* rites.

[582] On one hand, this is unsurprising since monastic codes (*jielu* 戒律) were not among the earliest works translated into Chinese and ritual manuals (*yigui* 儀軌) were not yet developed as a genre. On the other hand, there is also no mention of basic principles of worship in Xi Chao's 郗超 (336–420) *vade macum*, the *Essentials for Practicing the Dharma* (*Fengfa yao* 奉法要; T2102:86a–89a). For a translation of this text, see Zürcher, *Buddhist Conquest*, 177–79.

Eightfold Noble Path where An Shigao details nine different aspects of Right View (*dijian* 諦見, S. *samyak-dṛṣṭi*), he articulates one aspect, "trust in offerings" (*xinci* 信祠), by presenting a simple digest of Buddhist worship: "Having trust in offerings [means] hanging banners, burning incense, scattering flowers, and lighting lamps."[583] Descriptions of Buddhist worship such as this are commonplace in later scriptural works, thus it is easy to ignore such a seemingly prosaic directive. Nevertheless, this short passage remains the only elaboration on proper Buddhist worship in An Shigao's surviving core works.[584]

Important for our analysis, this passage is markedly different from the fifth century Chinese translation of the same text, forming part of the "Longer" Chinese *Saṃyuktāgama* (*Za ahan jing* 雜阿含經; T99), and furthermore finds no parallel in the surviving Pāli collection.[585] This suggests the résumé of ritual protocol may have been an interpolated

[583] 信祠者，懸繒燒香散花然燈。T112:505a25–26. According to this scripture, Right View requires trust in nine different areas: [1] trust in generosity 信布施; [2] trust in reverential worship [through obeisance] 信禮; [3] trust in sacrifice [through ritual offerings] 信祠; [4] trust in the naturally arising merits of good and evil actions 信善惡行自然福; [5] trust in one's parents 信父母; [6] trust in the religious practitioners of the world 信天下道人; [7] trust in seeking the path [to Awakening] 信求道; [8] trust in Right Practice 信諦行, and [9] trust in Right Livelihood 信諦受. This list imperfectly matches some early discussions of Right View which require the acceptance of karmic cause and effect and, by implication, the rejection of nihilistic views, see Tillman Vetter, *The Ideas and Meditative Practices of Early Buddhism* (Leiden: Brill, 1988), 12n.4 (where Vetter considers this to be an "archaic formulation" of Right View) and Paul Fuller, *The Notion of Diṭṭhi in Theravāda Buddhism: The Point of View* (London: RoutledgeCurzon, 2005), 42–43.

[584] For textual attributions of early Buddhist scriptures, I have relied on the work of Jan Nattier who uses both internal evidence, based on vocabulary and translation style, and external evidence, based on early catalogues, prefaces, colophons, and biographies, to assess the received tradition of translator attributions. For a listing of the core texts attributed to An Shigao with the highest degree of probability, see Nattier, *Guide*, 175–76.

[585] The *Sutra on the Eightfold Noble Path* is divided between two individual sutras found in the Chinese *Saṃyuktāgama*, see T99:203a01–204a15 (# 784 and #785) and specifically 203a19–b2 for the discussion on Right View that departs from An Shigao's version. For an overview on the Chinese translation of the Longer *Saṃyuktāgama*, see Andrew Glass, "Guṇabhadra, Baoyun, and the Saṃyuktâgama," *Journal of the International Association of Buddhist Studies* 31, no. 1/2 ([2008] 2010): 185–203. Furthermore, there is no parallel to this sutra in the "Shorter" Chinese *Saṃyuktāgama* (*Bieyi zan ahan jing* 別譯雜阿含經; T100) and there is only a poor parallel to the *Micchattasutta* of the Pāli *Saṃyutta Nikāya,* see Nattier, *Guide*, 50n.74. The lack of parallel sutras between the two Chinese *Saṃyuktāgamas* and the *Saṃyutta Nikāya* is not uncommon and efforts to determine the relationship between all three collections and their internal orderings has spurred a large amount of secondary scholarship. For one reference that addresses the lack of parallel sutras and the possibility of later additions to these collections, see Marcus Bingenheimer, "Two Sūtras in the Chinese Saṃyuktāgama

explanatory gloss for an audience unfamiliar with presumably formulaic Indic practices. To this point, Shi Guohui has recently hypothesized this passage is one among eight other sections that form an auto-commentary of sorts, many bearing the terminology indicative of An Shigao's hand.[586] Most notable in our passage is that An Shigao uses the term *ci* 祠, "sacrifice," to describe the practice of making offerings. As a result, he provides a conceptual kinship to traditional state sanctioned rites, but defines *ci* in a patently Buddhist, and bloodless, fashion. Consequently, banners, incense, flowers, and lamps replace the image of vessels filled with grains, meat, and alcohol. Curiously, this passage is to my knowledge one of the oldest uses of the phrase *shao xiang* 燒香, "burn incense," a Chinese turn of phrase that will become essentially synonymous with worship and ritual practice in the medieval period.

Outside of the gloss above, the term *ci* appears in passing a handful of more times in An Shigao's core corpus, all without elaboration. Surprisingly, *gongyang* 供養, "making offerings" – the term which becomes ubiquitous among Buddhists in China – does not appear.[587] In many cases, An Shigao's terminology has proven foundational for later Chinese

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without Direct Pāli Parallels-Some Remarks on How to Identify 'Later Additions' to the Corpus," *Buddhist Studies Review* 30, no. 2 (2013): 201–14.

[586] Guohuei Shi, "A Study of An Shigao's Translation Style: An Analysis of the Bazhengdao Jing T112," *Journal of Indian and Buddhist Studies* 66, no. 3 (2018): 176–82. Shi considers the passage above to be comprised of "revised terms" because they do not appear elsewhere in An Shigao's corpus, thus implying later interpolation, see Shi, 180. I would suggest it is plausible to attribute the verbal phrasings to An Shigao since the surviving corpus of his works occasions little reason to explicate Buddhist worship. In other words, none of his translations required him to address elements of *pūjā*, thus he never built a body of terminology related to worship. At the very least, the terms used by An Shigao were in circulation at the end of the Han, a fact we know from the work of Lokakṣema (see e.g., T362:301b23–24, a translation now attributed to him).

[587] Limiting ourselves to the "Core Texts" of An Shigao as determined by Jan Nattier (Nattier, *Guide*, 175–76), *ci* appears in five texts: T57, T112 (discussed above), T150A (as part of the "rediscovered" *Ekottarikāgama* anthology), T603, and T607. Moreover, *si* 祀 appears once as a variant for *li* 禮 in the so-called "Three Editions" (*san* 三) of the Song, Ming, and Yuan, as well as the "Palace Edition" (*gong* 宮), see T607:233c19. The term *gongyang* appears in two texts, both times referring to bodily nourishment, not worship, see T31:813c22 and T32:814b28. *Gongyang* also appears as part of the Song and Yuan recensions of T603 [as footnoted at 178b26], but this passage matches with this text's third century commentary at T1694:22a20. A

translators, but his use of *ci* seems to have been met with immediate disapproval among his contemporaries. Tellingly, Lokakṣema's 支婁迦讖 (mid-to-late 2nd c.) translation of the *Aṣṭasāhasrikā-prajñāpāramitā-sūtra* (*Daoxing bore jin* 道行般若經; T224), hereafter *Aṣṭasāhasrikā*[588], completed in 179, only uses *ci* to denote non-Buddhist heterodox sacrifice, often explicitly referring to the use of blood and other illicit offerings. To cite one illustrative example, in discussing the practices of those on the heterodox path (*yu daoren* 餘道人), Lokakṣema apparently personally glosses sacrifice (*cisi* 祠祀) as offerings made to spirits, noting that this consisted of alcohol, flesh, and grains, items which also form the three main classes of Sinitic sacrifice.[589] Given the lack of precise parallels to this passage, Lokakṣema appears to have strategically spoken to a Chinese audience familiar with state rites.[590] There also seems to have been good reason for Lokakṣema's apparent concern. A little more than a

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combined *gongyang ci* occurs at T101:93a27, a text considered to be a "Second-Tier" work of An Shigao, see Nattier, *Guide*, 176. It should be noted that An Shigao uses *weigong* 為供 at T32:814b29 in a way that seems to indicate making offerings. I have not consulted the Kongōji manuscripts of An Shigao's works; for more details on these latter works, see Nattier, 64–65.

[588] I have chosen to retain the Sanskrit title to underscore that the ideas in this text reflect Indian conceptions about the sense of smell and smelly objects.

[589] "[A bodhisattva] does not engage in affairs with those on the heterodox path or sacrifice to spirits and ghosts using alcohol, flesh, or grains" 不與餘道人若祠祀諸鬼神酒肉穀食從事。T224:455c9–10. This passage is part of Chapter 15 on the practices of non-reversible (*avaivartika*) bodhisattvas.

[590] Compare, for example, with Zhi Qian's 支謙 (fl. 223–253) translation of this passage which excludes mention of spirits and ghosts: "[A bodhisattva] does not sacrifice with money, grains, flesh, or alcohol with non-Dharmic men and women on the heterodox path or in licentious cults" 非法士女蠱道婬姝，錢穀屠酒祀。T225:495b28–b29; for more on the translation of this work, see Matthew Bryan Orsborn, "Chiasmus in the Early Prajñāpāramitā: Literary Parallelism Connecting Criticism & Hermeneutics in an Early Mahāyāna Sūtra" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Hong Kong, 2012), 62–63 and citations therein. The translation of Dharmaprīya (ca. late 4th cent.) and Zhu Fonian 竺佛念 (fl. 379–413) shows further deviance: "[A bodhisattva does not engage in affairs] with men or women on the heterodox path, nor in sacrifice with grain or alcohol" 不與女人亦不與男子亦不與餘道。亦不與穀亦不與須亦不與祠。T226:528a18–19; for more on this text, see Orsborn, "Chiasmus in the Early Prajñāpāramitā," 64–65 and sources therein. Kumārajīva's (344–413) translation does not speak of sacrifice at all, see T227:565b03–08; for more on this work, see Orsborn, "Chiasmus in the Early Prajñāpāramitā," 65–57 and sources therein. For a general comparison of different textual versions of this passage, see Seishi Karashima, *A Critical Edition of Lokakṣema's Translation of the Aṣṭasāhasrikā Prajñāpāramitā* (Tokyo: The International Research Institute for Advanced Buddhology Soka University, 2011), 318; for translation of corresponding Sanskrit, see Edward Conze, *The Perfection of Wisdom in Eight-Thousand Lines & Its Verse Summary* (Bolinas: Four Seasons Foundation, 1973), 205. Lastly, Lokaksema's other uses of *ci* appear at T224:454b26 and 472b24.

decade after completing the *Aṣṭasāhasrikā*, the notorious Chinese warlord and reputed Buddhist sympathizer, Ze Rong 笮融 (d. 195) is claimed to have built a Buddhist temple and held several "bathing the Buddha" ceremonies where copious amounts of alcohol was served.[591] While such activity aligned with ancient Chinese state rites, this would have conflicted with normative forms of Indian Buddhist worship.

Perhaps not surprisingly, when looking through Lokakṣema's *Aṣṭasāhasrikā*, a different term appears when referring to Buddhist offerings, *gongyang*. From this we can see that the two most prominent figures among the first generation of translators in China had different perspectives on how to render a basic category of Buddhist practice. One standard list of offerings, or what we might call an offertory formula, in the *Aṣṭasāhasrikā* runs as such: "fine flowers, scented powders, fragrant pastes, mixed aromatics, silk fabrics, elaborate canopies, and banners."[592] Importantly, offertory formulas like this were not presented in the *Aṣṭasāhasrikā* as parts of prescriptive instructions for the Buddhist faithful, but as parts of didactic narratives depicting model worship of the Buddha and other revered objects, such as *stūpas* and sutras. As a consequence, these lists of offerings provided exemplars of practice for listeners or readers of the text. For a Chinese audience in the late second century, the

[591] Zürcher, *Buddhist Conquest*, 27–28, 327n.53.

[592] 名華搗香澤香雜香，繒綵華蓋旗幡。E.g., T224:432a7. This exact listing (and phrasing) of seven offerings is found seventeen times in Lokakṣema's translation, excluding numerous minor variations (e.g., *haohua* 好華, *tianhua* 天華, *mingxiang* 名香, and so forth), suggesting this was envisioned as a standard set, at least in translation. Later translations of the *Aṣṭasāhasrikā* provide slightly different formulas, but aromatics remain a sizable proportion of the overall count of offerings. For example, a roughly parallel list in Kumārajīva's translation contains ten items of which half are explicitly noted as fragrant: "fine flowers, aromatics, garlands, fragrant pastes, incense, scented powders, mixed aromatics, silk, canopies, and banners" 好花香瓔珞，塗香燒香，末香雜香，繒蓋幢幡。T227:542b17–18. It should be noted that elsewhere Kumārajīva treats *hua*, *xiang*, and *yingluo* separately, see e.g., T223:285b20; also see how Conze treats a similar list of offerings, Conze, *The Perfection of Wisdom,* 105. Seishi Karashima gives the equivalent to *gongyang* as *upatiṣṭhan*, "to serve someone with something," see Seishi Karashima, *A Glossary of Lokakṣema's Translation of the Aṣṭasāhasrikā Prajñāpāramitā* (Tokyo: The International Research Institute for Advanced Buddhology Soka University, 2010), 187.

dazzling array of visual and (inedible) olfactory offerings would have contrasted the banquets, feasting, and food-oriented affairs associated with Chinese state rites.

In addition to exemplifying the appropriate kinds of offerings during Buddhist worship, a Chinese-style sacrifice was also explicitly rejected on the grounds of the intended recipient for those offerings. We saw this above where Lokakṣema excluded sacrificial offerings made to spirits. In addition, an early third century commentary on one of An Shigao's translations, likely attributable to the lay Buddhist Chen Hui 陳慧 (d.u.), we find the proper target of Buddhist worship made explicit. The explanatory gloss notes that "sacrifice (*ci*) to spirits in the hopes of attaining merit is futile, but by making offerings (*gongyang*) to human sages, the merit will be great."[593] This statement categorically rejects the karmic efficacy of sacrificing to indigenous Chinese spirits (*shen* 神). Conversely, it extolls the performance of generosity to "human sages" (*rensheng* 人聖), a traditional type of Chinese cultural hero often embodied by wise rulers. Here the term undoubtedly refers to the

[593] 祠神以望福莫。若供養斯八[→人]聖其福大也。T1694:22a20–21. The root text, entitled the *Scripture Concerning the Skandhas, Dhātus, and Āyatanas* (*Yin chi ru jing* 陰持入經; T603), and shown by Stefano Zacchetti to correspond to a chapter of the Pāli *Peṭakopadeṣa*, was separated from its commentary by the editors of the Taishō canon (the latter distinguished by adding *zhu* 註, see T1694), see Stefano Zacchetti, "An Early Chinese Translation Corresponding to Chapter 6 of the Peṭakopadesa: An Shigao's 'Yin Chi Ru Jing' T 603 and Its Indian Original: A Preliminary Survey," *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London* 65, no. 1 (2002): 74–98. Chen Hui was associated with the school of An Shigao and worked closely with the Sinicized Sogdian monk Kang Senghui 康僧會 (d. 280), see Stefano Zacchetti, "Some Remarks on the Authorship and Chronology of the Yin Chi Ru Jing Zhu: The Second Phase in the Development of Chinese Buddhist Exegetical Literature," in *Buddhist Asia 2: Papers from the Second Conference of Buddhist Studies Held in Naples in June 2004*, ed. Orofino Giacomella and Silvio Vita (Kyoto: Italian School of East Asian Studies, 2010), 141–98. In some canon recensions the passage cited is found as part of An Shigao's root text, see T603:178b26. It appears some of the preserved glosses may be "indirectly" attributed to An Shigao, see comments in Zacchetti, "Early Chinese Translation," 93n.108. In the case of our passage, however, the use of the final particle *ye* 也, a term not typically found in the works of An Shigao, suggest the gloss was composed by Chen Hui. The context of the gloss revolves around the fetter (*jie* 結, S. *samyojaṇa*) of doubt (*yi* 疑) and the ability for one to cultivate confidence in Buddhist teachings, including the notion of obtaining merit by making offerings. For a translation from Pāli of the corresponding passage in the root text, see Ñāṇamoli, *The Pitaka-Disclosure (Peṭakopadesa)* (London: Pali Text Society, 1964), 178 (where Ñāṇamoli considers *pūjā* to be a mistake for *puñña*).

Buddha. The gloss effectively announces that Chinese spirits hold no power within the moral and cosmological frameworks of Buddhism, thus rendering indigenous forms of sacrifice moot.

Notably, the rejection of bloody sacrifice was also part of Indian Buddhist discourse which set to define itself against the dominant practices of Vedic ritual.[594] While early references to Indic debates on proper ritual practice are scattered throughout the Chinese Buddhist canon, they were clearly explained in the lengthy commentary of the **Mahāparjñapāramitōpadeśa* (*Da zhidu lun* 大智度論; T1509), hereafter *Treatise on Great Wisdom*, translated by Kumārajīva 鳩摩羅什 (344–413).[595] In this treatise, sacrificing to the *devas* (*tianci* 天祠, S. *devayajña*) is routinely portrayed as a non-Buddhist practice rooted in immorality and a lack of wisdom.[596] Furthermore, worship through the act of making charitable offerings is presented as a cornerstone of Buddhist practice and a proper expression of reverence to the Buddha and monastic community. The commentary in the *Treatise on Great Wisdom* defines the act of "making offerings" thusly:

> "Making offerings" [means] that if one observes or hears about the meritorious qualities of all buddhas, one then mentally reveres, venerates, welcomes, and attends to them by circumambulating in obeisance, bowing with joined palms, and withdrawing to a quiet place. One provides drinks, food, flowers, aromatics, precious jewels, and so forth. In these ways, one praises their meritorious qualities of morality [i.e., *śīla*], concentration [*samādhi*], and

[594] For discussion on how Buddhists deployed "ritual exclusiveness" to distinguish themselves from their peers in India, see Phyllis Granoff, "My Rituals and My Gods: Ritual Exclusiveness in Medieval India," *Journal of Indian Philosophy* 29 (2001): 109–34.

[595] According to the Chinese tradition, the **Mahāparjñapāramitōpadeśa* is attributed to Nāgārjuna, but modern scholarship has yet to arrive at a consensus on the text's authenticity or the role Kumārajīva played in its transmission to China. These debates have been conveniently summarized in Stefania Travagnin, "Reception History and Limits of Interpretation: The Belgian Étienne Lamotte, Japanese Buddhologists, the Chinese Monk Yinshun and the Formation of a Global 'Da Zhidu Lun Scholarship," *Hualin International Journal of Buddhist Studies,* 1, no. 1 (2018): 341–69. Because of the text's association with Nāgārjuna in China, the prestige and importance of the *Treatise on Great Wisdom* can hardly be understated for the early development of Chinese Buddhism.

[596] For example, heretics are described as slaughtering innocent victims or drinking alcohol as part of the sacrificial program to the *devas*, of which the commentary states is not part of the Buddhadharma, see T1509:192a8–16.

> wisdom [*prajñā*]. If having expounded the Dharma, one should faithfully receive it and teach it. These wholesome physical, verbal, and mental actions constitute 'making offerings.' [597]
> 供養者。若見若聞諸佛功德。心敬尊重迎逆侍送。旋繞禮拜曲躬合手而住避坐安處。勸進飲食華香珍寶等。種種稱讚持戒禪定智慧諸功德。有所説法信受教誨。如是善身口意業是爲供養。

In this gloss, Buddhist worship is defined by cultivating the proper mental, verbal, and physical responses when encountering the Buddhist teachings or a Buddhist teacher. Thus, not only does the target of worship need to be appropriately identified, the three modes of one's karmic activity must also be rooted in wholesome intention. This also includes the selection of proper material gifts (*cai gongyang* 財供養), here listed as drinks, food, flowers, aromatics, and precious jewels, which along with the gift of the Dharma (*fa gongyang* 法供養), comprise the two main categories of offerings according to the *Treatise on Great Wisdom*.[598]

But what was the appeal of the Chinese terms *gongyang* to early medieval translators who, almost unilaterally, rejected *ci* as a viable rendering of Buddhist *pūjā*? For one, the deep indigenous association of *ci* with blood sacrifice to ancestors and spirits likely motivated translators to search for a term unburdened with such inappropriate connotations. As noted, Buddhists in India went to considerable lengths to define their ritual practices in contrast to the violent ritual culture of Brahmanical sacrifice, regularly invoking the doctrine of *ahiṃsa*, the abstention from harming living beings. Additionally, Buddhists in China soon emerged at the forefront in confronting both the state sanctioned slaughtering of animals and the use of

[597] T1509:276c23–277a3. Immediately following this passage, we find a Chinese-style semantic gloss of several other terms, thus suggesting these are additions not present in an Indic source text, see 277a3–a7.
[598] T1509:276c21–22. In a later passage, the commentary makes clear that merit is not necessarily derived from the material gift, but the intention behind the gift: "Aromatics and flowers are [karmically] indeterminate, they must be offered with wholesome intentions to be called 'roots of wholesomeness.' Giving [without wholesome intention] is not meritorious," 香華不定。以善心供養。故名爲善根。布施非即是福。T1509:282a28–29.

blood offerings in popular sacrificial cults, a position jointly held by the early Daoist institution.[599] Ultimately, native Chinese ideas about sacrifice may have aligned too well with Brahmanical sacrifice in India. For Chinese Buddhist translators, the attempt to reframe and redefine "sacrifice" (ci) as non-violent worship of the Buddha was likely deemed too difficult to accomplish, especially when other options presented themselves.

The ultimate preference for *gongyang* was likely due to its pre-Buddhist meaning regarding "reverent caring," especially care for one's parents. In its most literal rendering, *gongyang* refers to providing (*gong* 供) sustenance (*yang* 養), but the term also carries the critical implication of providing deferential support to a person of superior status. As Keith Knapp has shown, the development of a Han Confucian discourse on *gongyang* was motivated by the vertical hierarchy between sons and their parents, such that the term enabled one to "display respect for one's parents through the manner in which one meets their physical needs."[600] While *gongyang* still loosely reflects a logic of nourishment (through feeding parents), it was not framed by a discourse of highly orchestrated state sacrifice to the spirits, nor was it associated with the illicit activities of common cults. *Gongyang* was based in ideas of care and material support, ideas appropriate not only for ritual acts of Buddhist worship, but also for the sustenance of a nascent Buddhist community of monastics in China who were equally searching for such support.

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[599] For condemnations of blood sacrifice in early medieval China, see Rolf A Stein, "Religious Taoism and Popular Religion from the Second to Seventh Centuries," in *Facets of Taoism: Essays in Chinese Religions*, ed. Holmes Welch and Anna Seidel (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1979), 53–81; Kleeman, "Licentious Cults"; Chi Tim Lai, "The Opposition of Celestial-Master Taoism to Popular Cults during the Six Dynasties," *Asia Major*, Third Series, 11, no. 1 (1998): 1–20, and Raz, *Emergence of Daoism*, 91–126.
[600] Keith N. Knapp, "Reverent Caring: The Parent-Son Relationship in Early Medieval Tales of Filial Offspring," in *Filial Piety in Chinese Thought and History*, ed. Alan Chan and Soor-Hoon Tan (London: RoutledgeCurzon, 2004), 45.

Many tales circulating during the Eastern Han focused on filial sons forgoing luxuries in order to provide ample support for their parents. For Buddhist translators, *gongyang* emphasized the paternal position of the Buddha within the Buddhist community as well as the relationship of the *saṃgha* to the laity, both of whom were cast as deserving of reverence and support due to their karmic and soteriological advancements.[601] Additionally, *gongyang* also mapped well to the display of sensual opulence, hospitality, and sense of high-minded generosity that motivated *pūjā*-style rituals. In the end, *gongyang* provided a better fit for the material and ethical motivations behind Buddhist forms of worship.

In summation, while An Shigao attempted to redefine *ci*, a term with strong connections to Chinese state sacrifice, within normative Buddhist practice, Lokakṣema seemed more amenable to adopting a different term, *gongyang*, when referencing to Buddhist-style offerings. In either case, Buddhist worship was defined by the types of offerings that were presented and the proper recipient of those offerings, distinctions Buddhists needed to reiterate in both India and China.

3. Ritual Offerings of the State in the Late Eastern Han

Buddhist worship is marked by its sensual pageantry. Offerings displayed on and around the altar, such as shimmery silken banners, fragrant flowers, and burning lamps all served to heighten and concentrate the senses of the devoted practitioner. Because of this, a close analysis of the idealized offerings noted in texts can provide insight into which senses were

[601] From a technical standpoint, the *Treatise on Great Wisdom* proclaims three different kinds of *pūjā* pertaining to the relative status of the benefactor to the beneficiary, namely offerings to superiors, offerings to inferiors, and offerings to equals (such as when buddhas honor other buddhas), see T1509:132a2–6.

most valued and how the divine was envisioned and approached. We will take the seven-element offertory list noted above from the *Aṣṭasāhasrikā* – fine flowers, scented powders, fragrant pastes, mixed aromatics, silk fabrics, elaborate canopies, and banners – as a starting point and compare it to an example of roughly contemporaneous Han court sacrifice, first looking at the visual components before turning to the olfactory components.

According to the *Book of Later Han* (*Hou Han shu* 後漢書), the last few years of the life of Emperor Huan 桓帝 (r. 146–168) were occasioned by ceremonies dedicated to Laozi, with sacrifices held in the district of Hu 苦 [sic], the purported birthplace of the sage, in February 165 and January 166.[602] Unfortunately, other than the reported dates and location, we know very little about how these sacrifices were performed. In contrast, we are provided more information about a sacrifice in Luoyang, at Zhuolong Palace (Zhuolong gong 濯龍宮), in September 166. It was performed personally by Emperor Huan after encountering Laozi in a dream, a highly portentous event. According to imperial historian Fan Ye, the emperor prepared the ritual space by setting out "a patterned wool rug as the altar and adorning it using pure gold vessels with decorated rims; [he also] placed a seat under an elaborate canopy and used music from the *jiao*-sacrifice to Heaven."[603] The *Book of Later Han* is inconsistent with some of its details, once describing the sacrifice as performed to both Laozi and the Buddha (*futu* 浮圖) and elsewhere to Huang-Lao.[604] Regardless of the purported recipients, details about the altar arrangement and offerings corroborate.

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[602] The sacrifices are noted in the annals section, see HHS:7.313 and HHS:7.316, respectively.
[603] 文罽為壇。飾淳金釦器。設華蓋之坐。用郊天樂也。HHS:8.3188.
[604] HHS:7.320 and HHS:7.317, respectively. The account in the *Records of the Han Compiled at Dongguan* claims the sacrifice was to Huang-Lao, see DGHJ:3.3.125. Conversely, Xiang Kai's memorial attests to a sacrifice to the Buddha and Huang-Lao, see de Crespigny, *Portents of Protest*, 29; cf. Zürcher, *Buddhist Conquest*, 37 (who mistaken states the memorial cited the Buddha and Laozi). For further discussion on this issue, see Seidel, "Emperor and His Councillor," 152, 162–63; de Crespigny, *Portents of Protest* , 82–83n.70.

Most notable in this description is the empty seat (*zuo* 坐) positioned under an "elaborate canopy" (*huagai* 華蓋), the latter of which is also the precise term used in Lokakṣema's offertory list, likely rendering *chatra*, "parasol." This empty space clearly suggests the primary locus of divine presence. Since there is at least one report claiming Emperor Huan's sacrificial offering included the Buddha, might we presume this altar exhibits the influence of "aniconic" Buddhist worship, such as portrayed in early Indian Buddhist art? While contact with India is undisputed during the reign of Emperor Huan, as we have evidence for Indian tribute delegations arriving in 159 and the winter of 161, we need not assume the Chinese emperor was necessarily engaged in hybrid cultural forms of worship.[605] Wu Hung has demonstrated the empty seat motif derived from older Chinese funerary practices where seats were left as *wei* 位, the "position" for the invisible souls of the tomb occupants. Furthermore, we also find precedent for the ornamental canopy (*huagai*) in the early first century re-construction of a chariot believed to have been driven by the Yellow Emperor. Taken together, these motifs were incorporated as designs on Eastern Han mirrors to designate the position of an otherwise invisible Laozi.[606] As a consequence, we have strong

[605] For the Indian delegations, see HHS:7.306 and HHS:7.309, respectively. There is no record of what items were presented. Based on a later comment in the *Book of Later Han* we know the envoys arrived *via* the sea route. It reports that tributes had ceased due to fighting in the Western Regions and that the Indian delegation came from beyond Rinan, the coastal Chinese commandry in present-day central Vietnam, see HHS:88.2921; also see comments in Yu, *China and the Ancient Mediterranean*, 77n.56; Wang, "Nanhai Trade," 28; Wolters, *Indonesian Commerce*, 42. In addition, official histories declare an official envoy arrived from Roman Empire in 166, but some modern scholars believe this was actually a private merchant, see Yü, *Trade*, 159–60, see also Wang, "Nanhai Trade," 28–29; Lin, *Songdai xiangyao*, 22–23; and Taishan Yu, *A History of the Relationship Between the Western & Eastern Han, Wei, Jin, Northern & Southern Dynasties and the Western Regions*, Sino-Platonic Papers Number 131 (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania, 2004), 182–83.

[606] See the discussion in Wu Hung, "A Deity Without Form: The Earliest Representation of Laozi and the Concept of Wei in Chinese Ritual Art," *Orientations* 34, no. 4 (2002): 38–45.

indigenous Chinese precedents for the main visual elements of the altar at Zhuolong Palace.[607]

Unlike the court of Liu Ying who "revered the humane sacrifices of the Buddha," there is no unequivocal evidence of a Buddhist presence at the imperial court during the reign of Emperor Huan.[608] The emperor's use of traditional liturgical music, previously reserved for the august suburban sacrifice to Heaven, not only highlights the importance of the affair, but also its connection to older state practices. Moreover, as reported in the *Records of the Han Compiled at Dongguan* (*Dongguan hanji* 東觀漢記), the use of three sacrificial animal offerings (*san sheng* 三牲) strongly suggests Emperor Huan's sacrifice was modeled in the lineage of traditional Chinese state ritual.[609] Ultimately, the visible element of Emperor Huan's sacrifice to an invisible Laozi share certain affinities with, but not necessarily the influence of, Indian Buddhist forms of worship. In the end, it is possible to view these state activities as the natural outgrowth in the belief in a deified cosmic Laozi of which the earliest known evidence is also traced to an inscription erected at the request of Emperor Huan in 165, a year prior to the Zhuolong Palace sacrifices.[610]

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[607] Traditional sacrificial altars or platforms (*tan* 壇) were leveled mounds of dirt (*shan* 墠) or shallow pits (*kan* 坎) where offerings were deposited for the spirits, see Sterckx, *Food, Sacrifice, Sagehood*, 115–18. The woolen carpets (*ji* 罽) used by Emperor Huan as an altar are unexpected and constituted well-known luxury goods imported from the Western Regions, see Hulsewé, *China in Central Asia*, 106n.218. It seems doubtful this should necessarily indicate Buddhist influence.

[608] More specifically, while there was a clear Buddhist presence in Luoyang, there is no evidence they had access to the emperor or the imperial court, see Zürcher, *Buddhist Conquest*, 36.

[609] DGHJ:3.3.125. The three sacrificial offerings consist of a bovine, ovine, and porcine animal. Xiang Kai's memorial corroborates the emperor's use of animal flesh, see de Crespigny, *Portents of Protest*, 29; Zürcher, *Buddhist Conquest*, 37.

[610] The *Inscription to Laozi* (*Laozi ming* 老子銘) is precisely dated to September 24, 165 and was installed in the district of Hu at the temple erected to Laozi. For a translation and analysis of the inscription, see Seidel, "Emperor and His Councillor," 125–65. Zürcher characterizes Emperor Huan's "pseudo-Buddhist ceremony" as a "Basically Daoist ritual tinged with some Buddhist elements," Zürcher, *Buddhist Conquest*, 36. The only clear "Buddhist element" would be the inclusion of the Buddha as a recipient of the offerings, but it should be remembered that the Buddha is not cited as part of the proceedings in all documents pertaining to this event.

When turning to the domain of the nose, outside of the triple flesh offerings, we find Emperor Huan's sacrifice lacking in additional olfactory dimensions. Specifically, there is no indication of burning incense or the use of other aromatics. This absence could be explained in two ways. On one hand, if we take an approach of higher criticism, we might contend the ritual act of burning incense was so commonplace that it was not deemed worthy of note. I find this position largely untenable. As I have shown, burning incense was not described in early ritual sources, nor was it discussed in the numerous debates over ritual reforms during the late Western Han, nor was it directly cited by Zheng Xuan in his influential Eastern Han commentaries on the Three Ritual Canons.[611] If burning incense was an ancient and indispensable element of state sacrifice, one should expect to see its use documented in such sources. The best evidence suggests that incense burning remained largely domestic and related to garment fumigation, pest control, and disease mitigation – not sacrifice.

This leaves a second option, namely that incense burning was not yet part of state protocol at the end of the second century. This makes sense if we take into consideration the underlying concern for sacrificial matters: feeding the spirits. Displaying, presenting, and burning non-edible aromatics does not address this motivation for divine nourishment. A different undergirding logic presents itself in Buddhist literature, whereby the Buddha's presence was equated with fragrant smells. As we will see later in this chapter, the earliest clear evidence we have for the incorporation of incense into formal Chinese state sacrifice

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Moreover, Anna Seidel cites the memorial of Xiang Kai as proof that the Buddha was merely envisioned as Laozi who had traveled to India to convert the "barbarians," see Seidel, "Emperor and His Councillor," 162.

[611] For a close examination of the reforms of the Suburban Sacrifice during the Western Han, see Tian Tian, "The Suburban Sacrifice Reforms and the Evolution of the Imperial Sacrifice," in *Chang'an 26 BCE: An Augustan Age in China*, ed. Michael Nylan, Griet Vankeerberghen, and Michael Loewe (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2015), 263–92. For an examination of state rituals during the Six Dynasties, see Shuguo Chen, "State Religious Ceremonies," in *Early Chinese Religion, Part Two: The Period of Division (220–589 AD)*, ed. John Lagerwey and Pengzhi Lü, vol. 1 (Leiden: Brill, 2010), 53–142.

comes much later in the medieval period, in the early sixth century in the south, where it is implemented as part of a larger ritual reform program to end animal sacrifice.

The sacrifice of Emperor Huan to Laozi, or to the variant combinations of Laozi, the Buddha, and the Yellow Emperor, at Zhuolong Palace provides a clear snapshot of imperial court practice at the end of the Han. While the target of the offerings is novel, the use of traditional liturgical music and triple flesh offerings demonstrate that state sacrifice was still largely framed by long-standing concerns of attracting and nourishing divine spirits. While the latter was accomplished through the aroma of animal flesh, Buddhists preferred plant-based aromatics, the topic to which we now turn.

4. Buddhist Olfactory Practices: Overview

If we return to the offertory list in the *Aṣṭasāhasrikā* we find various scented materials constitute three of the seven total suggested offerings: scented powders, fragrant pastes, and mixed aromatics. We might consider flowers as a fourth kind of olfactory offering since they were revered by Buddhists both for their vibrant colors and rich fragrances, but I will not be discussing them at length here.[612] It is worth noting at the outset that "burned aromatics" or incense are not explicitly noted in this particular offertory list, an important point we will return to later in this chapter.

Indologist Gregory Schopen has recently demonstrated the use of perfumes and other aromatics were integral to early Indian Buddhist practice, claiming that in an undeniable

[612] As noted by Kumārajīva, "Flowers have two ritual purposes, color and scent," 華有二事。有色有香。 T1509:129b5–6.

sense, "the Buddha was identified as fragrance."[613] In the Indic cultural sphere, rendering and regularly renewing the fragrant scent of a ritual space, such as that of a *stūpa*, marked the invisible and lingering presence of the Buddha. This "scent of divinity" is also found through stories of the Buddha's personal residence, the perfumed chamber, or *ghandakuṭī*. As John Strong has demonstrated, this was not a permanent structure in Buddhist narratives as much as a "cultic abode" of the Buddha, constructed with flowers, sandalwood, or other scented materials. Moreover, *ghandakuṭīs* were constructed even when the Buddha was not physically present, and thus they functioned "to make a space in which the absent Buddha can be present in the here and now."[614] During a period in which the anthropomorphic likeness of the Buddha was not made the center of worship, images could not represent his presence during *pūjā* rites, but fragrant scents could. Consequently, when stories formed around the creation of first image of the Buddha, it is not surprising the raw material used was also highly aromatic. The principal story of this event that spread throughout East Asia involved a sandalwood image crafted at the behest of King Udayana during the Buddha's lifetime.[615] As James McHugh has shown, the creation of large sandalwood artifacts seems to have been conceived as a particularly Buddhist activity in South Asia, whereby sandalwood

[613] Schopen, "Fragrance of the Buddha," 24.
[614]John S. Strong, "Gandhakuṭī: The Perfumed Chamber of the Buddha," *History of Religions* 16, no. 4 (1977): 395; see also Joel Tatelman, *The Glorious Deeds of Pūrṇa: A Translation and Study of the Pūrṇāvadāna* (New York: Routledge, 2000): 115. Judging by inscriptions, references to the perfumed chamber (*ghandakuṭī*) at Bharhut suggest the use of scented offerings by at least the second century BCE. References to the *ghandakuṭī* become more frequent through the third century CE and appear in textual sources starting from the fifth century, see Schopen, "Fragrance of the Buddha," 22.
[615] Donald Swearer, *Becoming the Buddha: The Ritual of Image Consecration in Thailand* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2004), 14–24; Alexander Coburn Soper, "Literary Evidence for Early Buddhist Art in China," *Artibus Asiae Supplementum* 19 (1959), 259–265.

items were "in some way reserved for the Buddha – either as counterparts to the Buddha or as structures that are intended for the Buddha."[616]

In summation, the Buddha's presence in the world, both in life and after his death, is marked by an olfactory display. This stands in contrast to most ancient and early medieval Chinese conceptions of divinity, where spirits and smell were not correlated though a perceived olfactory sympathy, but were linked instead through their consumption of food aromas. The shamanic adornment of plant charms and scenting sachets might appear to have some affinity since it too evoked the presence of the divine, but this was not based in precisely the same logic. The perfume of plants affirmed the bodily cleanliness of the shaman while at the same time symbolically reflected her virtue and ritual purity, thus attracting the spirits. It is true that pleasant smell and virtue are also clearly correlated in Buddhist scriptures, but such Buddhist conceptions went even further to claim that the Buddha's body and breath were redolent of fragrance, aspects never attributed to Chinese spirits in the early medieval period.

A simple examination of the *Aṣṭasāhasrikā* offertory list clearly points to the importance of the olfactory dimension in Buddhist worship. Too frequently, however, scholars have not paid attention to the materiality of the aromatics and the requisite demands of how they were to be employed as part of ritual worship. A closer look will reveal that Buddhist scriptures describe specific olfactory practices, or the ways in which scented materials were selected, prepared, applied, and dispersed. Historically, these practices would expand upon or modify centuries-old Chinese methods of state and religious ritual as well

[616] McHugh, *Sandalwood and Carrion*, 215. The important of the *ghandakuṭī* and the ritual acts of scenting the air during Buddhist worship are made clear in the *Pūrṇāvadāna* and *Sumāgadhāvadāna*, for a study and translation of the former, see Tatelman, *Glorious Deeds*; for comments on the latter, see Tatelman, 29–30.

ancient techniques of perfuming the body. These would be some of the most noticeable forces shifting the medieval Chinese olfactory imagination. It should be noted in the forgoing discussion that our historical sources, especially in the early medieval period, are spotty in their coverage and sparse in description of our main areas of concern – the material nature of early Buddhist olfactory practice. Thus, I draw from a broader historical range to help fill in gaps of knowledge, with the hopes that future scholarship can provide more finely grained analysis.

5. Buddhist Olfactory Practices: Scented Powders

Arguably the most distinctive olfactory practice was the creation of powerfully scented powders and pastes, achieved by crushing raw materials, such as bits of aromatic wood or bark, flowers, leaves, or resins. Chinese Buddhist scriptures would often speak of dry, finely rendered aromatics as "pulverized aromatics" (*daoxiang* 搗/擣香) or in the phrasing that became more common by the fifth century, "powdered aromatics" (*moxiang* 末香), both translating an underlying India *cūrṇa*, "powder." The older translation, found first in the *Aṣṭasāhasrikā* and used by Buddhist clerics through the end of the fourth century (Kumārajīva helped usher in the use of "powdered aromatics"), gave a straightforward indication of how the aromatic was processed through crushing raw materials into fine particles. An early ninth century Buddhist lexicon completed by Huilin 慧琳 (737–820) remarked that this older wording of "pulverized aromatics" was artless (*pu* 朴), possibly because it revealed the banal preparation process without articulating the final, elegant

scented product.[617] Such implied preparation instructions might have been helpful to early medieval Chinese readers who were likely unfamiliar with such a diversity of scented substances and specificity in their preparation. For example, when surveying aromatic remnants found in ancient Chinese tombs, native raw materials were not pulverized into a fine powder. Roots, stems, leaves, and seeds were more typically placed directly (or perhaps, after being lightly torn or crushed) into sachets, pouches, pillows or other containers. The use of a mortar and pestle to "smith" (*ye* 冶) or triturate ingredients is well attested in early Han medical documents, yet as far as I am aware, rendering an aromatic material into a fine powder solely for olfactory purposes (i.e., not ingested ingested) is not found in pre-Buddhist Chinese sources or clearly attested in the surviving material record.[618] This does not outright negate the possibility that early Chinese perfumers used scented powders, but simply points to the disproportionate salience of powders in Buddhist sources.[619]

A more important distinction was how these powders were used in ritual: Buddhist texts are consistent in reporting they were not burned. According to the *Treatise on Great Wisdom*, scented powders were intended to be scattered or dispersed (*san* 散), along with

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[617] The *Pronunciation and Meaning of the Complete Canon* (*Yiqie jing yinyi* 一切經音義) notes, "In antiquity, people spoke artlessly [or plainly], therefore they spoke of 'pulverized aromatics,'" 古人 語朴。故云擣香也。T2128:375b21. Elsewhere, Huilin provides a very specific terminology for aromatic powders depending on how they are processed or applied. Scented powders that are applied directly by the hands are termed *mo* 抹; this includes "scented pastes" (*tuxiang* 塗香) because they are applied manually. If the product is used like paint, the substance is *mo* 澡. If the aromatic material is crushed into coarser fragments, it is termed *mo* 粖. Lastly, if it is made into a fine powder, one is to use *mo* 𣰰, a rather rare variant for *mo* 末; see T2128:489b4–5. Judging by a digital search of the Taishō canon, these nuanced distinctions were rarely used.

[618] "Smithing," the term used by Donald Harper, appears regularly in the medical materials recovered from Mawangdui, see Harper, *Early*,107–108. In the early medieval period various powders were ingested as medicinal therapies or to bestow special powers, but these were rarely made with strongly scented ingredients nor was aroma portrayed as a salient property to the finished product. See for example the discussion of Numinous Flying Powder (*lingfei san* 靈飛散) in Campany, *Heaven and Earth*, 300n.37.

[619] One could argue that processing practices were directly related to regionally available materials. Thus, materials like sandalwood, widely available in India, could easily be cut or filed into powder. Dried rhizomes and leaves, commonly used as perfumes in ancient China, were less amenable to being crushed into fine particulates that still retained their pungency.

flowers, in order to render sweet the air around the ritual space or sacred image.[620] In addition to being scattered over floors and on walls, Buddhist texts also speak of personal scenting practices, largely forbidden by monastic code but common among the people of India, where powders were used to perfume the body and clothing.[621] The exotic nature of this olfactory practice was noted by Huilin who, writing nearly seven hundred years after the introduction of Buddhism, still found it worthy to note its foreign origins:

> [After] mixing numerous scents and fine aromatics and crushing them into a powder, this [powder] is then scattered around the ritual area or applied to the body, hands, face, and clothing. This is called powdered aromatics. [Powdered aromatics] are often used in foreign countries. Our country, at this time, has imitations [of these powders]; [Buddhist] scriptures do not have a powder made from rice.[622]
> 合和數味名香。擣以爲末。散道場中。塗身手面。及散衣中。名爲末香。外國多用。此國時有效者。經文從米作粖非也。

The end of this passage is difficult to interpret, but I believe Huilin is contrasting the Indic practice of perfuming with the native Chinese custom of making powder out of grains, such as rice, and using it as a type of cosmetic concealer.[623] While Buddhist scriptures described a world filled with pungent aromatics used to perfume the body, powders made from rice

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[620] T1509:129b16.
[621] E.g., T1509:279a04. Also see comments below.
[622] T2128:558b14–15.
[623] Cosmetic face powder or face cream (*hufen* 胡粉, *shuifen* 水粉, *zhifen* 脂粉, *fenze* 粉澤 etc.) is not typically described in classical Chinese texts as being fragrant, only being "white" in contrast to eyebrow paste (*dai* 黛) that was "black," see for example the descriptions in the *Master of Huainan*, Major et al., *Huainanzi*, 774 and 787. Needham argues this white face powder was lead carbonate, despite its apparent toxicity, see Joseph Needham, Ping-Yü Ho, and Gwei-Djen Lu, *Science and Civilisation in China, Vol. 5, Chemistry and Chemical Technology, Part III: Spagyrical Discovery and Invention: Historical Survey, from Cinnabar Elixirs to Synthetic Insulin* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976), 16–17 and Liu, *Songdai Xiangpu*, 35 (*hufen* was also used for plastering walls). Scented cosmetics, mainly for the hair, were designated as "scented lotions" (*fangze* 芳澤), a term derived from the *Songs of Chu*, see CC:10.222, trans. Sukhu, *Songs of Chu*, 184 ("fragrant pomade"). These often tended to be decocted lotions where a plant's essential oils were extracted and suspended in a viscous substrate like water. There is also evidence in the Eastern Han dictionary *Explaining Terms* (*Shi ming* 釋名) for a "fragrant lotion" (*xiangze* 香澤) to moisturize the hair, see Liu, *Songdai Xiangpu*, 55, 328. The earliest description of scented cosmetic powder I have found comes in the *Essential Techniques for All People* (*Qimin yaoshu* 齊民要術) of the mid-sixth century. It prescribes only the use of crushed cloves, see QMYS:52.221.1–2.

certainly did not offer the same olfactory appeal. This is apparent when we look to the raw materials most often promoted for use as scented powders in early medieval Buddhist texts: sandalwood and aloeswood, two highly prized aromatics that would come to play an important commercial role in the growing maritime network of the Song.[624]

While Huilin impresses upon us that rice-derived "imitations" of scented powders were used in China by the early ninth century, we have evidence showing the act of scattering crushed aromatics, outside of the confines of religious Buddhist worship, was adopted in limited contexts by at least the late third century. In his *Records of Local Customs* (*Fengtu ji* 風土記), covering the regional practices of the Yangxian 陽羨 district of the state of Eastern Wu 吳 (modern Yixing 宜興 of Jiangsu), general Zhou Chu 周處 (238–297) records the preparations for the "double sevens" festival held on the seventh day of the seventh month. In addition to sweeping out the courtyards and setting out displays of wine, dried meats, and seasonal fruits, celebrants were to "scatter aromatic powder atop the bamboo mats" that were used for the offerings and as seating.[625] It is possible this was in imitation of contemporary Buddhist practice. While the aromatic powder remains unidentified, the reference would likely call to mind one of the many foreign imports moving through the thriving Southeast Asian trade network of the third century in which the state of

[624] Pulverized sandalwood and aloeswood are first noted by Lokakṣema, see T224:474c29. For the significance of aromatics trade, including sandalwood and aloeswood after the tenth century, see Sen, *Buddhism, Diplomacy, Trade*,, esp. 192–93.

[625] 散香粉于筵上。TPYL:1.31. The "Double Seventh" was a yearly festival, emerging only after the fall of the Han, held to celebrate the meeting of two constellations, the Weaving Maid, and the Cowherd, see comments in Derk Bodde, *Festivals in Classical China: New Year and Other Annual Observances during the Han Dynasty, 206 BC–AD 220* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1975), 312–313, 393–395. For more on this work, see Zheng et al., *Dictionary of the Ben Cao Gang Mu*, 133.

Eastern Wu was a major economic beneficiary.[626] For comparison, one contemporary record, the *Treatise on Strange Things of the Southern Regions*, describes the aromatic goods passing through the far southern ports of modern Guangdong and Guangxi, listing such items as Arabian frankincense, Kamśmīri saffron, Indian costus, Vietnamese aloeswood, Malayan patchouli, and Moluccan cloves.[627] Among these commercial goods, aloeswood, saffron, costus, and frankincense were most frequently noted in Buddhist scriptures translated into Chinese.

During this same period, the provincial governor of Jingzhou 荊州 (present-day Hubei and Hunan), Shi Chong 石崇 (249–300), was amassing a vast personal fortune and fantastic stories started to circulate over his conspicuous consumption of luxury goods. On one occasion, Shi Chong is reputed to have scattered bits of aloeswood as fine as dust over the top of an ivory bed in order to pose a test to his graceful court dancers. He rewarded those who could tread across the powder without leaving footprints with strings of pearls; he restricted the food of those who failed.[628] The story of Shi Chong is preserved in the *Uncollected Records*, a biographical collection of "tales of the strange" compiled in the fourth century. Even if we cannot lend credence to the above story as historical fact, it arguably reflects contemporary beliefs about the availability of rare aromatics and scented powders appearing in Chinese markets. It is important to emphasize that in addition to a new material reality of readily available goods, new stories about their origins and use were also

[626] Wang Gungwu has argued the Eastern Wu established highly profitable trade with Funan and that these maritime networks remained strong even with the overthrow by the Jin in 280, see Wang, "Nanhai Trade," 31–45.
[627] Liu, *Songdai Xiangpu*, 32; one can also consult Table 2.2 and relevant footnotes to the individual aromatics. I have provided the what I believe to be the place of origin of these commercial goods (or a close approximate), as many medieval authors confused regional entrepôts for origin points.
[628] SYJ:9.215. Elsewhere in the same collection, a similar story is attributed to King Zhao (r. 311–279 BCE) of the ancient state of Yan, see HC#45a.

circulating. In other words, the *significance* of these scented powders were also being negotiated, here treated as exotic luxuries symbolic of wealth and prestige.

Another tale speaks of Shi Hu 石虎 (295–345), the despotic ruler of the Zhao 趙 (319–351). In order to address a vexing drought, he had various assortments of gems and "strange" aromatics crushed into a fine powder called "fragrant dust" (*fang chen* 芳塵) and had them scattered from atop a tower.[629] We are not explained the rationale behind this act but presumably scattering fine particles from a great height was conceived by the author as a type of sympathetic magic to generate rain. As we have seen in an earlier chapter, the association of crushed gems with aromatics is likely traced to the influx of highly valued semi-translucent tree resins and their combined use as Buddhist offerings.[630]

In the case of Shi Chong and Shi Hu, the introduction of these exotic materials inspired novel uses beyond normative Buddhist worship. New uses also find expression in the writings of the alchemist and herbalist, Ge Hong 葛洪 (283–343), who incorporates scented powders (*xiangmo* 香末) into an apotropaic wash used to avert the dangers of snakes and other aquatic creatures while crossing rivers.[631] Among the many recipes and potions recorded in the *Inner Chapters of the Master who Embraces Simplicity* (*Baopuzi neipian* 枹

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[629] SYJ:9.198. The "sticky rain tower" (*nianyu tai* 粘雨臺) was so named for a large copper basin shaped like a dragon on the roof that would sprout forth a rain of alcohol on the ground below.

[630] This association is further supported by passages such as in Lokakṣema's *Aṣṭasāhasrikā* which mentions offerings of pulverized scented woods with crushed gems, see T224:474c29–a01.

[631] DZ1185:17.12b; also see translation in James Ware, *Alchemy, Medicine and Religion in the China of A.D. 320: The Nei Pien of Ko Hung* (New York: Dover, 1966), 294. The therapeutic use of aromatic powders, several of which were not native to China, is attested in numerous recipes found in Ge Hong's *Emergency Prescriptions to Keep up your Sleeve* (*Zhouhou beiji fang* 肘後備急方; DZ1306). In most cases, they were meant to be consumed (*fu* 服) or sometimes applied (*fu* 敷) as an ointment (e.g., DZ1306:5.20b), but only very rarely were aromatics meant to be burned or employed as a type of aromatherapy (e.g., DZ1309:6.12a; where sesame seeds are stuffed into a pillow to drive out earwigs in the ear). The therapeutic ingestion of aromatics has a long history in China and seems to have been the main method of "activating" their therapeutic properties, see brief discussion concerning the use of aromatics in the medical manuscripts recovered from Mawangdui in Harper, *Early*, 103.

朴子內篇; DZ1185), this is the only clear use of (non-incinerated) scented powders, in which this case they are triturated into a solution of water, egg, and rice powder and then applied to the body. In the case of this recipe, however, the efficacy of the wash does not seem to primarily rely on its ability to perfume the user, but in is use as a medicinal ointment or salve that confers demonifugic protection.

The act of rendering raw aromatic materials into a fine powder for scattering does not find expression in pre-Buddhist Chinese sources. Early medieval Chinese may have used powders as personal cosmetic concealers or medical ointments, but the importance of smell appears to have been attenuated in these cases, although further research may add deeper complexity to this phenomenon. By the end of the third century, stories start circulating about the use of scattered powders by powerful Chinese elite, exhibiting not only the influence of Buddhist practices, but also access to supra-regional aromatics along with the social cache that possession of luxury exotica confers.

6. Buddhist Olfactory Practices: Fragrant Pastes and Clays

In addition to powders, Buddhist scriptures also emphasized the use of scented pastes (S. *vilepana*), often translated as "moist aromatics" (*zexiang* 澤香) or "smeared aromatics" (*tuxiang* 塗香). These are similar to powders but often have a higher moisture content or are suspended in a water or oil substrate, and thus may range from a coarse paste to more viscous unguent or salve. As described by McHugh, in India, scented pastes are closer to our idea of perfumes or deodorants that are applied directly to body to remove the stench of sweat.[632]

[632] McHugh, *Sandalwood and Carrion*, 136–37.

These ideas concerning the personal use of fragrant pastes were also communicated to medieval Chinese audiences through Buddhist texts. The commentary in the *Treatise on Great Wisdom* explains that since India has a very hot climate one needed to apply scented pastes to cover foul body odors. Due to these sultry environmental factors, the commentary continues, a layperson was justified in making offerings of perfumes to the monastic community and to all buddhas during worship. It finishes, possibly in the voice of Kumārajīva, by saying sentient beings (monastics) in "our country" currently receive all kinds of scented powders and unguents.

The imaginary interlocutor immediately responds by noting that Buddhist precepts forbid even novice monastics from wearing perfumes and openly questions why these scented offerings are allowed. The commentator responds that bodhisattvas treat their bodies as precious and that they should follow the appropriate times when using perfumes.[633] Other sources tell us that one such appropriate time was bathing, an activity that was highly regulated by monastic protocols.[634] Otherwise, if prescribed by a physician, a monk could use perfumed pastes as long as he remained secluded within his room, separated from communal activities until he was healed and free of a fragrance that might cause undue suspicion among the monastic community.[635] In this vein, substances like sandalwood paste, known for its

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[633] T1509:710c28–a04. The commentary also says one could apply the pastes on the ground or walls, or where one walks or sits (see also T1428:958b23–26, cf. Schopen, "Fragrance of the Buddha," 18, who notes one occasion where a layperson confuses a perfumed monk's cell with the Gandhakuṭi, thus causing the Buddha to forbid the practice). The use of scented paste, sandalwood paste in particular, as bodily perfume is also noted at T1509:279a13–14.

[634] See Ann Heirman and Mathieu Torck, *A Pure Mind in a Clean Body: Bodily Care in the Buddhist Monasteries of Ancient India and China* (Gent: Academia Press, 2012), 27–51, esp. 31–32, 52n.7. Their discussion of "fragrant mud" almost certainly refers to prepared aromatic pastes, not simply soil or sand. For example, the Indian recipe for *yakṣa* mud contains sandalwood, aloeswood, and camphor, among several other ingredients, see McHugh, *Sandalwood and Carrion*, 137. Regardless, it should be acknowledged that earth (*mṛd*) was considered a cleansing substance in India, see Schopen, "Fragrance of the Buddha," 20.

[635] The guidelines for an olfactory quarantine are noted in the *Mūlasarvāstivāda-vinaya-kārikā*, see T1459:647a24–25. Also see comments in Schopen, "Fragrance of the Buddha," 18n.11.

cooling properties, were common remedies for fevers.[636] Incidentally, a similar "olfactory quarantine" is required should illness have a person be prescribed to eat a pungent smelling alliums, like onion or garlic. As reported by the pilgrim Yijing 義淨 (635–713), a monk would also not be allowed to engage in basic acts of reverence, such as circumambulating a *stūpa* or making offerings to the Buddha.[637] In this situation, the foul-smelling food would render the monk ineligible to enter into locations where it would conflict with the sweet-smelling presence of the Buddha. The reflects a belief in taboos of foul odor, an issue we will revisit in the next chapter.

Elsewhere, the *Treatise on Great Wisdom* explains that beyond using scented pastes on the body or clothing, it was also used to smear (*tu* 塗) on the ground or walls.[638] In the context of early Buddhist worship in India, Schopen has shown this included regularly applying perfumes and scented pasts to *stūpas* in order to keep them fragrant. One especially notable practice involved placing paste on one's hand and impressing a perfumed palm print on the exterior *stūpa* wall. Depictions of this devotional practice can be found on the carved panels of the third century BCE *stūpa* at Bharhut.[639] During his pilgrimage to India in the seventh century, Xuanzang 玄奘 (602–664) also spoke of other devotional activities centered

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[636] McHugh notes that sandalwood was known for its cooling properties, McHugh, *Sandalwood and Carrion*, 137 (see also the thirteenth century *Dainichi kyō shoen'ō shō* 大日經疏演奧鈔; T2216:254a17–20). For its use to treat fever, see Schafer, *Golden Peaches*, 136–37; McHugh, *Sandalwood and Carrion*, 208–09.

[637] T2125:225a13–18, trans. Rongxi Li, *Buddhist Monastic Traditions of Southern Asia: A Record of the Inner Law Sent Home from the South Seas by Śramaṇa Yijing* (Berkeley: Numata Center for Buddhist Translation and Research, 2000), 127. For comments on not "offending" a *stūpa* with bad smells, see Schopen, "Fragrance of the Buddha," 20–21.

[638] T1509:279a0–05.

[639] Schopen, "Fragrance of the Buddha," 18–19. Making palm prints (*shouxiang* 手像) and Dharma Wheel symbols (*lun xiang* 輪像) from scented pastes is noted in the *Four Part Vinaya* (*Sifen lü* 四分律), see T1428.957a17. The *vinaya* expert Daoxuan 道宣 (596–667) comments that if one is in possession of scented clay one should make palm prints and Dharma Wheel symbols (*shoulun xiang* 手輪像); if there is excess clay one should coat the ground with it, see T1804.134a15–16 (cf. T2248:786c09–12, where *shoulun xaing* is interpreted as the thousand-spoke wheel as found on the hands and feet of the Buddha).

around smell, such as using scented clay to fashion miniature *stūpas* onto which scriptural passages were stamped.[640] Yijing noted a similar practice of using molds to make small clay buddhas.[641]

Xuanzang also noted a more obscure practice using scented clay (made by mixing scented powder with clay and binding it in white silk) to make an impression of the Buddha's *uṣṇīṣa* bone relic which then could be used to prognosticate one's fortune. According to Xuanzang's biography, the clay impression he fashioned resembled a Bodhi tree, causing the attending brahmin to marvel at the rarity of such an imprint. Xuanzang's two *śrāmaṇa* guides received impressions resembling the image of the Buddha and a lotus flower, images that received no special recognition from the brahmin.[642] In all of these cases, pious Buddhists and pilgrims maintained a devotional relationship to the Buddha through the use of smell. The scented pastes and clays reflected an intimate connection to the Buddha and his odorous body though his relics or objects in contact with his relics.

Relevant to these objects is a story retold by Xuanzang pertaining to the creation of the first posthumous image of the Buddha at Bodhgaya, the site of the Bodhi tree under which the Buddha was Awakened. According to Xuanzang's retelling, monks had long looked for a skilled artisan to create the statue until a brahmin approached to take the offer.

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[640] T2087:920a21–b03; see translation in Rongxi Li, *The Great Tang Dynasty Record of the Western Regions* (Berkeley: Numata Center for Buddhist Translation and Research, 1996), 35–36. Paul Copp discusses the importance of stamped incantations on such miniature *stūpas* and on clay seals, see Copp, *Body Incantatory*, esp. pp. 34–35.

[641] T2125:226c15–27; see translation and discussion in Daniel Boucher, "The Sūtra on the Merit of Bathing the Buddha," in *Buddhism in Practice*, ed. Donald S. Lopez (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996), 60–61. While Boucher renders the activity of making miniatures as taking a "rubbing" (*ta mo* 拓摸), elsewhere Yijing describes the practice as "impressing into a mold" (*tuo mo* 拓模; T2066:8c03), which I believe better describes the material process.

[642] T2087:879a28–b03 and T2053.226b26–c04; see translations in Li, *Tang Dynasty Record*, 58 and Rongxi Li, *A Biography of the Tripiṭaka Master of the Great Ci'en Monastery of the Great Tang Dynasty* (Berkeley: Numata Center for Buddhist Translation and Research, 1995), 54, respectively.

When asked what materials he would need to accomplish his work, he replied, "scented clay, nothing more" (*xiangni er* 香泥耳). After molding the image in the famed *bhūmisparśa* repose the sculptor revealed himself to be Maitreya Bodhisattva.[643] This story is thus connected to the famed Udayana sandalwood image of the Buddha through the fragrance imbued into the materials that formed the statue. In both cases, the presence of an otherwise missing Buddha (he was in Trāyastriṃśa Heaven when the Udayana image was made), is made manifest through his image accompanied by a fragrant smell.

When turning to the impact of these olfactory practices in China there seems to have been a sizable adoption in the use of pastes and clays, but the importance of the olfactory dimension is difficult to ascertain. One area of cultural influence was the Chinese creation of small clay pagodas and miniature tablets bearing Buddhist images. The *Record of Monasteries and Pagodas* (*Sita ji* 寺塔記; T2093), compiled by Duan Chengshi 段成式 (?–863) in the summer of 843, notes that while he was touring the Temple of Duke Zhao Jing (Zhaojing gong si 趙景公寺) in the eastern part of Chang'an, small clay pagodas (*xiaoni ta* 小泥塔) were made to house a miraculous proliferation of relics that appeared on temple grounds.[644] This specific use directly corresponds to numerous clay specimens that have been recovered from Buddhist monastery complexes in eastern India, each molded to hold a relic.[645] Thus the small pagodas, more likely in the rounded shape of Indic *stūpas*, were

[643] T2087:916a16–b01; Li, *Tang Dynasty Record*, 218–219. This particular Bodhgaya Buddha image was replicated many times over in China, see Hsueh-man Shen, *Authentic Replicas: Buddhist Art in Medieval China* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2019), 120–21.
[644] T2093:1023a27–b02. The temple, founded during the Sui in 583, was named after the father of one of the consorts of the first Sui emperor, see Alexander C. Soper, "A Vacation Glimpse of the T'ang Temples of Ch'ang-an: The Ssu-t'a Chi by Tuan Ch'eng-Shih," *Artibus Asiae* 23, no. 1 (1960): 23–24.
[645] Schopen has shown that small clay *stūpas* were produced on a very large scale to house small relics, Gregory Schopen, "Stūpa and Tīrtha: Tibetan Mortuary Practices and an Unrecognized Form of Burial Ad Sanctos at Buddhist Sites in India," in *The Buddhist Forum Volume III*, ed. Tadeusz Skorupski and Pagel Ulrich (Berkeley: The Institute of Buddhist Studies, (1994), 273–93.

probably only an inch or two in height. Duan Chengshi's account does not describe the use of an aromatic clay mixture, but this practice clearly mirrors Indian antecedents and can be presumed as a continuance of material forms of Indian piety.

Furthermore, instructions for making small clay pagodas can be located in the *Scripture on the Great Dhāraṇī of Stainless Pure Light* (*Wugou jingguang da tuoluoni jing* 無垢淨光大陀羅尼經; T1024), translated by Fazang 法藏 (643–712) and *Mitraśānta (d.u.) before 704.[646] The text extols the benefits that come through installing a *dhāraṇī* within miniature pagodas, leading many scholars to cite this as an important motivation behind the invention of printing in China. While the scripture only cites the use of mud or clay as appropriate materials, the olfactory valence is reasserted when the method for the installing Disk *Dhāraṇī* (*xianglun tuoluoni* 相輪陀羅尼) is described. The scripture underscores that one must first chant the incantation one thousand and eight times before starting work, as this will cause the clay to emit marvelous fragrances named in the text as ox-head sandalwood, white sandalwood, camphor, musk, saffron, and other divine scents.[647] As with the body of the Buddha, numinous power is concomitant with olfactory displays. Among the benefits noted from enchanting the clay is that one's body will smell like sandalwood and one's breath will smell like a blue lotus flower. Moreover, for anyone who enchants scented clay and anoints the finished pagoda(s) with it, they too will receive the same benefits as those who created the pagoda(s).[648] I am not aware of any surviving Tang examples of small clay

[646] T1024:718a16. For more on this text, see T.H. Barrett, "Stūpa, Sūtra, Śarīra in China, C. 656–706 CE," *Buddhist Studies Review* 18, no. 1 (2001): 51–58 and Chen: 111–117. It should be noted that the instructions for each of the three *dhāraṇī* allow for a person to erect a larger scale pagoda or several small pagodas which the text claims could be as small as a fingernail, T1024:719b14.
[647] T1024:719b12–17.
[648] T1024:719b21–25.

pagodas encasing (or stamped with) *dhāraṇī*.[649] This olfactory practice does bear upon the later famed creation of the "one million miniature pagodas" (*hyakumantō* 百萬塔) sponsored by Empress Shōtoku 稱德 (718–770). Turned on lathes to facilitate mass production, these pagodas were composed of Japanese cypress (*hinoki* 檜, i.e., *Chamaecyparis obtusa*), a wood known for its exceptional fragrance.[650]

Scented paste was a common bodily ornament in India and was allowable in certain hygienic and medical epistemic contexts to be used by members of the monastic community, even though perfumes were otherwise strictly forbidden. Nevertheless, there was some expectation of an olfactory quarantine so as to not raise the suspicion of the monastic community. The use of scented pastes and clays also appears to have been an expression of worship, where they were spread on holy sites or formed into auspicious imagery as a type of pilgrim's charm or souvenir, again reflecting the belief that the Buddha's body and sacred presence were infused with sweet smells. Such olfactory connections are not presented as integral to the late medieval manufacturing of miniature clay pagodas in the China, but the connection to earlier Indian practices is almost certain.

[649] After the Tang, and under Tibetan influence, three-dimensional *stūpa* forms bearing incantations appear with much greater frequency, especially during the Western Xia (1038–1227) and Yuan Dynasty (1271–1368), see, e.g., Guo Meng and Zhang Jianlin, "Dunhuang Mogaoku beiqu chutu caca yanjiu," *Wenbo* 5 (2015): 34–41.
[650] The complicated process for turning the pagodas and piecing them together is discussed in Inoue Kazuto, "Mokuseishōtō no seisaku zanzai — hyaku man tō seisaku kōbō no arika nitsuite," *Nara Bunkazai Kenkyūsho Kiyō* 1 (2001): 24–25.

7. Buddhist Olfactory Practices: Manure and "Fragrant Mud"

There is one more medieval Buddhist use of aromatic pastes and clays that is worth noting: the demarcation of a ritual area or an esoteric *maṇḍalic* space. This space was consecrated by spreading a fragrant paste or clay on the ground (or walls), often designated in translations as "fragrant mud" (*xiangni* 香泥). More so than scattering powder, these pastes would add a clear visual dimension to help distinguish sacred space.[651]

One of the more common cleansing substances used in India for this purpose was cow manure, or *gomaya*, a substance that did not carry the same connotations of ritual purity in China. The idea of spreading cow manure on the ground for ritual purposes appears as early as the beginning of the fourth century in Chinese translations. One sutra relates a story about a woman adept in incantations (*zhou* 咒) who wished to deploy them to trick the Buddha's disciple, Ānanda. The woman's daughter had developed a deep affection for Ānanda and desperately wished for him to visit their home. In order to use her spells, the mother and daughter first had to coat an area of their courtyard with manure, thus consecrating and purifying it. They then start a fire and recite incantations while tossing flowers into pots of water that have been set out for the occasion. The spells are powerful enough to draw

[651] Another modality which will not be explored was the custom of sprinkling the ground (*sadi* 灑地) with liquid so dust would not be kicked up. In many cases, instructions included the use of scented water (*xiangshui* 香水) or aromatic extracts (*xiangzhi* 香汁). Equally, the religious use of scented pastes and clays have a longer history in China than I can recount here. Instructions for the construction of "elixir chambers" (*danwu* 丹屋), laboratories for the careful preparation of alchemical substances to extend life, sometimes included the use of scented plaster to cover the walls, see Campany, *Heaven and Earth*, 40–41. There was an even earlier tradition of plastering the walls of Han empresses' chambers with Sichuan pepper for therapeutic and fertility purposes, see Milburn, "Aromas," 454–55. For a story where musk is used to paint a wall, see Liu, *Songdai Xiangpu*, 35.

Ānanda to the home, but the Buddha is able to counteract the odious magic with his own incantations.[652]

Such a story noting the use of animal feces might only appear to reflect the confused practices of immoral people trying to trick the innocent Ānanda, but cow manure appears more regularly in fifth and sixth century translations describing proper Buddhist ritual practice. This is most evident in the translation of a series of *dhāraṇī* collections.[653] Moreover, the anonymous translator of the *Dhāraṇī Miscellany* (*Tuoluoni zaji* 陀羅尼雜集; T1336), dated to the first half of the sixth century, seemingly felt the need to qualify the use of the apparent taboo substance by noting it was "pure" cow manure (*jing niushi* 淨牛屎), a qualification that would have been self-evident and redundant for Indian audiences.[654]

Chinese concerns over the use of animal excrement seemed to have been voiced even when clearly sanctioned in sacred scripture. In response to a passage where liquid from "pure cow excrement" is used to draw the image of a dragon, the north Indian translator Narendrayaśas (517–589) apparently felt it necessary to explicate a formal justification. He claimed that "it is customary for the countries of the West to use cows [oxen] for plowing

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[652] T1301.410c15–23. This story is found in the *Sutra of Prince Śārdūlakarṇā and the Twenty-Eight Nakṣatras* (*Shetoujian taizi ershibaxiu jing* 舍頭諫太子二十八宿經; **Śārdūlakarṇāvadāna*), tentatively attributed to Dharmarakṣa. Another version, likely translated in the fifth century by Guṇabhadra 求那跋陀羅 (349–468) (see T2149.298a18–20), notes the mother and daughter pair used "white *mao*" (*baimao* 白茅), possibly cogongrass or a type of lemongrass, to help spread the manure. The Indic source possibly referred to the long strands of sacred Indian *kuśa* grass, but "white grass" had its own associations with ritual purity in China, see my comments to lemongrass at HC#36. A similar story, with a much more elaborate ritual sequence, appears in the **Vinaya* (*Binaiye* 鼻奈耶; T1464), translated at the end of the fourth century, see T1464: 863c14–20.

[653] See e.g., the *Great Dhāraṇī Spirit-Spell Spoken by the Seven Buddhas and Eight Bodhisattvas* (*Qi fo ba pusa suoshuo da tuoluoni shenzhou jing* 七佛八菩薩所說大陀羅尼神咒經; T1332:542c11) and the *Sutra of the Great Divine Spells of Auspiciousness* (*Dajiyi shenzhou jing* 大吉義神咒; T1335:579b04).

[654] T1336:635a26. It should be noted that elsewhere we find directions for what properly constitutes "pure cow excrement," namely the excrement of a calf that has not eaten the leftover dregs of beans, see T901:893c09. Further preparatory protocols involve washing the excrement with water and mixing it with sandalwood powder, see T901:787a03–11. Different instructions direct one to use a vessel to catch the excrement before it touches the ground and to mix it with an aromatic decoction, see T901:886c08–09.

fields to nourish the ten thousand things. Therefore, cow excrement is considered pure. Both King Indra and cows have shrines established where one can make offerings to the Buddha. In accord with popular sentiment, likewise they are considered pure."[655] This explanation illustrates that cows were "pure" on two accounts; they functioned as necessary aids to agriculture and their shrines could be used to make offerings to the Buddha. In other words, a cow's purity derived from its ability to assist in both the human and spiritual realms. The fact that Narendrayaśas' explanation was recorded by Daoshi 道世 (d. 683) a century later seemingly speaks to the ongoing concerns over the use of a substance like manure with different cultural inflections.

Outside of such explicit apologia, it appears medieval Chinese translators simply replaced cow manure with "fragrant mud" or other euphemisms to circumvent Chinese cultural taboos.[656] Additionally, skillfully applied transcriptions of *gomaya*, such as found throughout the early fifth century translation of the *Mahāsāṃghika-vinaya*, offered yet another subtle way to subvert strong cultural anxieties.[657] At the end of the seventh century, Yijing explained in a commentarial note that dry cow manure, along with crumbled beans and dirt, constituted the "three cleansing materials" (*sanxie jingkai* 三屑淨揩) commonly

[655]西國土俗。以牛能耕地。出生萬物。故以牛糞爲淨。梵王帝釋及牛並立神廟以祠之佛。隨俗情故同爲淨。T2122:761c19–20. This explanation does not appear in the translation of the root text (see T993:513b18), but as an interlinear comment by Daoshi who attributes it to Narendrayaśas.

[656] See for example the passages treated by Koichi Shinohara, *Spells, Images, and Mandalas: Tracing the Evolution of Esoteric Buddhist Rituals* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2014), 23, 48–49, 59. Zhaohua Yang has also noted the tendency for Chinese translators to obscure direct mentions of fecal matter, see Zhaohua Yang, "Developing Impurities: Myth, Ritual, and Talisman in the Cult of Ucchuṣma in Tang China" (Ph.D. dissertation, Stanford University, 2013), 144–46. There is a long history of Chinese therapeutic and apotropaic use of feces (see e.g., Harper, *Early*, 103–04, 171), but a comprehensive history has yet to be written.

[657] The *Mahāsāṃghika-vinaya* transliterates *gomaya* as *jumo* 巨磨, see *inter alia* T1425:318c19 (a more common transcription used elsewhere was *jumoyi* 瞿摩夷). Curiously, the Ming edition of Fayun's twelfth century lexicography emphasizes that *gomaya* is "cow excrement mixed with flowers" (T2131:1178b09) showing the lasting anxiety over the use of impure substances in religious praxis.

used throughout India.[658] These textual directives, if not the actual use of cow manure in Chinese practice, did not go unnoticed by Buddhist detractors in China. One medieval Daoist text, the *Scripture of the Jade Purity of the Grand High Great Dao* (*Taishang dadao yuqing jing* 太上大道玉清經; DZ1312), composed around the middle of the eight century, chastises Buddhists for "making their altars out of feces and filth."[659]

It should be noted that different social and epistemic contexts modulate the critical assessment of a substance like cow manure. For example, within pre-imperial Chinese pharmacological practice, animal excrement was an important ingredient to several drugs, especially medicinal salves, and was commonly used as a demon repellent.[660] Moreover, in the early medieval period, numerous scatotherapies are preserved in Ge Hong's *Emergency Prescriptions to Keep up your Sleeve* (*Zhouhou beiji fang* 肘後備急方; DZ1306), hereafter *Emergency Prescriptions*, a text revised up through the twelfth century. On one hand, as is the case with the demonifugic remedy, we can find a logic of repulsion at work since the targeted pathogen is driven away by the use of excrement. On the other hand, and perhaps deriving from the use of manure as fertilizer, we can also find a logic of fecundity as excrement is applied topically on wounds, burns, pustules, or other skin injuries.[661] Extra-phytophagous therapies are less commonly prescribed in early medieval medical manuals,

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[658] T2125:207b28. As noted by John Strong, a gift of dirt to the Buddha can considered impure and lead to unfortunate karmic effects, see John Strong, *The Legend of King Aśoka. A Study and Translation of the Aśokāvadāna* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1983), 61–65.

[659] 以糞穢爲壇。DZ1312:1.12a. See also comment in Kristofer M. Schipper, "Purity and Strangers Shifting Boundaries in Medieval Taoism," *T'oung Pao*, Second Series, 80 (1994): 79.

[660] See, e.g., Harper, *Early*, 246; Donald Harper, "A Chinese Demonography of the Third Century B. C.," *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 45, no. 2 (1985): 495 and sources cited therein.

[661] For the use of manure as fertilizer in China, see Francesca Bray, *Science and Civilisation in China, Vol. 6, Biology and Biological Technology, Part II: Agriculture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), 289–98. For excrement salves see, e.g., DZ1306:5.2a (an original salve by Ge Hong using burned and powdered cow excrement mixed with chicken egg whites), DZ1306:5.19b, and DZ1306:7.3b, among others.

but several remedies are listed in *Emergency Prescriptions*. For example, we find oral prescriptions using powdered chicken excrement and white goose excrement.[662] When applying a medicinal epistemic framework, some substances deemed impure from a ritual perspective can be reconceived as effective and medical therapies.

Curiously, the same Daoist text that critiques Buddhists for spreading cow manure also critiques them for applying scented paste on the ground. This framing suggests this olfactory practice could be conceptually marked as a patently Buddhist, i.e., non-Daoist or even "barbarian" activity.[663] Nevertheless, several Daoist liturgical works also advocate the use of scented pastes to demarcate ritual space. For example, the *Dongshen Scripture for the Primordial Transformation of the Eight Emperors* (*Dongshen badi yuanbian jing* 洞神八帝元變經; DZ1202), hereafter *Eight Emperors*, explains a technique to summon the spirits of the Eight Trigrams in which the adept needs to construct a temple, literally a "spirit room" (*shenshi* 神室), in a remote mountain location where the rituals are conducted.[664] While inside the temple, the adept is instructed to fastidiously avoid corpses and the filth of the six animals while also keeping the interior clean by spreading fragrant paste on the ground and sweeping it. Moreover, a spirit altar (*shentan* 神壇) is to be erected and plastered with a white chalky clay mixed with an aromatic powder made from a "white grass" (*baicao* 白草), likely indicating a type of subtropical lemongrass (*baimao xiang* 白茅香), but also possibly

[662] DZ1306:3.21b (an original formula by Ge Hong adding chicken excrement to alcohol spirits) and DZ1306:7.30a.
[663] DZ1312:1.12a. The text never specifically names Buddhism, but the activities mentioned are clearly meant to evoke normative medieval Chinese Buddhists practices, such as various acts of self-sacrifice (entering into fine, jumping into a chasm, cutting oneself), sitting in caves silently (i.e., meditating), venerating bones (i.e., relic worship), and dishonoring one parents by engaging in ascetic practices (for example, it was long thought shaving one's head for ordination was a harm to the body gifted by one's parents).
[664] DZ1202:22a–23a. A synopsis of this text can be found in Kristofer Schipper and Franciscus Verellen, *The Taoist Canon: A Historical Companion to the Daozang*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004), 502–03.

cogongrass (*baimao* 白茅), a ritually important, but not significantly fragrant, plant.[665] These instructions, dating from around the eighth or ninth centuries, are motivated by smell taboos concerning the stench of decaying bodies and animal excrement, which are generally believed to render the ritual ineffective. This could be an oblique repudiation of Buddhist activities centered on the reverence of dead bodies (in the form of relics) and the use of cow manure for the more esoteric forms of practice. Sweet smells, on the other hand, were conceived through a logic of hygiene by many medieval Daoists and thus were more inviting to the spirits, a point we will return to in the next chapter.

Later in ritual sequence when the spirits of the Eight Trigrams are being summoned, sheaths of lemongrass/cogongrass are to be woven together to make mats which will act as seats (*zuo* 坐) for the spirits, again recalling the empty place reserved for Laozi. The text reiterates that the aroma of "white grass" pleases (*xinxiang* 欣響[→饗]) the spirits and explicitly bars the use of "hemp grass" (*mamao* 麻茅).[666] The specific use of *xin* recalls the "spiritual smelling" and consumption of sacrificial foods by Shangdi in the *Book of Odes*.[667]

The ritual use of culturally impure substances like cow manure elicited both apologia and condemnations from medieval Chinese authors. Buddhists aware of the associations with purity in India tried to explain the different cultural framework to their Chinese audiences, but detractors still found footing to denounce the ritual use of excrement. Nevertheless,

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[665] The identification of various grasses incorporating the term *mao* 茅 are fraught with problems. For details on these issues, see my commentary to lemongrass at HC#36.

[666] DZ1202:26a. The passage notes that this grass grows in abundance in the fields of the mountains of Jinyang 晉陽, in present-day Shanxi, where it remains uneaten by grazing animals; DZ1202:26a–b. This phytogeographic range is more commensurate with cogongrass as is the idea that "white grass" was to be woven together since cogongrass has notably toothy leaves. Ultimately, I believe there is some conflation with other natural referents of *mao*-type grasses, many of which have pungent smells.

[667] See discussion in Chapter 1, Section 4.

certain medical contexts that were already present in China granted the use of scatotherapies. The appear to have operated on the logic of repulsion, driving away the malignant force, or on the logic of fecundity, such as when made into salves to heal wounds.

8. Buddhist Olfactory Practices: Incense Pellets and Scented Pills

One of the more subtle, yet revealing, changes in Chinese Buddhist olfactory practices involving pastes and perfumes regards stories around self-immolation (or auto-cremation). As an act that had several vocal detractors in the medieval period, self-immolation allowed a Buddhist monk or nun to express their deep abiding devotion for the Buddha or to voice political dissent against the depredations of the state. The archetypal practice can be traced to the *Saddharmapuṇḍarīka Sūtra*, more commonly known as the *Lotus Sutra*, where Bodhisattva Medicine King offers his own body as a gift to the Buddha. In the account given by Kumarajiva's early fifth century translation, the heroic bodhisattva "applied the various aromatics of sandalwood, frankincense, *turuṣka* (storax), *spṛkkā* (fenugreek?), aloeswood, and Gum Aromatic (gum guggul?)" to his body, and did so for twelve hundred years until, in the presence of the Buddha Pure Bright Virtue of the Sun and Moon, he made a vow and lit his body ablaze.[668] James Benn had shown that the inspiration for this practice was likely derived from Indian mortuary customs and the story of the Buddha's own passing where he was soaked in scented oils before cremation. On a symbolic level, the actions of the Medicine King reflect deeply embedded Indian cultural practices centered on smell,

[668] 諸香。栴檀。薰陸。兜樓婆。畢力迦。沈水。膠香。T262:53b06–07. The identification of the six aromatics remains conjectural. I address my translations to these six items in my commentary to *turuṣka* at HC#76 and relevant footnotes therein.

including anointing the body with scented pastes and powders, the use of fragrant items as sacrificial offerings, and the virtuous purity of a fragrant body. In the narrative of the *Lotus Sutra*, self-immolation is cast as the olfactory practice of greatest significance, as the Medicine King turns himself into veritable scented offering to the Buddha.

While there is little evidence of dramatic re-enactments of the Medicine King's sacrifice in medieval India, the practice of self-immolation in medieval China is well attested through numerous pious hagiographical narratives. Of course, these stores were expressed through different cultural lenses and imaginations centered around aromatics. Benn has carefully noted that stories of Chinese monks and nuns engaging in self-immolation rarely told about the external bodily application of perfumes as relayed in the *Lotus Sutra*. Instead, as Benn explains, "indigenous ideas about transforming the constituents of the body by diet took center stage."[669] Thus we commonly find the ingestion of "scented pills" or incense pills (*xiangwan* 香丸) as part of preparatory stages, along with other sacralized dietary regimens such as the abstention of grains. This was not necessarily a misunderstanding on part of the medieval Chinese, incense at the time was processed by blending several pulverized scented powders with a coagulant like honey and rolled into small pellets. These pellets would be largely indistinguishable from pills made by Chinese pharmacists in earlier periods. For example, directions to make medicinal pills the size of small beans, can be found in the second-century BCE *Recipes for Fifty-Two Ailments* (*Wushier bingfang* 五十二病方), and similar metrological standards can later be found throughout the *Emergency Prescriptions*.[670]

[669] Benn, "Burning for the Buddha," 39.
[670] For directions to make pills in the Mawangdui medical manuscripts the size of small beans, see Harper, *Early*, 223, 223n.5. For a prescription using pills (*wan* 丸) the size of a small beans (*xiaodou* 小豆), see DZ1306:8.4b. These points were first raised in Chapter 2, Section 5 and Chapter 3, Section 3.

Ingesting therapeutic pills was conceived as a viable method to induce desired bodily changes. This action was not necessarily meant to make the person redolent of aloeswood and sandalwood in mimicking the saintly bodies of Indic lore, but as part of a macrobiotic regimen in preparation for physical transformation. In the vernacular religious beliefs of medieval China, drawn upon by Chinese Buddhists and Daoists alike, this regimen signaled liberating transcendence and the path to becoming an immortal. The olfactory dimensions of self-immolation as expressed through the *Lotus Sutra* were minimized by Chinese auto-cremators, but who nevertheless still expressed it as an olfactory practice through the calculated ingestion of scented pills.

One culmination of these novel Chinese practices was the composition of new Buddhist recipes for religio-therapeutic incense pills. Preserved in the cache of documents recovered from Dunhuang were two medical manuscripts describing the benefits of ingesting such pills. Both manuscripts, catalogued as P. 2637 and P. 2703 are identical and contain "Avalokiteśvara Bodhisattva's Method for the Utmost Marvelous Incense Pill" (*Guanyin pusa zuisheng miao xiangwan fa* 觀音菩薩最勝妙香丸法), hereafter "Method for the Marvelous Incense Pill."[671] The method includes a contextualizing narrative as to why the recipe is disclosed, then followed by specific ingredients and detailed directions on preparing the medicinal pills, before ending with a discussion of the benefits one receives from ingesting them. This text is as follows:

> [Context:] At that time, Avalokiteśvara Bodhisattva told Great Brahma, the King of the Devas, "With the coming future in an evil world of the five impurities, when the ten Māras rise up in competition, in a time of the three calamities and eight hardships, of armed soldiers and famine, of plunder and the arising of all sorts of difficulties, if there are *bhikṣus* who enter deep into the mountains to sit in meditation, recite spells, and cultivate the supreme Way, yet who are

[671] P. 3043 contains another recipe, with slightly different ingredients, entitled "Method of the Marvelous Incense Pill" (*miao xiang wanzifang* 妙香丸子方). The manuscript cuts off the end of the recipe.

tormented by hunger and fires, I will explain for them the method of the marvelous incense pill. It will allow these *bhikṣus* to eternally seek liberation, to avoid the difficulties of flood and fire, to cut off defecation and urination, to obtain the Tathāgata's perfect mirror-like ocean [of wisdom], to have a lifespan of thousands of tens-of-thousands of years, and to obtain the five spiritual powers. For the method of the marvelous incense pill only rely on the blending instructions in this scripture:
爾時觀世音菩薩告大梵天王。卻後未來，五濁惡世之時，十魔競起，三災八難，刀兵飢饉，草劫諸難生時，若有比丘入於深山坐禪持咒，修無上道，飢火所迫，我為人說妙香丸法，令此比丘永得解脫，不遭水火之難，大小便利，息比斷絕，得如來大圓鏡海，壽千萬歲，獲五神通。妙香丸法，但依經修合。

[Ingredients]: *piyena* (stickweed[672]), *nuojiaduo* (ginseng), *bixie*, *gouji*, *mona* (cinnabar), *daduoye*, pine resin (refined), *jianzhongyu*, *shiyu*, *zhuteng*, poria fungus[673], and three *liang* of pale honey
毗夜那（鸝虱[674]），諾迦多（仁參），必屑，狗脊[675]，摩那（朱砂），達多夜，松脂 (練[676]過) ，菅眾禹，石餘，朱滕，茯苓，白蜜三兩。

[Directions]: Use one *liang* of each of the above ingredients that are fresh and of good quality. Finely crush them into powder. Using refined honey, make pills. The pills should be the size of a marble. When you want to ingest it, make obeisance before the Buddha and set forth the utmost vow to liberate all living beings. Take one *sheng* of glutinous rice, one *ge* of almonds, and one *liang* of Chinese ash tree [leaves]. Combine and boil into a thick porridge. Eat it all at once. Afterwards, swallow one *ge* of soy beans with one pill. Then take a frankincense decoction with one pill. Do this for eighty days. Then ingest another pill for thirty-two months. Then swallow one pill for the remainder of one's life. You will forever be free of the hardships of hunger and thirst. One must refrain from desire and hatred, from the five alliums, and from alcohol, meat, and so forth. If strength is weak, one can eat boiled bits of notoginseng[677] for supplementation. After a month, one will be settled without doubt. If one wants to eat more, than eat a broth of mallow greens[678] and the [stomach] churning will lessen. Afterwards, use scented water to wash the medicine [pills] and bury them in a hole dug from virgin soil for thirty-seven days. Once taking them out, rely on the above method for eating them. Afterwards, bring to mind the King of the Devas to protect the body and recite the incantation: *an xiangnadi suofuhe*. Bring to mind the incantations and eat the medicine.
右件藥各一兩，新好者，細搗為末，練[679]蜜為丸，丸如彈子大。若要服時，於佛前禮拜，發至願，當度眾生。用糯米一升，杏仁一合，白臘[680]壹兩，相和煮粥，飽食一頓，後更吞大豆一合，一丸，後用乳香湯下一丸，得八十日。後又服一丸，三十二個月。後更吞一丸，得終身也，永脫飢渴之苦。至須誡貪嗔，五辛，酒肉等物。若力怯時，可餐煮三七顆助之，一月已來，定無疑也。若要開食，即喫葵菜湯轉下，後以香水洗藥，於生土坑內埋三七日，取出。如服，依前法食之。後念天王護身真言: 唵 向那 底娑縛賀[681] 念諸真言及服藥。

[Effects]: After one year the body will become light and the eyes bright, in two years all faculties will be keen and the great collection of scriptures [can be memorized] in one turn without omission, in three years one will be swift like the wind, in five years one will not sink in

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672 *Lappula myosotis*
673 *Wolfiporia extensa*
674 Replacing 防風 in Xiao Dengfu, "Zangjing ji Dunhuan xiejuan suojian shou Daojiao bigu shiqi sixiang yingxiang de Fodian," *Ershiyi shiji Dunhuangxue guoji xueshu yantaohui* 11 (2001): 684–703.
675 狗脊 is missing from Xiao, "Daojiao bigu shiqi sixiang yingxiang de Fodian."
676 Read 練 as 煉.
677 *Panax notoginseng*
678 *Malva verticillata*
679 Read 練 as 煉.
680 Read 臘 as 蠟.
681 唵向那底娑縛賀 is missing in Xiao, "Daojiao bigu shiqi sixiang yingxiang de Fodian."

> water, in seven years one will not be burned by flames, in ten years one will not be stricken with the myriad illnesses, in fifteen years one's fleshy eyes will transform into heavenly eyes,[682] in twenty years one will know the thoughts of all living beings, and [attain] the Tathāgata's perfect mirror-like ocean [of wisdom] and have a lifespan without measure and without any obstructions. This is a true *śramaṇa*.[683]
> 一年後，身輕目明；二年，諸根通利，大藏經一轉無遺；三年後，疾如風；五年後，水上不沒；七年後，入火不燒；十年，萬病不侵；十年五，肉眼變為天眼；廿一年，知一切眾生心念，如來大圓鏡海，壽命無量，一切無礙，是真沙門也。

As discussed by Wang Shumin, the above incense pill recipe is part of an untitled scroll of prescriptions which he considers devoted to the practice of "abstaining from grains" (*pigu* 辟穀).[684] Avalokiteśvara's purpose for revealing this method does not forthrightly address this traditional macrobiotic practice, but instead frames the prescription as for devoted monks in the mountains who need to survive in a world of increasing hardship and despair when concerns like starvation, drowning, and fire are eminent dangers. The prescribed pills will allay both hunger and thirst and if taken for many years will confer supernormal abilities upon the monk patient. Several of the benefits easily call to mind the powers exhibited by immortals, such as not drowning in water or being burnt by fire. The ability for this compound to quell hunger, however, appears to be the main concern and one that would have an immediate appeal to an underfed or malnourished mountain-dwelling ascetics. The satiating quality of these pills also harken back to the story of the anomalous Douyi Aromatic

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[682] In Buddhist lore, the attainment of heavenly eyes means the attainment of supernormal vision, where a person can see into the great distance, the past and future, the knowledge of a sequence of causal events, and so forth.

[683] Transcribed with P. 2637 as base text; there are minor differences with Xiao, "Daojiao bigu shiqi sixiang yingxiang de Fodian."

[684] Shumin Wang, "The Dunhuang Manuscripts and Pharmacology in Medieval China," in *Medieval Chinese Medicine: The Dunhuang Medical Manuscripts*, ed. Lo Vivienne and Christopher Cullen (London: RoutledgeCurzon, 2005), 280–81. There are five other named prescriptions in this text: the Method of the Gushing Spring (*yongquan fang* 湧泉方), the Method for Eating Herbs (*chicao fang* 喫草方), Another Method for Eating Herbs (*you chicao fang* 又喫草方), the Method for Expelling Gu Poison (*chu gudu fang* 出蠱毒方), and the Method for Ceasing Food (*xiuliang fang* 休糧方)(for reading *liang* as food, see Christine Mollier, *Buddhism and Taoism Face to Face: Scripture, Ritual, and Iconographic Exchange in Medieval China* [Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2008], 34n.40). In addition, there is also short sutra entitled the *Buddha Expounds the Sutra on Interrupted Kitchens* (*Foshuo ting chu jing* 佛說停廚經), which is discussed in Mollier, 27, 35–36. Modern editors sometimes refer to this collection of works as the *Buddhist Methods for Avoiding Grains* (*Fojia pigu fang* 佛家辟穀方), see Wang, "Dunhuang Manuscripts," 280.

that was claimed to resemble jujube pits and would allow a person to go without hunger for months if consumed.[685] From the earliest introduction of foreign aromatics into China, stories of their miraculous properties were propagated. In earlier periods, the special powers of aromatics were partly a result of their novelty and exotic origins, but with the "Method for the Marvelous Incense Pill," their powers were harnessed and made realizable through a set of instructions couched in the structure of medical prescriptions.

When turning to the ingredients and instructions for the incense pills, however, the use of widely-recognized aromatic materials is rather limited. The pills themselves appear to contain an array of vegetal and mineral substances, several of which are obscured by Sanskrit, or possibly pseudo-Sanskrit, names.[686] At some point someone added a handful of proper Chinese names to the manuscript to help identity the ingredients, but none of these refer to well-established fragrances. Ginseng, cinnabar, pine resin, and poria fungus (*fuling* 茯苓) are, on the other hand, all well attested in medieval medical prescriptions. In the subsequent instructions, only frankincense in noted by name when a decoction is used to wash down the pills as part of a protocol that lasts many months. Under scrutiny, and with the caveat that not all ingredients are known to us, it is uncertain why this pill would be considered "scented" or as a type of incense. The best explanation is that for many Chinese herbalists and physicians, the concept of the category of aromatics was almost indistinguishable from medicine, a point reinforced by the fact that the term aromatic-drugs (*xiangyao*) was coined to classify certain floral and faunal substances in the medieval period. In the case of the authors of the "Method for the Marvelous Incense Pill," the process of

[685] As noted in Chapter 2, Section 5; see also Douyi Aromatic at HC#44.
[686] None of the Sanskrit-like terms approximate known aromatics, nor do they appear in digital searches of the Taishō canon. Many ingredients that do not approximate Sanskrit also remain unidentified.

molding ingredients into pellets with honey and utilizing subterranean cellaring, methods employed in both medieval drug-making and the art of perfumery, seem to have been preserved for their reputed religio-therapeutic efficacy and not necessarily their olfactory potency.

9. Buddhist Olfactory Practices: The Rarity of Incense in Early Indian Buddhist Worship

Turning to the final item in the offertory list of the *Aṣṭasāhasrikā*, we find "mixed aromatics" or "various aromatics" (*zaxiang* 雜香). I have been unable to locate a clear explanation of this category by medieval authors, but it seems to have been a catchall classification for any other aromatic material. Nevertheless, clustered together into a relatively concise section of the *Aṣṭasāhasrikā*, we find mixed aromatics replaced with "burned aromatics" (*shaoxiang*), or what we would formally call incense.[687] The fact that a text as richly "scented" as the *Aṣṭasāhasrikā* contains such a small amount of references to incense might be surprising. The lion's share of dramatic scenes of worship to venerated figures and holy objects clearly reveal the importance of scented powders and fragrant pastes in the Indian olfactory imagination. Why is incense not afforded equal acclaim in the *Aṣṭasāhasrikā*? The solution to this problem requires an examination of the history of ritual worship in India, something beyond the scope of this work, but a few preliminary thoughts are in order.

Indic texts are difficult to date and much of Indian Buddhist history is aided by the attested translation dates of scriptures into Chinese. Dated inscriptions, on the other hand,

[687] Incense appears five times in T224:439b25–c19. It also appears once at 455c10 in a passage I suspect was strategically worded by Lokakṣema, see below. Notably, "various aromatics" should not be treated merely as a synonym for incense, for example Dharmarakṣa also uses it to indicate scented powder sprinkled atop the Buddha, see T425:62a5–6.

offer a much better opportunity to answer thorny questions of chronology. As far as I am aware, the earliest extra-textual reference to Buddhist *pūjā* comes from the Kuṣāṇa epigraphic corpus where an inscription records the creation of an image of Śākyamuni in the fifty-first year of Huviṣka, likely placing this event at the end of the second century. The inscription notes the image was established "for the worship (*pūjā*) of all buddhas," which Michael Willis interprets as meaning the image was created so *pūjā* offerings could be made to it.[688] While this inscription attests to the basic practice of Buddhist worship and places us in the same period of Lokakṣema's translation activity, it lacks an enumeration of what items were offered during worship. According to Willis, epigraphical sources record the specific constituents of *pūjā* only starting in the late fifth century, among which *dhūpa*, or incense, is often included.[689] Unfortunately, these inscriptions push us beyond our ideal window of analysis, since by the end of the fifth century burning incense is already attested in a wide range of sources.

If we look to the Indian archaeological record, we are still left with scarce insight into the early Indian Buddhist use of incense. Unlike the ancient Chinese material record, there has not been a large recovery of durable artifacts that can more-or-less be identified as incense burners. During the early twentieth century excavations of Taxila, John Marshall found numerous small offering bowls, but speculated that due to their size were better understood as small incense burners.[690] As with ambiguous Chinese vessels, the discovery of

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[688] Michael Willis, "Offerings to the Triple Gem: Texts, Inscriptions, and Ritual Practice," in *Relics and Relic Worship in Early Buddhism: India, Afghanistan, Sri Lanka and Burma*, ed. Janice Stargardt and Michael D. Willis (London: The British Museum, 2018), 71. Willis specifically dates Huviṣka 51 to c. 177 CE.
[689] Michael Willis, *The Archaeology of Hindu Ritual: Temples and the Establishment of the Gods* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 96–97.
[690] As cited in Elizabeth Rosen Stone, "A Buddhist Incense Burner from Gandhara," *Metropolitan Museum Journal* 39 (2004): 87. Elizabeth Stone notes these bowls were found at the Greek and Śaka-Parthian levels of Taxila, covering a period roughly between fourth century BCE and mid-first century CE.

vented lids is often necessary to identify the object as a censer. In support of Marshall's speculation, it appears the late third century translation of the *Lotus Sutra of the True Dharma* (*Zhengfa hua jing* 正法華經; T263), hereafter *Lotus Sutra,* by Dharmarakṣa 竺法護 (230?–316) uses the Chinese term "brazier, burner" (*lu*) to translate an underlying *ghaṭikā*, or "water pot." This vessel is modified by *dhūpa*, incense, which Dharmarakṣa renders as "incense" (*xiang*), thus giving us the standard nomenclature in Chinese, incense burner (*xiang lu*).[691] The use of a generic term like *ghaṭikā* appears to suggest early medieval incense burners in India were not too dissimilar from regular pots and bowls. Ultimately, however, it is remains difficult to assess the function of the small "offering" bowls.

Arguably one of the most significant discoveries, described as a first century bronze Gandhāran "Buddhist" censer by Elizabeth Rosen Stone, is oddly unique.[692] Stone believes the relative lack of ancient bronzes in India, either Indian-made or imported, is due to the commonplace practice of melting down used metal objects and refashioning them into other forms. It is thought this practice ensures that the karma of the previous owner is "burned away" as the object transfers to new ownership.[693] Regardless of this censer's stunning craftsmanship, I believe its identification as "Buddhist" should be tempered. Unfortunately, the origin of the vessel is unknown, no does it bear inscriptions, meaning all dating and

[691] T263.115c09; Hendrik Kern and Bunyiu Nanjio, *Saddharmapuṇḍarīka* (St. Petersburg: Académie Impériale des Sciences, 1908-1912), 329 (line 5); see trans. Hendrik Kern, *The Saddharma-Pundarika, or Lotus of The True Law* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1884), 313. Karashima does not treat *xiang lu* in his glossary of Dharmarakṣa's *Lotus Sutra*, cf. Seishi Karashima, *A Glossary of Dharmarakṣa's Translation of the Lotus Sutra* (Tokyo: The International Research Institute for Advanced Buddhology Soka University, 1998), 493–94. An underlying *ghaṭikā*, which is related to the clepsydra water clock, may account for several occurrences of *xianghu* 香瓶, "fragrance vase," in the Chinese Buddhist canon, in which case might be better understood as an incense burner.

[692] Stone, "A Buddhist Incense Burner from Gandhara," 9, 69–99. Stone notes this item was part of the sizable Shelby White and Leon Levy antiquities collection.

[693] Stone, "A Buddhist Incense Burner from Gandhara," 75. Stone comments that Indian example of censers were only previously known "through illustrations on Buddhist narrative reliefs of Gandhara," Stone, 69.

identification must solely be based on the iconography and other stylistic features. The symbolism upon which Stone relies to make her assessments are either pan-Indic in origin, such as lotuses or guardians of the four directions, or conjectural, such as the censer imitating the shape of a *stūpa*. While this is undoubtedly an important object exemplifying cross-cultural Greco-Roman and Near Eastern influences, we cannot be sure that Buddhists actually used it – the narrow criterion I am employing to qualify it as "Buddhist" for our purposes. Furthermore, the rather opulent design of the censer bespeaks a display of wealth. While this certainly does not prohibit Buddhist monastic use, given we know little of the object's provenance and nothing of its origins, it opens the possibility of its use by many other groups of people. In other words, this artifact, especially in isolation, does not necessarily prove the use of incense in first century Gandhāran Buddhist ritual. It does, however, reveal that censers were crated in ornate forms and speaks to the practice of burning incense in or around Gandhāra, possibly in the first century.[694]

Before Stone's publication of the Gandhāran censer, the best evidence for the early Buddhist use of incense came through the depiction of censers in the lower register of Gandhāran votive imagery as discussed in Chapter 3. By the second century, it was common to use this space to depict objects related to *pūjā*, among which we often find fire-altars and incense burners. While it is presumed these carvings preserve a "snap shot" of contemporary Buddhist fires practices, the origins of such practices are not straightforward.

On one hand, these scenes of worship may indicate the adoption of older Vedic fire sacrifices that were developed into bloodless Buddhist *homa* rituals. On the other hand, there is indication some scenes depict practices more closely aligned with Zoroastrian worship

[694] For some possible issues on a first century date, see Stone, "A Buddhist Incense Burner from Gandhara," 88.

using fire-altars.[695] The dating of individual texts in the *prajñāpāramitā* corpus remains tenuous, but the *Aṣṭasāhasrikā* is often treated as the older "smaller" version that was gradually expanded over time.[696] It might be the case that Lokakṣema's translation reflects an older, less favorable Buddhist perspective on incense burning before it was more widely accepted as part of *pūjā* rites. Judging by Gandhāran votive imagery, this adoption was seemingly complete by the second century. How long it took for such a change in attitudes and beliefs remains unknown, as it the potential influence of Zoroastrianism.

If we return again to Chinese textual materials, the *Treatise on Great Wisdom* offers another promising vantage point, even if it dates to the early fifth century. It provides a rationale as to why there may have been some resistance to incense by early Buddhist communities in India. In a section outlining the broad range of Buddhist offerings – food, drink, garments, bedding, scented pastes, vehicles, houses, lamps, and assorted goods (*zhuwu* 諸物) – the imaginary interlocutor inquires why incense and flowers were not also listed. The commentator responds that they are included under the final collective category of assorted goods. More importantly, the commentator explains that the other offerings are deemed "essential" (*xuyao* 須要), noting, for example, that fragrant pastes are valuable because the body is dirty and foul smelling. Unpersuaded, the interlocutor continues by asking, "Flowers and aromatics are also able to dispel foul smells, why are they not discussed?"[697] The response given by the commentator remains the best answer I have found regarding why flowers and incense were not deemed essential offerings:

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[695] Bivar, "Fire-Altar."
[696] This expansion was uneven, as earlier sections grew disproportionately more than later sections, see Orsborn, "Chiasmus in the Early Prajñāpāramitā," 56–57. Moreover, a Gāndhārī birch-bark manuscript carbon dated to between 47–147 CE has been recovered, making it roughly contemporaneous with Lokakṣema, see Karashima, *Glossary of Lokakṣema's Translation*, 759–60.
[697] 華香亦能除臭。何故不説。T1509:279a15.

> Flowers are impermanent and quickly wither and rot. Their benefit is minimal and therefore they are not discussed. As for incense, in cold weather it is suitable, but when hot it is unpleasant. Scented pastes are useful in both cold and hot weather. When cold, they can be mixed into water. When hot, they can be mixed with sandalwood and applied to the body. Therefore, only fragrant pastes are discussed [as essential].[698]
> 華非常有亦速萎爛。利益少故是故不説。燒香者。寒則所須。熱時爲患。塗香寒熱通用。寒時雜以沈水。熱時雜以栴檀以塗其身。是故但説塗香。

The response acknowledges the flexibility of fragrant pastes to be used in both hot and cold weather as the reason they are preferred offerings. This is in contrast to incense, likely imagined here as burning using the "indirect method" of casting aromatics atop a bowl of hot charcoals. While this can produce a favorable residual heating effect in cold weather, the commentator admits, it becomes less tolerable in warmer weather conditions. One might contend that the heat from burning incense is negligible, but this overlooks the fact that this passage can only be responding to, and thus trying to justify, practices that were already widely accepted at the time, regardless of the rationale.

Implicit in the above discussion is another issue worth bringing to light. The imagined targets of the above offerings are Buddhist monks and nuns. The "essentials" refer to goods necessary to life in monastery in which incense and flowers are mere ornamentation – and not coincidentally, forbidden by the precepts. Only when aromatics possess a clear "practical" value, such as medicine or for basic bodily hygiene, are they sanctioned by monastic code. Up to this point we have mainly been discussing offerings that are given to the Buddha's body as expressed through *stūpas* (i.e., his bodily relics) and sutras (i.e., his body of teachings). The *Aṣṭasāhasrikā* presents a different offertory formula when the targets of the offerings are living bodhisattvas, or beings on the path to Awakening. That offertory list typically includes items such as "*cīvara* robes, food and drink, bedding, and medicine for

[698] T1509:279a15–19.

illness," objects that are often classified as requisites for monastic living.[699] As a complete set, these form what are often characterized as the four kinds of reliance (*siyi* 四依) or the four matters (*sishi* 四事). Notably, when comparing these items to the *Treatise on Great Wisdom* we find considerable overlap with the offerings identified as essentials, with only the exception of the final item, albeit curiously, of medicine.

It is not accidental that there are two different types of offertory lists in the *Aṣṭasāhasrikā*: one category constitutes items appropriate for worship that are meant to represent the majesty and sensuality of the Buddha's presence, the other constitutes items appropriate for direct support of the monastic community.[700] If we can take the explanations in the *Treatise on Great Wisdom* as representative of broader (and possibly older) trends, is casts important light on early Indian Buddhist worship and offering practices. While scented pastes could be used to both materially support the *saṃgha* and be used as scented offerings at *stūpas*, incense was not viewed in the same flexible manner. Moreover, we might pause to think about how different aromatics were offered: scented pastes could be gathered from sites of worship, similar to how fruit is collected by the monastic community after being offered at altars, but once incense was burned there was nothing left to collect.

If the rarity of incense in the offertory lists of the *Aṣṭasāhasrikā* suggest it was uncommon (or of less practical value), what might this say about early Buddhist offertory

[699] 震越衣服。飲食床臥具。病瘦醫藥。E.g., T224:439b12, 440a04, 440b09, and 455a23–4. Elsewhere, these items are used as examples of offerings that may disturb the calmness and focus of a bodhisattva's mind, see T244:447c12–14 and 462c12–13.

[700] According to Michael Willis, the mechanisms for materially supporting an independent community of Buddhist monastics were adopted by Brahmans by the fourth century when a temple-based theism gained traction in the Gupta period, see Willis, *Archaeology*, 106. Willis has also shown how the category of requisite items was flexible in practice and in some cases included ritual paraphernalia and items of worship, see Willis, "Offerings to the Triple Gem." Willis offers the rationale that items of worship were also needed by those who perform the rituals, i.e., the monastics themselves.

practices in China? What can we make of the claims by An Shigao who defines Buddhist sacrifice as constituting the burning of incense? On one hand, it is possible An Shigao attempted to tailor his definition of *pūjā* to a Chinese audience familiar with burning fragrant plants, but who were not as familiar with the use of scented powders and pastes.[701] If we take this to be the case, however, this would have been in spite of the fact that burning incense was not known to have been used for Chinese sacrifice at the time. We can use Emperor Huan's sacrifices at Zhuolong Palace in 166 as a roughly contemporaneous proof for this fact, or point to the older Western Han Music Bureau hymn discussed in Chapter 2.[702]

On another hand, it may also be the case that Vedic fire sacrifice and Zoroastrian fire worship had already reformulated Indian Buddhist practices of worship around the use of incense or, more specifically, that someone like An Shigao, who was from Parthia – an ancient stronghold of Zoroastrian faith – was personally influenced by offertory practices using fire.[703] In such a scenario, An Shigao's familiarity with ritual fire formed an elective affinity with incense burning in China even though their end purposes were different.

As it stands, a better contextualized understanding for the use of incense in the early Buddhist translations of An Shigao and Lokakṣema will have to await a more comprehensive

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[701] It is worth noting that Lokakṣema's translation of the *Aṣṭasāhasrikā* also speaks of burning incense (*shao xiang*) in reference to the precept against bodily ornamentation, see T224:455c10. Given the application of scented pastes was a far more common perfuming practice in India, I presume Lokakṣema was strategically addressing his Chinese audience who burned incense to perfume their garments. Later medieval translations of the same passage speak of perfuming, but not specifically of burning incense; see e.g. T225:495b29 ("scented perfumes"; *xiangxun*$_1$ 香熏); T226:528a20 ("flowers…aromatics" 華…香); T227:565b05 ("flowers and aromatics" 華香).

[702] Han court protocol manuals from the first and second centuries attest to burning sweet basil (*xun*), but as we have seen, this is in the context of perfuming the robes of the high chancellery, see Chapter 3, Section 5; see also sweet basil censer at HC#87.

[703] For an overview of Zoroastrian practitioners in medieval China and claims that they descended from An Shigao, see Antonino Forte, "Iranians in China: Buddhism, Zoroastrianism, and Bureaus of Commerce," *Cahiers d'Extrême-Asie* 11, no. 1 (1999): 277–90. I wish to thank Dominic Steavu for underscoring the potential importance of An Shigao's complex religious heritage.

understanding of first and second century Buddhist *pūjā* in India. It may be the case that incense was viewed as less utilitarian, and therefore less essential, than scented pastes for the *saṃgha*. Consequently, incense may have been more strongly associated with worship of the immaterial Buddha than viewed as an appropriate offering that would be transferred to the monastic community.

10. Burning Incense in the Chinese Far South: A Practice of Late Han Barbarians

Finally, there is also some evidence to suggest that in the late second and early third centuries, and within certain contexts, burning incense was portrayed as an indication of abnormal or non-Chinese (*hua* 華) behavior – a curious stance given that since the medieval period incense was portrayed as a tradition of ancient Chinese culture. Most of our evidence appears as stories concerning state officials embedded among people of non-Han descent (such as the Yue 越 or Man 蠻) on the far southern borders of the Chinese empire. A region like Jiaozhi commandery, originally centered on the Red River Delta and roughly comprising present-day northern Vietnam, was strategically positioned for maritime travel through the Gulf of Tonkin. Critically, its coastal ports drove a rich trade in exotic goods throughout the latter part of the Han. It is thus appropriate to view Jiaozhi as a "contact zone" where different cultural influences intermingled, thus giving rise to a bricolage of Chinese and non-Chinese practices.

For example, we know that by the end the second century, a delegation, presumably from southern India, came through the region bearing a rhinoceros as tribute and that foreign merchants regularly entered Jiaozhi *via* the maritime kingdoms of Funan, on the lower

Mekong Delta, and Linyi 林邑, a Mon-Khmer polity that established itself in the early third century in central Vietnam.[704] Moreover, in 226, a Roman merchant named Qin Lun 秦論 (var. 秦倫) (Qin likely being an ethnikon derived from Daqin 大秦, the Roman Empire) sailed to Jiaozhi and was granted passage to the Eastern Wu court in Wuchang 武昌, in present-day Hubei.[705] Accounts such as this attest to an international presence in the far south, not only of people from Southeast Asia, but travelers from further west. In the eyes of later dynastic historians, officials sent to Jiaozhi were susceptible to numerous non-Chinese influences and as a result sometimes adopted customs that that were portrayed as culturally anomalous.

One such figure was Zhang Jin 張津 (fl. ca. 200), who around 201 was installed as the Regional Inspector (*cishi* 刺史) of Jiaozhi.[706] According to a short biographical note, shortly after arriving for his post Zhang Jin adopted behaviors unbecoming of a cultured Chinese elite:

> He abandoned the norms and instructions of the previous sages, abolished the laws and statutes of the house of Han, wore a purple turban, played instruments, burned incense, and read the heterodox and vulgar books on the Way. He said this assisted the transformation [of his region], but at the end of his life he was killed by the people of the south.[707]

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[704] For the rhinoceros-bearing tribute delegation in 2 CE from Huangzhi, often identified as Kāñci on the Bay of Bengal, see Wang, "Nanhai Trade," 19–20; Petech, "On Huang-Chih," 295–301. For discussion on the debates over the ethno-linguistic identity of Linyi (Vietnamese Lâm Ấp) once thought to be the Cham, see Michael Vickery, *Champa Revisited*, Asia Research Institute Working Paper Series No. 37 (Singapore: Asia Research institute, 2005), 12-23.

[705] Wang, "Nanhai Trade," 32, 40; Zürcher, *Buddhist Conquest*, 51. For comments pushing Qin Lun's visit into the 230s, see de Crespigny, *Generals of the South*, 373–74n.38. The first Roman merchant, under the guise of an official imperial emissary, arrived in 166, see Yü, *Trade*, 159–60.

[706] Zhang Jin was appointed by the puppet Han court established by Cao Cao following a local revolt that drove his predecessor from the region. Zhang Jin was soon given a higher rank as governor to enhance his prestige in the area, see de Crespigny, *Generals of the South*, 272–73.

[707] SGZ:46.1110, trans. (with minor changes) in de Crespigny, *Generals of the South*, 157. This story is part of Pei Songzhi's 裴松之 (372–451) annotation to the biography of Sun Ce 孫策 (175–200) in the *Record of the Three Kingdoms* (*Sanguo zhi* 三國志). Pei Songzhi claims to have drawn from the now lost *Traditions of Jiangbiao* (*Jiangbiao zhuan* 江表傳) composed during the late Western Jin 西晉 (266–316), see Zheng et al., *Dictionary of the Ben Cao Gang Mu*, 218. The text places Zhang Jin's story in the mouth of Sun Ce who was

舍前聖典訓，廢漢家法律，帶著絳帕頭，鼓琴燒香，讀邪俗道書，云以助化，卒為南夷所殺。

According to the account, Zhang Jin adopted these behaviors to persuade or transform (*hua* 化) the administration and others around him, probably meaning he found the local customs effective in currying favor with the people of the south, a mistake which ultimately cost him his life.[708] Claiming he rejected the teaching of the sages and abolished the laws established by the Han imperial court was a profoundly strong rebuke not only of his political policies but of his very identity as someone considered ethnically Chinese. The marks of his descent into barbarism were seen in his change of clothing, his taste in music, the vulgar books that he read – and in his choice to burn incense (*shaoxiang*).[709] We are not told the contexts in which Zhang Jin used incense, but it must have been viewed as different from activities of regional courts around other parts of China where, importantly, incense burning is attested through the presence of censers recovered from Eastern Han tombs. We must remember that roughly contemporary Han court protocols, including the late second century *Observances for Han Officials*, only note the use of incense to fumigate the robes of high members of the chancellery. The tenor of the accusations against Zhang Jin seem to suggest he was using incense in a way that broke imperial protocol or was out of accord with normative Chinese culture in the north.

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relating it to his generals and other guests as a warning against the mesmerizing appeal of foreign customs. The attribution of this story to Sun Ce is anachronistic since he was already dead by the time the supposed events of Zhang Jin's life occurred, a point already noted in the medieval period, see de Crespigny, *Generals of the South*, 160. For our purposes, Zhang Jin's story need not be historically accurate since it still accounts for the perceptions of incense circulating in the early medieval period, and at the latest by the beginning of the fourth century when the *Traditions of Jiangbiao* was compiled. For more on the life of Zhang Jin, see de Crespigny, *Generals of the South*, 272n.94.

[708] De Crespigny places his death around 204, see Rafe de Crespigny, *A Biographical Dictionary of Later Han to the Three Kingdoms (23-220 AD)* (Leiden: Brill, 2007), 1057.

[709] The charge that Zhang Jin "played instruments" likely refers to his use of non-Chinese instruments.

Another story involves Shi Xie 士燮 (137–226), whose powerful family was one of the stewards of Chinese culture in the far south since the mid-second century. Even while Zhang Jin was assigned formal command of Jiaozhi, Shi Xie maintained *de facto* control over the Red River Delta region to the west until his death in 226, operating as a nearly independent state. After Zhang Jin's death, Cao Cao, operating through the puppet Han court he had established at Xu 許 in 196, made an alliance with Shi Xie and installed him as governor (*taishou*) of Jiaozhi (sometimes cited under its new name Jiao prefecture [*jiaozhou* 交州]) around 203.[710] This relative freedom cast Jiaozhi as a place of refuge for Chinese émigrés fleeing the devastating warfare of central China during the end of the Han and into the Three Kingdoms.[711] One account reports how Shi Xie and his family lived during this period:

> [Shi] Xie and his brothers were all in aligned territories that were formidable as a single province. For ten thousand *li* all around, they had no superior in prestige or seniority. As they came and went, bells and chimes were sounded, they were equipped with the accoutrements of majesty and ceremony, flutes were played, drums were beaten, and carriages and horsemen filled the roads. There were always several tens of foreigners surrounding the carriage wheels who burned incense.[712]
> 燮兄弟並為列郡，雄長一州，偏在萬里，威尊無上。出入鳴鐘磬，備具威儀，笳簫鼓吹，車騎滿道。胡人夾轂焚燒香者常有數十。

This procession is likely descriptive of what would have been seen on the street of Longbian 龍編, present-day Hanoi, the capital of the prefecture. It portrays a train of dozens of foreign

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[710] The date when Shi Xie was given de jure authority over the region is not clear in our sources, with some suggesting it occurred in the 180s and the alliance forged around 203 merely provided Shi Xie with additional honors, see Taylor, *The Birth of Vietnam*, 55n.83. It appears Cao Cao gave control of the south to Shi Xie to undercut the power of his rival, Liu Biao 劉表 (142–208), who had announced his own candidate to replace Zhang Jin, see de Crespigny, *Generals of the South*, 272–73. After the Eastern established control of the

[711] Han emperors had entrusted the Shi family with control over the far south in the mid-second century due to the inroads they developed with Yue (Việt) ruling families; for more on the influence of the Shi family during this period, see Wang, "Nanhai Trade," 26–27; Taylor, *The Birth of Vietnam*, 52–53, 55–62; de Crespginy, *Generals of the South*, 266–76.

[712] SGZ:49.1192, trans. (with minor changes) in de Crespigny, *Generals of the South*, 270. For a later tradition concerning Shi Xie's revival from death with special medicinal pills, see Campany, *Heaven and Earth*, 142–43.

"barbarians" (*huren* 胡人) as part of the raucous festivities, all burning incense (*fenshao xiang* 焚燒香). These curious figures have been identified as Buddhist monks from India or Central Asia by Erik Zürcher and others, nothing the term *hu* 胡 was reserved for non-Chinese people from the north and, in practice, the far west.[713] Notably, incense burning is not portrayed as merely a part of the pomp and circumstance of the procession, but as an activity specifically overseen by foreigners. As to whether this was a "Buddhist" procession, as some have argued, is far from certain. The religious affiliation is not as important as the fact that they are considered "barbarians" and like the personal activity of Zhang Jin, perfuming the air with incense was strategically highlighted as a non-Chinese practice.

It is difficult to make sense of the fact that burning incense was seemingly portrayed as part of the fabric of Jiaozhi "contact zone" culture while the archaeological record clearly reveals equipment for burning incense was scattered throughout most of China by this time. Nevertheless, we must recall that a great majority of Han-era censers were recovered from tombs located in Guangdong, Guanxi, and Hunan, regions that were classically and collectively referred to as Lingnan, or the "region south of the mountains." This is in contrast to Han tombs in the vicinity of Luoyang which revealed only a total of three censers.[714] Interpolating from this data, it is possible that from the perspective of the Han court, stationed variously at Chang'an and Luoyang (and later, Xu), incense burning was perceived as a relatively novel activity and culturally derivative of the far south. Moreover, the influx of the choicest kinds of aromatics from countries as distant as the Roman Empire, far from

[713] Zürcher, *Buddhist Conquest*, 336n.148, see also de Crespigny, *Generals of the South*, 270–71n.89.
[714] As noted in Chapter 3, Section 2.

the heartland of Chinese culture, would only reinforce the perception of burning incense as a non-Chinese activity.

In this regard, the Shi family of Jiaozhi may have been critical since they controlled all trade coming up the Vietnamese coast from the lush tropics of Southeast Asia, presumably aboard ships manned by local Yue (Việt) sailors. We know, for example, that after establishing an allegiance with Cao Cao, Shi Xie regularly sent tribute to the capital at Xu.[715] We also know that the Han emperor and his retinue owned incense burners, gifted to them personally by Cao Cao when they entered his protection in 196.[716] We are not told what tributary items were sent by Shi Xie, but it would be reasonable to assume he replenished the stockpiles of incense used at the Han court. This assumption is supported by the fact that Shi Xie regularly later sent envoys with "assorted aromatics" (*za xiang* 雜香) to Sun Quan 孫權 (189–252), the future founder of the Eastern Wu.[717] Based on this, we might also speculate that Shi Xie's father, Shi Ci 士賜 (fl. 160), who served under Emperor Huan as the governor (*taishou*) of Rinan, in present-day central Vietnam, was the one who supplied the court with Moluccan cloves. While these were not used as incense, cloves are attested in contemporary Han court protocol manuals being used as breath fresheners.[718]

In addition to the strong association of the tropical south with incense and other aromatics, the most elaborate and diverse literary descriptions of perfuming, such as scattering scented powders, applying fragrant pastes, and burning aromatic incense, were all

[715] SGZ:49.1192; see Taylor, *The Birth of Vietnam*, 56–57; de Crespginy, *Generals of the South*, 273.
[716] CCJ:1.21–22; see also my comments to Golden Incense Burner at HC#94. The incense burners were listed among numerous items of daily domestic use, such as pillows, mirrors, and bathing kits, thus there is no reason to assume they were used during sacrifice.
[717] SGZ:49.1192; de Crespigny, *Generals of the South*, 275.
[718] TPYL:3.221; HGLZ:206; see also Milburn, "Aromas," 460 and my comments to Suckled Aromatic at HC#95.

depicted in Buddhist scriptures. These activities were also being performed by foreign visitors and immigrants, if not Buddhist monastics themselves. Consequently, there is reason to believe that even though northern China had an established practice of burning plant material as perfume for the body and clothing, the immediate social, religious, and economic influences of the Eastern Han made it appear as if it was chiefly promoted and sustained by non-Chinese forces. This leaves open the possibility that early Buddhist translators working in Luoyang at the end of the Han were speaking to an audience aware of burning incense, but still perceived the activity as a semi-exotic or a far southern practice. Moreover, while the particular telos for burning incense is not explicit in the accounts of Zhang Jin or Shi Xie, we might presume the purpose was viewed as more occult or esoteric than the domestic and hygienic uses of incense in the north.

Lastly, given the importance of burning incense during ritual activities in the later medieval period, it is worth briefly exploring what we know about when incense was first adopted by the imperial court to communicate with spirits, both in formal state functions and as part of mourning practices. While documentation is sparse, it appears incense was first used for state sacrifice under the reign of the famous patron of Buddhism, Emperor Wu 武帝 (464–549) of the Liang 梁 (502–557), who perhaps not incidentally ruled over a vast region of the coastal south. Not too long after ascending the throne, Emperor Wu ordered a complete revision of the state ritual code in 502. It was completed more than two decades later in 524, but unfortunately the documents no longer survives. Nevertheless, we do possess an imperial edict dated to 517 that decrees all animal sacrifices be halted at ancestral temples

(*zongmiao* 宗廟) and replaced with offerings of vegetables (*caishu* 菜蔬).[719] This change was chiefly bolstered, if not initially motivated, by Buddhist ethical concerns over the slaughtering of animals.[720]

These changes in the patterns of worship at ancestral temples were then extended to the highest-level state sacrifices performed by the imperial house, namely the suburban sacrifices (*jiaosi* 郊祀) to Heaven and Earth.[721] Once the occasion for odorous displays of animal flesh and alcohol, we have evidence that fragrant incense was incorporated into these most august affairs of state by Emperor Wu. According to the *History of the Sui* (*Suishu* 隋書), in 505, when the southern suburban sacrifice was performed at the Hall of Brightness (*mingtang* 明堂), an edifice representing the ritual hall were Zhou kings sacrificed to their ancestors, aloeswood was to be burned. The selection of this dark resinous wood, both imported from overseas and harvested in the Chinese tropical south around present-day Guangdong, was based on a perceived correspondence with the fundamental nature of Heaven which was considered the embodiment of *yang* 陽 energy.[722] Additionally, the

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[719] The larger historical context of these reforms are discussed in Tom De Rauw, "Beyond Buddhist Apology: The Political Use of Buddhism by Emperor Wu of the Liang Dynasty (r. 502–549)" (Ph.D. dissertation, Gent University, 2008), 6–39. The "Edict for the Total Abolition of the Killing of Domestic Animals as Sacrifice at the Ancestral Temple" (*Duan shajue zongmiao xisheng zhao* 斷殺絕宗廟犧牲詔) is preserved in the *Further Collection for the Propagation and Clarification of Buddhism* (*Guang hongming ji* 廣弘明集; T2103), see T2103.293b28–294a12. For dating of this document, see De Rauw, 17–18n.43. While the edict only notes vegetables, dynastic histories describe using vegetables and fruit (*shuguo* 蔬果), see the *History of Liang* (*Liangshu* 梁書) at LS:2.57 and the *History of the South* (*Nanshi* 南史) at NS:6.196.

[720] For the ritualized framing of Emperor Wu as a bodhisattva, which challenged the growing institutional independence of the Chinese *saṃgha*, see Andreas Janousch, "The Emperor as Bodhisattva: The Bodhisattva Ordination and Ritual Assemblies of Emperor Wu of the Liang Dynasty," in *State and Court Ritual in China*, ed. Joseph McDermott, 1999, 112–49.

[721] This was first suggested by the official Liu Xie 劉勰 (ca. 465–522), who would later become a Buddhist monk, see De Rauw, "Beyond Buddhist Apology," 17–18.

[722] The correspondence of aloeswood to *yang* may reflect the Indian understanding of aloeswood as "heating," as opposed to sandalwood which was "cooling," see McHugh, *Sandalwood and Carrion*, 85. For the development of an aloeswood harvesting industry in southern China by the fifth century, see my comments to aloeswood at HC#3.

northern suburban sacrifice was to employ a superior blended incense (*shanghe xiang* 上和香), a selection based upon the idea that the various fragrances used in the mixture corresponded to the various human relationships of people on Earth.[723] These protocols would be revised regularly in the coming centuries as various rulers would implement their own reforms, but the initiative by Emperor Wu, undoubtedly influenced by his ties to the Buddhist *saṃgha*, represents, one of the earliest adoptions of incense into large-scale Chinese state ritual.[724]

It is more difficult to answer when incense was first adopted as part of post-mortem mourning rites and regular ceremonial observances at ancestral temples and family altars. The earliest clear evidence seems to appear in the fifth century. For example, just previous to Emperor Wu's signature changes in state sacrifice, Prince Wenxian 文獻王 (444–492) of Yuzhang 豫章, who ruled during the Southern Qi 南齊 (479–502), requested that the mandatory three-day mortuary observances upon his death include the display of an incense burner (*xianghuo* 香火) and basin of water, along with more traditional offerings of alcohol

[723] SuiS:6.109; see also passing discussion in Wang, "xianglu yu xiang wenhua," 42. If the dating of 505 in the *History of the Sui* is correct, the use of incense predates the 517 edict.

[724] For a summary overview of state ritual reforms during the Six Dynasties, see Chen, "State Religious Ceremonies." Although relatively late, the twelfth century *Developing Luxuriant Dew* (*Yanfa lu* 演繁露), compiled by Cheng Dachang 程大昌 (1123–1195), proclaims that "when Emperor Wu of the Liang sacrificed to Heaven, he started using aloeswood; in antiquity this was not yet used" 梁武帝祭天始用沈香，古未用也。YFL:1.42. This passage is cited as being derived from Du You's 杜佑 (735–812) *Comprehensive Statutes* (*Tongdian* 通典), the first comprehensive history of the rules, regulations, and institutions of state governance, but the remark regarding aloeswood is not preserved in the received edition of the document. Otherwise, another important passage regarding the use of incense during sacrifice, of which we have unfortunately very little context, comes in the form of the now lost *Methods of Sacrifice* (*Zaji fa* 雜祭法) attributed to Lu Chen 盧諶 (284–350): "When sacrificing during the four seasons, incense burners are to be placed on all sides of the [spirit?] seat" 香爐四時祠，坐側皆置也。TPYL:6:703.515. *Zuo* 坐 likely represents the empty seat where the spirit receiving the sacrifice was believed to lodge. A further comparison with other references to the *Methods of Sacrifice* in the *Imperial Readings of the Taiping Era* and elsewhere might help us understand this brief comment of Lu Chen in greater depth.

and dried meats.[725] A similar practice was seen during the mortuary observances following the death of the official Zhang Xu 張緒 (422–489), where a cup of water and an incense burner (*xianghuo*) were displayed, but, as reported, no sacrifices were performed.[726] The fact that such practices were recorded and made explicit in historical documents suggests the use of incense was not already established as a normative practice by the end of the fifth century, but further research will need to flesh this out considerably.

There is some evidence, albeit imperfect, to suggest such changes may have already started a few centuries earlier. It appears the informal adoption of incense for ancestral rites may have been spurred by the mortuary practices of imperial concubines sometime during the end of the Eastern Han. We might infer this through the "Proclamation of Bequeathment" (*yiling* 遺令) of the warlord Cao Cao, a document that expressly forbids his concubines from using bequeathed incense as part of sacrifice. The text of Cao Cao's testament is straightforward: "My incense (*xiang*) can be divided among my consorts; it is not to be used for sacrifice."[727] Just previous to this directive, Cao Cao lays out the mortuary protocols he wishes his harem to follow after his death, including the delivery of food offerings once every morning and once every afternoon, as well as twice-monthly musical performances and regular gazing upon his tomb from the Copper Sparrow Terrance (*tongqiao tai* 銅雀臺). Consequently, the context suggests the injunction against sacrificing with incense relates to mortuary practice and mourning rites.

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[725] As recorded in the *Book of Southern Qi* (*Nan Qi shu* 南齊書), see NQS:22.417; see also quotation in Wang, "xianglu yu xiang wenhua," 42.
[726] 靈上置杯水香火，不設祭。NQS:33.602.
[727] 餘香可分與諸夫人，不命祭。CCJ:3.57. As noted by Rafe de Crespigny, it was common for Han emperors to leave testamentary edits, but Cao Cao used the form of a proclamation (*ling* 令), see Rafe de Crespigny, *Imperial Warlord: A Biography of Cao Cao 155-220 AD* (Leiden: Brill, 2010), 440n.35. I have treated *xiang* here as incense because it appears in the context of sacrifice.

Moreover, since Cao Cao makes the injunction against burning incense explicit, we can presume he had real concern incense would have been used otherwise. This suggests that burning incense during mortuary observances, and specifically at ancestral shrines or family altars, was already practiced among the women of his court. We unfortunately know very little about the mourning practices of elite women during the Han.[728] Nevertheless, I believe the scenario inferred by Cao Cao's will is plausible. The women of Cao Cao's harem, and those of earlier Han emperors, would have had access to the finest aromatics, both domestic and foreign imports (possibly as tributes from the Shi family in Jiaozhou). More critically, they were also likely less beholden to long-standing formal imperial traditions which emphasized flesh offerings, especially when mourning in private. As argued by Miranda Brown, Eastern Han mourning obligations followed a larger political shift to the more personal and particular, and thus perhaps an openness to individual expression allowed such women a window to mourn in ways more personal to them.[729] Additionally, as speculated in the previous chapter, it may also be the case women of the court were informally responsible for fumigating the garments and other vestments of the deceased emperor before sacrificial offerings were presented, thus providing a context in which burning incense and making offerings of food were roughly coordinated in time and space. Considering formal state sacrifice would deal with the need to feed imperial ancestors, women of the court could burn incense without fear of official reprisal. As to whether such acts were envisioned as a direct

[728] As noted in Miranda Brown, *The Politics of Mourning in Early China* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2007), 15. It is also worth noting Miranda Brown's work on mourning practices in early China never refers to incense, suggesting it was not yet relevant. Moreover, it should be underscored, the censers gifted to Emperor Xian and his retinue by Cao Cao in 196 were listed among numerous other items of daily use, hinting they may not have been intended for sacrificial purposes.

[729] Brown uses discourse around the "reaffirmation of the personal" to explain why extended mourning became central to filial piety during the Eastern Han, see Brown, 59–63.

means to communicate with the dead remains unknown, although such speculation does not seem unwarranted. We might again point to the later Eastern Han tombs of northern Shaanxi that depict *boshan* censers in the same register as the Queen Mother of the West, a figure most closely associated with heavenly messengers.[730]

The timeline of events discussed above suggest the late second and early third centuries formed a liminal period for incense burning in China. Given the best information we can draw from Han historical sources, we may infer a perception of "two cultures" around incense: "ours" and "the Other." From the perspective of the Eastern Han court (and perhaps for the Chinese in the north more broadly), burning incense was principally viewed as a bodily hygiene practice involving garment fumigation and the eradication of foul odor. Moreover, given the curious portrayal of incense in the biographies of Zhang Jin and Shi Xie, officials who freely adopted the regional customs of their administrative regions, burning aromatics may have also been viewed as an old obsession of the far south. On one hand, this may simply be a perception of degree: an "amplified volume" of incense burning in the south contrasted with a relatively more "muted" practice in the north. This is supported in part by the disproportionate abundance of excavated censers in southern tombs, a disparity that continues well into the Three Kingdoms. On another hand, the curious portrayal of incense in the south may also speak to a perception of novel purpose, namely, the use of incense in ritual contexts distinctive from courtly use. From the perspective of the Han court looking at southern culture, burning incense may have been perceived as both semi-exotic (perception of degree) and inclining towards the esoteric (perception of purpose).

[730] See Chapter 3, Section 6.

Additionally, the recent introduction and growth of Indian Buddhist styles of worship in China may have helped sustain a belief in the Han court that burning incense was at best a foreign practice and at worst incommensurate with formal state affairs that sought to nourish the ancestors and spirits. Given these historical circumstances, it makes sense the state sanctioning of incense, such as we find with Emperor Wu of the Liang, may have been the product of a long-term process of strengthening elective affinities between burning fragrant plants for fumigation and burning incense for more occult ends. Although we cannot adequality document this long trajectory from surviving sources, this process may have first occurred through "backdoor channels," such as with the imperial harem, that did not, or could not, rely on ritual precedent to establish the legitimacy of burning incense during mourning sacrifices.

11. Conclusion

This chapter explored the manifold uses of scented powders, fragrant pastes, aromatic pills, and incense in medieval China. It was not the case, however, that the practices were simply transferred whole cloth from South Asia into East Asia *via* Buddhist intermediaries. New social, ritual, and economic conditions caused the Chinese to find uneven affinities with the olfactory practices introduced by their Indian and central Asian counterparts. One of the factors causing the uneven adoption was access to aromatics that were not native to China. Even when access was greatly improved through trade, scented woods and resins more readily available in India remained luxury goods and carried a connotation as foreign exotica. This is related to another important factor, namely that the distinctive smellscapes of India

and China also fed into contrasting conceptions regarding the domain of the spirits and other divine beings. For Buddhists in India, the Buddha's body was treated as equivalent to a wondrous olfactory display of perfume, thus the scattering of powders, aspersion of oils, and the spreading of pastes made sense as a means of evoking the sacred. This stood in contrast to the ancient Chinese sacrificial world that found primary value in the aromas of food offered to the inertly odorous divine. Thus, among the first challenges of early Buddhist translators was to find the appropriate conceptual category to define *pūjā*, ultimately favoring making offerings (*gongyang*) over performing bloody sacrifices (*ci*).

The two olfactory practices that were perhaps most novel to early medieval Chinese audiences were casting scented powders and applying scented pastes, both with could dress the body and adorn a sacred space. By the third and fourth centuries, the use of scented powders started to find expression, albeit rarely, in non-Buddhist Chinese sources. Another practice involving the use of "fragrant" cow manure seems to have found more resistance, including the outright rejection by some Daoists. This likely accounts for the regular reminder of Chinese Buddhist exegetes about its perceived purifying qualities in India.

The different cultures of smell in India and China also found expression in the curious adoption of Buddhist lore related to the practice of self-immolation. As we explored, the *Lotus Sutra* envisions a practice of bodily adornment in service to self-sacrifice, thus making the devotee a scented offering to the Buddha. In contrast, Chinese auto-cremators worked from a template of native macrobiotic regimens and thus consumed scented substances as pills to help induce a bodily transformation. A similar conflation involving incense pellets and ingestible pills is also expressed in the later Chinese Buddhist recipe entitled the "Method for the Marvelous Incense Pill." Special instructions, with some similarity to

incense blending procedures, are given for crafting medicinal pills that allay severe hunger and confer long-life. In such cases the vibrant Indian world of aromatics was interpreted through the Chinese lens of ingestible medicines.

We last turned to burning incense, a practice which on its surface has clear precedents in China. Yet it was performed in remarkably different social contexts than we find in Buddhist India. As we examined in the previous chapter, Chinese censers were primarily used as tools to render a space or a person fragrant, especially in terms of perfuming garments; they were not intended as instruments for feeding the ancestors and spirits. Furthermore, as we explored in this chapter, it appears that burning incense was not value-neutral, but may have had strong cultural ties to the far south, especially among the elite living in the cosmopolitan centers of the central plains. Thus, when Han-era Buddhists were advocating *pūjā*-style worship with incense (itself possibly motivated by Zoroastrian influences in northwest India), they were unwittingly reinforcing notions of a custom that was not considered fully "Chinese." This perception of burning incense as a semi-exotic and strange practice would have been underscored by the fact that the normative imperial use of incense was for hygiene, not contacting the ancestors and spirits, or in this situation, for making offerings to the Buddha.

The next chapter will continue to explore the early medieval olfactory practice of burning incense, but with a focus on how it was further shaped as an esoteric art for opening communication with divine beings. This will take us back to southern China during the third and fourth centuries and so we can start tracing the early evolution of the Celestial Master, Grand Purity, and Supreme Purity traditions, the progenitors of an institutionalized Daoist tradition in China.

Chapter Five – Smoke, Salvation, and Purity: Daoist Olfactory Practices in Early Medieval China

1. Introduction

In the time between the fall of the Tang and the establishment of the Song, former Tang military governors began establishing their own autonomous regional governments. Known traditionally as the Five Dynasties and Ten Kingdoms period (907–979), the dissolution of a centralized bureaucracy and disruption of sovereign authority signaled a period in which Daoist rituals and investiture protocols were employed to legitimate regional rulers' claims to power. A former Tang court Daoist, Du Guangting 杜光庭 (850–933), emerged as an important officiant of the liturgy during this period, performing a variety of rites for Wang Jian 王建 (847–918), a former prince who was proclaimed the emperor over the kingdom of the Great Shu, in present-day Sichuan.[731]

Du Guangting's ritual activities earned him court promotions and a title of nobility, but it was more so his attempts at reconstituting parts of the Daoist canon lost after the fall of the Tang that earned him a position in the Daoist tradition as one of the "three masters of ritual instruction" (*kejiao sanshi* 科教三師), along with the eminent scholar-adepts, Lu Xiujing 陸修靜 (406–477) and Zhang Wanfu 張萬福 (fl. 712).[732] The chief compendium of

[731] For more on the role of Daoist ritual in legitimating the Shu kingdom, see Franciscus Verellen, "Liturgy and Sovereignty: The Role of Taoist Ritual in the Foundation of the Shu Kingdom (907-925)," *Asia Major*, Third Series, 2, no. 1 (1989): 59–78; Franciscus Verellen, "Shu as a Hallowed Land: Du Guangting's Record of Marvels," *Cahiers d'Extrême-Asie* 10, no. 1 (1998): 213–54.

[732] Chi Tim Lai, "The Daoist Identity of the Yellow Register Retreat in the Southern Song: A Case Study of Jin Yunzhong's Great Rites of Lingbao," *Cahiers d'Extrême-Asie* 20, no. 1 (2011): 64. These three figures were first acknowledged for their importance by Jiang Shuyu 蔣叔輿 (1162–1223), see Schipper and Verellen, *The Taoist Canon*, 1015.

Du Guanting's oeuvre was the *Liturgical Manual for the Grand High Yellow Register Retreat* (*Taishang huanglu zhaiyi* 太上黃籙齋儀; DZ507), hereafter *Liturgical Manual*, a massive collection of documents, liturgical procedures, and personal annotations related to the most commonly celebrated Daoist ritual service of the late medieval period, the eponymous Yellow Register Retreat. This manual "served as a model through the entire Song" and thus cemented Du Guangting's status as one of the most influential commentators on medieval Daoist liturgy.[733] Consequently, due to his encyclopedic knowledge and distinguished reputation, Du Guangting's views on the meaning and use of incense in Daoist ritual forms a solid ground from which to begin our exploration.

According to the *Liturgical Manual*, an offering of incense was one of the five types of offerings used when communicating with the divine, along with flowers, lamps, water, and fruit.[734] This selection of offerings is motivated by the long-standing Daoist rejection of blood sacrifice and blood oaths, but this particular constellation of items is ultimately indebted to the style of worship introduced by Indian Buddhists.[735] According to an interlinear comment, presumably penned by Du Guangting himself, at the opening of the "Ceremony of Lamps" (*lideng* 禮燈) chapter, two types of offerings are foregrounded due to the unique roles they play in the liturgy. "Those who perform the retreats and practice the Way," Du Guangting

[733] Schipper and Verellen, 578. The version of the *Liturgical Manual* in the Ming Daoist canon has undergone significant modifications, however, the section under consideration below (*juan* 56) is believed to be authentic to Du Guangting's original work, see discussion in Schipper and Verellen, 579. For an analysis on the relationship between the Yellow Register Retreat and the older Numinous Treasure liturgical structure, see Lai, "Yellow Register Retreat."
[734] Yoshinobu Sakade, "Jinji, Proscriptions and Prohibitions," in *The Encyclopedia of Taoism*, ed. Fabrizio Pregadio, vol. 1 (New York: Routledge, 2008), 577. This group of offerings is still important to Daoists today, see Yan Xiaoqing and Zhang Tao, "Zhongguo daojiao xiang wenhua," *Daojiao yanjiu* 2 (2011): 57–58.
[735] On the rejection of blood offerings by early Daoists, see Stein, "Religious Taoism"; Kleeman, "Licentious Cults"; Lai, "Celestial-Master Taoism"; and Raz, *Emergence of Daoism*, 91–126.

explains, "consider burning incense and lighting lamps to be the utmost pressing tasks."[736] The comments then describe the specific functions of this pair of items:

> It is incense that transmits the mind and conveys messages, ascending to affect the Perfected and numina; it is lamps that shatter darkness and illuminate obscurity, descending to open the [underground] springs and the dark period [of the deceased].[737]
> 香者，傳心達信，上感真靈。燈者，破暗燭幽，下開泉夜。

These descriptions clarify that burning incense and lighting lamps are viewed as "pressing tasks" precisely because they unite the adept with the abode of spiritual beings through smoke and the realm of the dead through light. In effect, they act as conduits that bridge over into regions that are otherwise inaccessible by the adept's physical body.

If we turn our focus to the use of incense, the explicit purpose of burning aromatics in many Daoist liturgies by the late medieval period was to open a pathway of communication with spirits and other divine beings, just as Du Guangting highlights above. This conception of incense as a spiritual conduit was oftentimes expressed in our sources as having the power to draw down (*jiang* 降), deliver (*song* 送), or communicate with (*da* 達) the spirits, or to otherwise penetrate (*tong* 通) into the spiritual realm. Despite the widespread liturgical use of incense, Daoist scriptures and ritual manuals rarely offer elaborate theories on the specific mechanisms of its efficacy. How does incense precisely open communication with the empyrean? How does it, in the words of Du Guangting, "transmit the mind and convey messages"?

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[736] 凡修齋行道，以燒香然燈，最為急務。DZ507:56.1a. Du Guangting notes that the Method for Ceremony of the Lamps was extracted from the *Simplified Writ of the Golden Register* (*Jinlu jianwen* 金籙簡文), a fifth century text that is no longer extant, see Schipper and Verellen, *The Taoist Canon*, 962.

[737] 香者，傳心達信，上感真靈。燈者，破暗燭幽，下開泉夜。DZ507:56.1a. I am unsure of how to interpret *ye* 夜, "night," in this passage, but I presume it metaphorically enhances the implicit gloom and darkness of the underground Yellow Springs.

One of the clearest responses to these questions can be found in the *Various Accounts of the Essential Elements of the Three Caverns* (*Sandong shuji zashuo* 三洞樞機雜說; DZ839), hereafter *Essential Elements of the Three Caverns*, an anonymous work dating no later than the Tang.[738] Under the heading "Method of Incense for Penetrating to the Numina and Perfected" (*tongling zhenxiang fa* 通靈真香法), we are informed:

> It is incense is that draws down the numina and penetrates to the spirits. Postal horses run transmitting what is said, communicating back and forth and spreading understanding both near and far. For this reason, those who supervise and attend to incense, [such as] the Jade Lad, Jade Lass, and the Emissaries of the Incense Office, specialize in and take charge of these duties; they cannot be treated as frivolous.[739]
> 夫香者。所以降靈通神。傳言驛行。導達往來。表明還近。所以典香侍香。玉童玉女。香官使者。專司其職。不可輕也。

There is no mistaking such claims. The gamut of Daoist spirits who attend to incense during liturgical performances, here named as the Jade Lad, the Jade Lass, and the Emissaries of the Incense Office, are crucial to a ritual's success. This is because the spiritual functionaries who overlook the incense are responsible for conveying messages to the spiritual realm. This is further clarified by the analogy of postal horses who are responsible for dispatching letters and enabling communication; without the use of such a conveyance, communication would be rendered impossible.[740]

Importantly, such views are not founded upon the older alimentary logic of smell where the ancestors and spirits were nourished by the aromas of food. As noted above, early

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[738] Schipper and Verellen, *The Taoist Canon*, 355.
[739] DZ839:1.11a. This passage was extracted from the otherwise unknown *Supplemental Codex of the Three Caverns* (*Sandong bei lianke* 三洞備鍊科).
[740] This metaphor of postal relay animals is drawn directly from early Daoist scripture. The invocations over the censer found in the *Liturgy of the Sworn Alliance with Zhengren, Kept in the Jade Casket of the Nine Realms of Darkness in the Department of the Long Nights* (*Dongxuan lingbao change zhi fu jiuyou yugui mingzhen ke* 洞玄靈寶長夜之府九幽玉匱明真科; DZ1411), a work compiled in the early fifth century, notes the presence of spirits named Postal-Relay Dragon (*yilong* 驛龍) and Mounted Official (*jili* 騎吏) who are in charge of holding incense, see DZ1411:26b–27a. For more on this text, see Schipper and Verellen, *The Taoist Canon*, 225–26.

Daoists had rejected blood sacrifice, thus it was said by Lu Xiujing that "the spirits neither eat nor drink."[741] These ideas regarding the conveyance of messages are a reflection of a bureaucratic logic that undergirded much of the medieval spiritual world. Accordingly, a pantheon of spirits was envisioned as part of a hierarchy of officials in administrative roles who could be petitioned to help seek prosperity for the living and salvation for the deceased. Consequently, although incense is burned during ritual, the critical role is assigned directly to those spirits associated with incense who mobilize the adepts' aspirations and help realize his directives. Elements of the bureaucratization of the Chinese pantheon can be found in antiquity, but such views started to gain momentum, especially in regards to the Chinese imagination about death, only during the Han.[742] The true innovation by early Daoists was the adoption of liturgical procedures modeled on bureaucratic structures and legal processes so as to command a large array of spirits to help them achieve their ritual aims.[743] Various incense spirit-emissaries emerged as central to that project.

While modern scholarship may theorize about the ability of smoke to transmit messages to the ancestors and spirits during ancient rights such as the *chai*, *liao*, or *yin* sacrifices, it was only in the medieval period when such views were clearly and consistently expressed in our primary sources. Moreover, in a generic sense, this belief concerning the ritual function of incense to act as a bridge also found support in medieval Chinese society writ large. Such a view, for example, was held by Chinese Buddhists such as Zanning who,

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[741] Lai, "Celestial-Master Taoism," 7 (citing *Master Lu's Abridged Codes far the Daoist Community* [*Lu xiansheng daomen kelüe* 陸先生道門科略]).
[742] Cedzich, building off the pioneering research of Anna Seidel, discusses the importance of early grave-quelling texts employed by Han mortuary cults that attempted to subjugate demons and spirits to law and order, see Ursula-Angelika Cedzich, "Ghosts and Demons, Law and Order: Grave Quelling Texts and Early Taoist Liturgy," *Taoist Resources* 4, no. 2 (1993): 23–36.
[743] See the convenient summary of the relevant scholarship on this point in Lai, "Celestial-Master Taoism," 1–6.

citing an old parable from the Chinese Buddhist canon, claimed that "incense is an emissary for [conveying] messages and the mind."[744] Similar views were also espoused by secular works, such as the *Pure Registers of the Cavern Heavens*, a Song guidebook for bronze collectors, which noted that southernwood and mugwort were used to commune with the spirits.[745] Such views do not require complex theology, one can easily observe smoke rising and dissipating into the sky and conceive of it as a messenger to the heavens.

The seeming ubiquity in which medieval sources speak about the ritual utility of incense can easily obscure the fact that burning scented plant matter was not always afforded such a role in Chinese antiquity. A few words are in order to clarify where there has been slippage in the use of language throughout time before we turn to explore how such language was employed in early Daoist ritual. A representative view of an anachronistic position on incense can be found in the influential *Systematic Materia Medica* (*Bencao gangmu* 本草綱目), compiled by pharmacologist Li Shizhen 李時珍 (1518–1593). In his entry for sweet basil, Li Shenzhen asserts:

> In antiquity, [people] burned fragrant plants to draw down the spirits, therefore [the plants] were called *xun* and *hui*; *xun* refers to perfuming and *hui* refers to the blending [of aromatics].[746]
> 古者燒香草以降神，故曰薰，曰蕙。薰者熏也，蕙者和也。

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[744] 香為信心之使也。T2126:241c01; cf. trans. Welter, *Administration*, 301 ("[incense] conveyed the sincerity of his faith"). While the wording may speak to Chinese influence, a very similar idea is present in Indian Buddhist texts, especially several versions of the *Pūrṇāvadāna* and *Sumāgadhāvadāna*. For the former, see e.g., T200:203a07–b29; for the latter, see e.g., T125:660a1–665b09. In both stories incense is burned atop a tall structure while the smoke travels to the Buddha's location where it is treated as his emissary. It is worth noting that early versions of the *Pūrṇāvadāna* do not have the protagonist burn incense, but he instead uses his powers of flight to go directly to the Buddha's side. A slightly later version has him scatterings flowers that functions as messengers. It is only the latest iterations of the story that involve incense smoke. These shifts from flying, to flowers, and to incense are noted in Tatelman, *Glorious Deeds*, 144, 150, and 61 [sic], respectively.

[745] DTQL:235. This passage is discussed in Chapter 3, Section 1.

[746] BCGM:1.901 [薰草/集解].

Li Shenzhen's view conforms to the broadly accepted medieval notions of burning incense, but as we have already seen, *xun* and *hui*, both referring to sweet basil, are simply never described in early sources as being burned to "draw down the spirits." *Xun*, the term for sweet basil in the temperate north, is described in Han court protocol manuals as being used to fumigate the garments of high-ranking courtiers; it is never described as a tool for state sacrifice. *Hui*, the term for sweet basil in the subtropical south, is often described as being tied to a garment's belt-sash as perfume and treated as an emblem of purity and a sign of the divine; it is never described as being burned.[747] These distinctions should matter. Even when we have evidence through the hymns of the Western Han Music Bureau of a coalescence between the alimentary paradigm and the adornment paradigm of ritual during state sacrifice, burning plant matter as incense is still not recorded.

The idea of performing special rites to draw down (*jiang*) the spirits is substantiated in early Chinese ritual treatises, but these rites are tied to different kinds of sensual practices, such as the employment of music (*le* 樂) or shamanic dance (*wu* 舞). Smell, too, was used to attract the spirits, but this was often limited to food and other banquet aromas, not smoke (and when smoke was used, smell was not salient). Specifically, *chang*-ale is most commonly cited as having the power to cause the spirits to descend. This view has its early origins in the "Suburban Sacrifice of a Single Victim" chapter of the *Record of Rites* where the sacrificial libation is explicitly utilized for its spiced aroma. By the Eastern Han, the influential exegete Zheng Xuan envisioned the aroma of spiced ale to move bi-directionally, upwards and downwards, a position later clarified by Jia Gongyan who claims, "the liquid enters into the

[747] For more on the use of these scented plants, see my comments to the Aromatic from Lingling at HC#20 and sweet basil at HC#32.

earth and its *qi* ascends into Heaven."[748] Many other Han-era works attest to similar interpretations. Xu Shen's gloss on *chang*-ale notes its ability to "draw down the spirits" by virtue of its aroma.[749] Furthermore, Wang Chong's *Weighted Debates* reports that "the fragrance of *chang*[-ale] is piercing," before adding, "when sacrificing, pour out the *chang*[-ale] to draw down the spirits."[750]

During the Han, a different phraseology describing the effects of sacrificial ritual starts to appear with more regularity, namely the ability to penetrate (*tong*) into Heaven and the realm of the spirits.[751] Moreover, the kinds of substances that are identified as having such power are expanded into a much larger world of floral, faunal, and mineral substances that are used as religio-therapeutic drugs. For example, the *Classic of Materia Medica of the Divine Husband* and the collected annotations from the *Supplementary Record by Famous Physicians* list around two dozen substances with the capacity to penetrate to the spirits. Reducing these items down to those that were also portrayed as having a salient odor in ancient and early medieval sources, we are left with just six substances, including costus (or unknown root plant), thoroughwort, lovage sprouts, wild ginger, musk, and storax.[752] Notably, none of these substances are explicitly described as needing to be burned like

[748] 其汁下入於地，其氣上升於天。ZLZY:17.1623. This is further discussed in Chapter 1, Section 3.
[749] 芬芳攸服，以降神也。SWJZ:5.128. Reading *you fu* 攸服 as *tiao chang* 條暢[→鬯] as emended in Zheng Xuan's commentary to the *Rites of Zhou*, ZLZY:32.1502 [sic].
[750] 芬香暢[→鬯]達者，將祭，灌暢[→鬯]降神。LHJS:5.223, cf. trans. Alfred Forke, *Lun-Hêng, Part II: Miscellaneous Essays of Wang Ch'ung* (Leipzig: Harrassowitz, 1911), 167. *Da* 達, "piercing," also carries the implication of penetrating into the realm of the spirits. Susan Erickson misinterprets this passage as referring to burning fragrant grass, see Erickson, "Boshanlu," 15.
[751] For example, the Western Han political treatise, *Luxuriant Dew of the Spring and Autumn*, describes the aroma of *chang*-ale as "penetrating" into Heaven, see Sarah A. Queen and John S. Major, *Luxuriant Gems of the Spring and Autumn* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2016), 537.
[752] See XXBC:6.172 (the ability to penetrate to the spirits is attributed in the *Supplementary Record by Famous Physicians*), XXBC:7.188 (*Classic of Materia Medica*), XXBC:7.190 (*Classic of Materia Medica*), XXBC:8.206 (*Classic of Materia Medica*), XXBC:15.363 (*Supplementary Record by Famous Physicians*), and XXBC:12.321 (*Supplementary Record by Famous Physicians*), respectively.

incense. The vast majority of the two-dozen total substances are explicitly prescribed as drugs that need to be ingested to manifest the desired effect.

Consequently, in spite of the fact that burning incense is portrayed as facilitating communication with the spiritual world in many medieval works, we find very little evidence before or during the Han attesting to similar beliefs or practices. As we saw in Chapter 4, Buddhist *pūjā* rites were transmitted to China during the Eastern Han and the use of incense in these offertory rituals undoubtedly helped shape a new medieval imagination around the use of smell and aromatics in China. These Buddhist olfactory practices were not simply adopted wholesale, but meshed with prevailing beliefs to form a more complex tapestry of ritual practice around the sense of smell. Early Chinese ideas about the power of sacrificial aromas, the adornment of scented plants, and the use of incense burners to perfume garments all formed elective affinities with Indian Buddhist ritual where fragrant pastes, powders, and incense were used to worship the Buddha, a being conceived as possessing a divine scent. Together, these practices both formed and were expressions of an extraordinarily rich olfactory imagination.

This chapter will continue to explore another important vector in the religious use of incense and other aromatics in China in early medieval period. A special focus will be placed on early Daoist scriptural sources and closely related texts from the Six Dynasties period, spanning roughly from the end of the second century to the first half of the fourth century. It is during this period when references to using incense to draw down the spirits first start to appear. Part of this investigation will focus on the use of special structures called quiescent chambers that appear in the at the tail end of the Han dynasty. Specifically, we will examine the history of the use of incense burners within these structures and tease out the various

significations of incense smoke within the context of ritual practice. Censers developed into important anchors for the activities that unfolded within the quiescent chambers and were necessary tools not only for the priest, but for the spirits who wished to communicate with their earthly supplicants, sometimes through the manipulation of incense smoke. After exploring the changing smellscape of the north after the fall of the Han, and the potential influence of Buddhism and a growing international trade in aromatics, we will move to the coastal south of the early fourth century. There we will examine the olfactory practices of Jiangnan, where alchemical and divinatory practices shaped the culture of the south. This will dovetail into exploring the role of hygiene and smell taboos, ideas that can be ultimately traced to the ancient state of Chu, and which became central to the emerging medieval Daoist tradition.

2. Burning Incense and the Esoteric Practices of Yu Ji

Arguably, the earliest named individual in surviving sources to "burn incense" (*shao xiang*) in China was the enigmatic healer and thaumaturge Yu Ji 于吉 who lived at the very end of the second century.[753] The oldest documentation of his life is found in the *Traditions of Jiangbiao* (*Jiangbiao zhuan* 江表傳) by Yu Pu 虞溥 (ca. 249–310), a compilation of stories focused on the area south of the lower Yangzi River delta known as Jiangnan. Yu Pu reports Yu Ji's *vita* as such:

[753] In the coming centuries, burning incense was increasingly associated with older historical figures, including Emperor Wu of the Han, or even the legendary Yellow Emperor, as we have seen in earlier chapters. That said, the historicity of Yu Ji (or Gan Ji, see below) is far from certain, nevertheless, elements of his biography fit well with other contemporaneous sources regarding the conspicuous use of incense and thus more likely reflect genuine views of what a second and third century religious adept might do, even if Yu Ji was a merely fictionalized figure conceived to fit that mold.

> At that time there was a master of the Way, Yu Ji, from Langya who first resided in the eastern region before coming [south] to Wu and Kuai[ji]. He built concentrative dwellings, burned incense, read books on the Way, and prepared talismanic water to cure illnesses. Many people from Wu and Kuai[ji] served him.[754]
> 時有道士琅邪于吉，先寓居東方，往來吳會，立精舍，燒香讀道書，制作符水以治病，吳會人多事之。

This brief biographical note tells us that Yu Ji hailed from Langya 琅邪 (also 琅琊), an old coastal commandery located in present-day Shandong and traditional stronghold of the masters of methods. This information, in conjunction with a similarity of name, has caused many scholars to identify Yu Ji as Gan Ji 干吉, an equally enigmatic figure who lived at approximately the same time. We primarily know of Gan Ji through a memorial presented to Emperor Huan in 166 which claims that a divine book (*shenshu* 神書) was given to Emperor Shun 順帝 (r. 125–144) by Gong Song 宮嵩 of Langya, who in turn originally received the work from Gan Ji. This books is identified as the *Book of Great Peace with Headings Written in Blue* (*Taiping qingling shu* 太平青領書), a precursor to the *Scripture on Great Peace* (*Taiping jing* 太平經; DZ1101) which advocated for state governance based on returning to the Way as a means to curtail social instability.[755] Gong Song's book was deemed heretical and immediately dismissed by Emperor Shun's court, yet the notion of a Great Peace (*taiping* 太平) proved far more durable among the masses as a political ideology. It helped spur a popular movement that came to a head in 184 when an armed uprising, termed the Yellow

[754] SGZ:46.1110, trans. (with minor changes) in de Crespigny, *Generals of the South*, 157. The *Traditions of Jiangbiao* is now lost, but this passage is part of Pei Songzhi's 裴松之 (372–451) annotations to the biography of Sun Ce 孫策 (175–200) in the *Record of the Three Kingdoms* (*Sanguo zhi* 三國志). The remainder of Yu Pu's account explains how Yu Ji's healing prowess and fame made him extremely popular among the troops of Sun Ce. Unfortunately for Yu Ji, the general quickly soured on his haughty and deceptive nature and ordered him to be executed, see de Crespigny, *Generals of the South*, 158–59.

[755] The memorial of Xiang Kai, who also hailed from southern Shangdong, and other relevant details concerning Gan Ji are discussed in de Crespigny, *Portents of Protest*, esp. pp. 27–31, 90–93. For the larger context of the *Scripture on Great Peace* and Gan Ji's role, see Hendrischke, *Scripture on Great Peace*, esp. 31–36.

Turban Rebellion by the state, were ultimately defeated by government troops.[756] Thus, despite neither Gong Song and nor the *Book of Great Peace with Headings Written in Blue* are mentioned in Yu Ji's biographical note, most scholars still opt to treat him as identical with the second century spiritual founder of the Great Peace movement.[757]

These issues need not concern us here other than to note that Yu Ji, if identical to Gan Ji, can also be linked to a famous religious insurrectional movement, an event that might help explain his departure from Langya, a region that was also well known at the time for pervasive banditry.[758] Whatever may be the case, the *Traditions of Jiangbiao* claims Yu Ji moved down the coast, possibly following old shipping routes, to the neighboring Wu 吳 and Kuaiji 會稽 commanderies, areas that roughly correspond to southern Jiangsu and northern Zhejiang along the southeastern seaboard.

Turning to Yu Ji's esoteric career, after arriving in the south it is reported that he was able to gather a large group of local supporters who "served him," presumably the result of his abilities to perform healing miracles with talismanic water (*fushui* 符水). Talismanic water refers to special therapeutic concoctions of water mixed with the ashes of burned

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[756] For more on the ideology of the *Scripture of Great Peace* and its political influence during the Eastern Han, see Anna K. Seidel, "The Image of the Perfect Ruler in Early Taoist Messianism: Lao-Tzu and Li Hung," *History of Religions* 9, no. 2/3 (1969): 216–47.

[757] Most modern scholars adopt the reading of Gan Ji to collectively refer to both figures, based in part on the name used in the oldest print editions of relevant sources, see B.J. Mansvelt Beck, "The Date of the Taiping Jing," *T'oung Pao*, Second Series, 66, no. 4/5 (1980): 10n.1 (who relies on the work of Fukui Kōjun). It should be noted that based on the information in the memorial, Gan Ji would have been active in the earlier part of the second century, and, if we are to take the *Traditions of Jiangbiao* seriously, "Yu Ji" was killed by Sun Ce at the very end of the second century, thus making the adept close to one hundred years old. Because of this advanced age some scholars prefer to view Gan Ji and Yu Ji as different individuals, see e.g., Seiwert, *Popular Religious Movements*, 69. Concerns over an advanced-aged Gan Ji were also voiced in the medieval period, see de Crespigny, *Generals of the South*, 159–60.

[758] On state conflicts with bandits in Langya, see Rafe de Crespigny, "Politics and Philosophy Under the Government of Emperor Huan 159-168 A.D.," *T'oung Pao*, Second Series, 66, no. 1/3 (1980): 70–71n.52 and de Crespigny, *Generals of the South*, 45.

talismans, a practice that goes back to at least the second century BCE.[759] These elixirs were common to the Eastern Han religious milieu, especially in the aftermath of epidemics that ravaged the empire in the late second century. Yu Ji's older contemporary, Zhang Jue 張角 (d. 184), and leader of the aforementioned Yellow Turbans, had employed similar healing techniques in the same coastal region a few decades earlier.[760]

Another element critical Yu Ji's biography is the construction of concentrative dwellings (*jingshe* 精舍), structures that have an undetermined relationship to quiescent chambers (*jingshi* 靜室) used contemporaneously in the southwest (we will return to this issue below). The structures built by Yu Ji, at least in name, have a long history in China worth briefly touching upon. The *locus classicus* for the term "concentrative dwellings" is found in the mystically oriented "Inward Training" (Neiye 內業) chapter of *Master Guan* (*Guanzi* 管子) that dates to around the fourth century BCE. The term refers to the transformation of an adept's body into a space where the mind can be settled, quieted, and concentrated.[761] By the Eastern Han, however, this somatic metaphor for bio-spiritual cultivation techniques had materialized into real physical structures that dotted the Chinese landscape, also sometimes called concentrative huts (*jinglu* 精廬). Dynastic histories inform us that these structures housed private academies for the study and exegesis of classical texts. For example, scholars Liu Shu 劉淑 (d. 169), from Hejian 河間 (in modern Hebei), and Tan

[759] Harper, "Conception of Illness," 226n.84.
[760] As noted in the third century *Abridged Archives* (*Dianlüe* 典略), see Terry F. Kleeman, *Celestial Masters: History and Ritual in Early Daoist Communities* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2016), 29 (who refers to Zhang Jue as Zhang Jiao). For general description of how it was performed in the fourth century, see Strickmann, *Chinese Magical Medicine*, 9.
[761] See translated passage in W. Allyn Rickett, *Guanzi: Political, Economic, and Philosophical Essays from Early China, Vol. 1* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 1965), 160; also see the discussion in Jonathan Pettit, "Learning From Maoshan: Temple Construction in Early Medieval China" (Ph.D. dissertation, Indiana University, 2013), 65.

Fu 檀敷 (d.u.), from Shanyang 山陽 (Shandong), both recruited hundreds of students from great distances around China to their private schools.[762]

There is little reason to believe, however, that Yu Ji used his concentrative dwellings as private schools for studying the classics. Yu Pu alerts us to the fact that Yu Ji was known to have read books on the Way (*daoshu* 道書), suggesting his disavowal of traditional institutions of power and prestige. It is more common to read these concentrative dwellings as healing centers for patients seeking Yu Ji's religio-therapeutic power. This interpretation overlaps with the use of quiescent chambers as centers for healing and the expiation of moral transgressions. While some scholars may prefer to see differences between these two structures due to their different names, it is worth noting that the construction of special buildings for esoteric study and training was a part of the broader social and religious milieu of the Eastern Han and Six Dynasties. In addition to private teaching academies and healing centers, small ritual structures were also erected by adepts to conduct alchemical experiments in seclusion. Thus we find the alchemist Ge Hong promoting the use of concentrative chambers (*jingshi* 精室) as the ideal location for concocting elixirs of immortality.[763] The variety of names for such ritual structures would only expand the coming centuries, with the *Scripture on Great Peace* attesting to quiescent places (*jingchu* 靜處), thatched chambers (*maoshi* 茆室), and hidden chambers (*youshi* 幽室).[764]

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[762] HHS:67.2190 and HHS:67.2214, respectively. Kasuga Reichi has identified at least twenty-two of these academies, some reportedly with thousands of students, see Kasuga Reichi, "Shōja kō," *Nanto Bukkyō* 23 (1969): 133–34. See also Stein, "Mouvements du Taoïsme," 70 and sources therein; Yoshikawa Tadao, "Seishitsu kō," *Tōhō gakuhō* 59 (1987): 148–149.

[763] DZ1185:4.16b, trans. Ware, *Alchemy*, 90 ("cell of retreat"); cf. Pettit, "Maoshan," 32 ("quiescent dwelling").

[764] DZ1101:36.6a, 96.8b, 98.1a, respectively; also noted in Pettit, "Maoshan," 31. To this we might also add "incense chamber" (*xiangshi* 香室), but this is only found in a single passage attributed to the *Scripture on Great Peace*. It can be found in the *Pearl Satchel of the Three Caverns* (*Sandong zhunang* 三洞珠囊), see DZ1139:1.21b. A similar quote is preserved in the *Imperial Readings of the Taiping Era* (*Taiping yulan* 太平御

What can this information regarding Yu Ji's use of talismanic water and concentrative dwellings tell us about the last element of his biography, burning incense? Read from the vantage point of the later medieval period, that fact that Yu Ji burned incense may not sound odd or worthy of our scrutiny. Yet, given the rarity of such a practice in contemporary second century sources, burning incense may have been as noteworthy to early medieval audiences as Yu Ji's feats of miraculous healing. I suggest that instead of dismissing Pu Yu's comment on burning incense as inconsequential to Yu Ji's identity, we read it as a strategic choice that critically informs perceptions about his life and career. Read in this manner, the brief catalogue of Yi Ji's activities all shape the wandering adept in the mode of a wonderworker acquainted with esoteric arts. Burning incense thus should be reframed and envisioned an esoteric practice with supermundane potency and not as a holdover of older state sacrificial practice.

Crucially, this characterization of burning incense approximates that of Yu Ji's contemporaries in the far south, namely Zhang Jin, the regional inspector of Jiaozhi, and Shi Xie, the governor of Jiao prefecture, discussed in the previous chapter. In those cases, burning incense was portrayed as a hallmark of foreign and exotic influence. We might conclude that Pu Yu, writing from the capital at Luoyang about a century after Yi Ji's death, noted the burning of incense as a means to signal the anomalous character of Yu Ji's activities on the coastal fringes of the old Han empire. This is partly supported by Mitsuda Takashi who has argued that Pu Yu's selection of materials was intended to supplement the

覽), see TPYL:6.667. The "incense chamber" is discussed in relation to Yu Ji in Wang Chengwen, "Han-Jin Dao jing suojian 'jingshi' mingcheng jiqi yu zhaijie zhidu de guanxi," *Wei-Jin Nanbeichao Sui-Tang shi ziliao* 34 (2016): 2–3. One might wonder if this nomenclature, perhaps a later interpolation, is influenced by the Buddhist use of *xiangshi* as a translation for the cultic abode of the Buddha, the *gandhakuṭī*, see Strong, "Gandhakuṭī"; Schopen, "Fragrance of the Buddha."

more or less straightforward historical account of Chen Shou's 陳壽 (233–297) *Record of the Three Kingdoms* by adding more dramatic accounts of anomalous figures.[765] Thus, while the particularities of Yu Ji's practices remain obscure, the connotations are clear – burning incense was considered a notable and strange activity on par with concocting talismanic water and building concentrative dwellings.

If the connotations of burning incense speak to Yu Ji's special character, we still are left with little insight about what such activities were supposed to denote in practice. One might reasonably assume that Yu Ji used incense as part of the healing arts within concentrative dwellings, just as was typically done in the so-called quiescent chambers. But as we will see in the next section, the use of incense within these structures is not attested in the earliest strata of documents explaining their use.

If we can exclude mundane activities, such as garment fumigation, from the scope of Yu Ji's purported use of incense, what might be the end-goal or telos of such an act? On one hand, we might suspect fumigation techniques, motivated by older medical beliefs in bug-related etiologies, were adopted into Yu Ji's esoteric healing repertoire.[766] For example, the Western Han physician Chunyu Yi was early expositor of vessel theory and still practiced fumigation techniques to cure his patients. Notably, Chunyu Yi was from the state of Qi in present-day Shandong, the same region from which Yu Ji originated.[767]

On the other hand, it is possible that Yu Ji was using fragrant incense to communicate with the spirits as part of his healing rites. But we are left with the question of how this latter

[765] Mitsuda Takashi, "Gu Fu 'Kō hyōden' nitsuite " *Sōka daigaku jinbun ronshū* 30 (2018): 41–59. Mitsuda argues that Pu Yu composed the *Traditions of Jiangbiao*, possibly based on the requisitioned library of the coastal Wu court, sometime between the 280s and the fall of Luoyang in 311.
[766] The close connection between fumigation and bug etiology is noted in Harper, *Early*, 97–97.
[767] For more on the life of Chunyu Yi, see Harper, 7–8, 55–67ff. and Raz, *Emergence of Daoism*, 94–98.

practice developed. It may be the case that such a change in cultural practice happened "off record" and the plants that were once adorned by shamans in the state of Chu to attract the spirts, such as thoroughwort, wild angelica, and sweet basil, were at some time incinerated to induce the spirits to action. The higher concentration of censers in the south suggests a particular regional focus on burning plants. Consequently, Yu Ji may have been continuing a practice that spread to the masters of methods common the northeast, and Langya in particular, or which he encountered when he arrived in the coastal region of Jiangnan, another center of occult arts.[768]

External factors may have also be at play. We know that by the end of the second century Buddhists in China were promoting the use of incense as part of the ritual veneration of the Buddha, such as clearly expressed in the commentarial addition of An Shigao to his translation of the *Buddha's Teaching of the Sutra on the Eightfold Noble Path*. For this reason, some have speculated that Yi Ji was exposed to Buddhist ritual, perhaps due to the exchange of goods and people between Jiaozhi in the far south and the eastern coastal regions that would later become the kingdom of Wu 吳 (222–280) after the fall of the Han.[769] I am not aware of any definitive evidence placing Buddhists in Langya, Wu, or Kuaiji at the

[768] The ancient state of Chu and the state of Qi, in present-day Shandong, shared a border during the Warring States period and it is presumed a close cultural connection between the two regions persisted well into the Han. Thus, it is possible shamans, often portrayed as women in the *Songs of Chu*, had close interactions with the figures known in Han dynastic records as the masters of methods. It is worth noting that the earliest recovered *dou*-censer in the north, dating from the early Western Han, was found in the Shangwang cemetery in Linzi, Shandong, see footnote 406. As we saw in Chapter 3, Section 2, the *dou*-censer shape is believed to have originated in Chu, thus the Linzi censer is firm material evidence for the interaction between the two regions as well as a shared practice in burning plant matter.

[769] Seiwert suggests more conclusively that, "we can be sure, however, that the use of incense, which is attested for the sect of Yu Ji in the late second century, was inspired by Buddhist rituals, since this practice was introduced into China from India," see Seiwert, *Popular Religious Movements*, 96; see also Wu Chao, "Han dai ren fenxiang"; Hendrischke, "Early Daoist Movements," 154.

end of the second century, but such claims cannot be dismissed out of hand.[770] Nevertheless, we are left with the fact that, at the end of the Eastern Han, surviving textual materials unambiguously attesting to burning incense are extremely limited and – outside of Han court protocols for fumigating garments – center on figures living in coastal contact zones far from the traditional urban centers of imperial power.

Yu Ji remains among the first small subset of individuals in China who are described in extant historical materials as burning incense. It remains undetermined how or why Yu Ji engaged this practice, but the short biographical account of his life by Pu Yu suggests it may have been considered among his repertoire of occult activities that established him as regionally venerated healer and wonderworker. Also noted in Yu Ji's biography is his use of specially constructed concentrative dwellings. Since small, freestanding buildings of this sort eventually became a primary location for burning incense in the Daoist tradition, we will now turn our attention to these structures and the group that initially built them.

[770] Anthropomorphic forms resembling the Buddha start to appear on a range of artifacts in the Eastern Han, but most of these have been recovered from tombs around Sichuan. Similar imagery from Jiangsu and Zhejiang are mostly from the Western Jin, see Bin Bai, "Religious Beliefs as Reflected in the Funerary Record," in *Early Chinese Religion, Part Two: The Period of Division (220–589 AD)*, ed. John Lagerwey and Pengzhi Lü, vol. 1 (Leiden: Brill, 2010), 1022. The Buddhist-like images found at Mount Kongwang, in Jiangsu, and often dated to the late Eastern Han, are in the words of Bai Bin, "an isolated piece of evidence," Bai, 1024. Zürcher seems to view Xiang Kai's knowledge of the Buddha and basic Buddhist teaching as evidence for Buddhist activity in his natal home of southern Shandong, see Zürcher, *Buddhist Conquest*, 37, 41 (Map I.)

3. Entering the Quiescent Chamber: Rites of the Early Celestial Masters

During the Six Dynasties, one of the most important religious uses for incense burners was in service of various rites held in structures often called *jingshi*, or "quiescent chambers."[771] There are several competing theories in modern scholarship regarding their origins. Rolf Stein has suggested quiescent chambers derived from the private "Confucian" academies of classical learning noted above.[772] Taking a different perspective, Yoshikawa Tadao finds their most immediate predecessors in "pleading chambers" (*qingshi* 請室), small private annexes where law-breaking aristocrats could admit to their crimes without being bound in fetters to face public disgrace.[773] Wang Chengwen, on the other hand, sees the origins in reputed "abstention halls" (*zhaigong* 齋宮) attached to the ancestral temple where the emperor would sequester to purify himself before important sacrifices.[774] Instead of looking for a single structural antecedent, it appears medieval quiescent chambers may have been a particular expression of a more widespread phenomenon of building separate structures for

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[771] The standard study on quiescent chambers remains Yoshikawa, "Seishitsu kō"; one might also profitably consult R.A. Stein, "Remarques sur les mouvements du Taoïsme politico-religieux au IIe siècle ap. J.-C.," *T'oung Pao*, Second Series, 50, no. 1 (1963): 38–39, 70–72; Pettit, "Maoshan," 28–35; Kleeman, *Celestial Masters*, 222–28; Wang, "Han-Jin Dao jing suojian jingshi." There is a variety of names and orthographic variants for this structure in received sources, including *jingshi* 靖室 ("tranquility chamber"), *jingshi* 淨室 ("clarity chamber"), *qingshe* 清舍 ("pure dwelling"), and *jingshe* 精舍 ("concentrative dwelling"), as well as *maowu* 茅屋 ("thatched hut"), *fangliu* 方溜 ("square eaves"), and *huandu* 環堵 ("surrounding barrier"). Several less-common terms not noted here are discussed in Wang, "Han-Jin Dao jing suojian jingshi." The common English translation as oratory (originally deriving from French scholarship, *oratoire*) while evocative, fails to capture the meaning of any of the above Chinese terms.

[772] Stein, "Mouvements du Taoïsme," 38–39, 70–72; also see Yoshikawa, "Seishitsu kō," 148–49.

[773] Yoshikawa, "Seishitsu kō," 153–158.

[774] Wang, "Han-Jin Dao jing suojian jingshi"; Wang Chengwen, "Lun Han-Jin Daojiao 'jingshi' de xingzhi he laiyuan," *Xueshi yanjiu* 2 (2017): 109–23. Wang Chengwen rejects Yoshikawa's argument because pleading chambers were too much like prisons and consequently suggests an antecedent structure with a closer historical relationship to ancient ritual practice. I ultimately find Wang's evidence for abstention halls inconclusive, however, because the handful of passages where the structure is cited are either ambiguous in detailing its use or are drawn from works post-dating the Han, see especially Wang, "Lun Han-Jin Daojiao jingshi," 114–15.

sequestering, self-cultivation, or specialized use. We see this also, for example, in the construction of small temples and "chamber cults" (*fangsi* 房祀) throughout the countryside, oftentimes where female *wu*-shamans or other specialists could be called upon to perform exorcistic or summoning rites.[775]

Central to our inquiry, quiescent chambers are noted in the early third century historical record, the *Abridged Archives* (*Dianlüe* 典略), as a defining element of the Way of Celestial Masters (*tianshidao* 天師道), a millennialist movement originating in the southwestern part of China in the ancient region of Shu. It was founded in 142 when Zhang Daoling 張道陵 (fl. 142) received a revelation from Grand High Lord Lao (*Taishang Laojun* 太上老君), subsequently creating a vast community of regional groups lead by priests who were called libationers (*jijiu* 祭酒).[776] Because of the lasting importance of the church-like institutions of the Celestial Masters, many scholars consider Zhang Daoling the originator of an institutional style of Daoism that has persisted, albeit in the guise of differently named traditions, throughout Chinese history until the present day.

According to the *Abridged Archives*, the early Celestial Masters practiced ritual healing where the sick were made to contemplate their transgressions (*si guo* 思過) inside the specially constructed quiescent chambers. Additionally, the sick were aided by the priests who drafted three copies of a document listing the offender's name and confession, called the Handwritten Depositions to the Three Officials (*sanguan shoushu* 三官手書), which were

[775] See Stein, "Religious Taoism," 67–68, 78–81, and sources cited therein; see also Kleeman, *Celestial Masters*, 222.
[776] For an extensive overview of the early development of the Celestial Masters, see Kleeman, *Celestial Masters*. A purported early biography of Zhang Daoling, also known as Zhang Ling, can be found in Campany, *Heaven and Earth*, 349–56.

then presented to the spiritual offices of Heaven, Earth, and Water.[777] The guiding principle was that physical illness was viewed as the result of ethical failures, thus healing was the product of confession to the appropriate spiritual authorities.

This characterization drawn from an official history recounts practices that are well documented in other textual materials. Scriptural sources further describe quiescent chambers as small, freestanding huts located at the homes of priests and wealthy patrons of the Celestial Masters. Further regulations specify that the lone doorway of the structure face towards the east and that the interior space should be kept clean and tidy.[778] The detailed sequence of liturgical procedures performed in these spaces have been examined by scholars elsewhere, but some of the most important rites include approaching and entering the quiescent chamber (*rujing* 入靜), summoning and exteriorizing spirits (*chushen* 出神) that inhabit the priest's body, and drafting and dispatching the petition (*shangzhang* 上章) to the appropriate spiritual offices on behalf of the sick petitioner.[779] Since different spirit-officials were responsible for specific types of diseases, these rituals were symbolic bureaucratic acts that only found success through orderly legalistic procedures.[780]

In addition to the above rites, two more elements have come to define the basic framework of Daoist rituals that are believed to have emerged from the Celestial Masters: the

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[777] SGZ:8.264. A full translation of this passage can be found in Pengzhi Lü, "Daoist Rituals," in *Early Chinese Religion, Part Two: The Period of Division (220–589 AD)*, ed. John Lagerwey and Pengzhi Lü, vol. 2 (Leiden: Brill, 2010), 1251 and Kleeman, *Celestial Masters*, 28–30. For a lengthy note on the handwritten depositions, which are later called petitions (*zhang* 章), see Ursula-Angelika Cedzich, "The Organon of the Twelve Hundred Officials and Its Gods," *Daoism: Religion, History and Society* 1 (2009): 20–21n.39.

[778] Several descriptions of the physical structure are summarized in Yoshikawa, "Seishitsu kō," 127–33; Kleeman, *Celestial Masters*, 222–28.

[779] Descriptions of these various rites are summarized in Yoshikawa, "Seishitsu kō," 137–44; Lü, "Daoist Rituals," 1250–57, 1273–79 and Kleeman, *Celestial Masters*, 246–51. An overview more general in character can be found in Strickmann, *Chinese Magical Medicine*, 4–10.

[780] Cedzich, "Ghosts and Demons," 31.

rites of "lighting the censer" (*falu* 發爐) and "extinguishing the censer" (*fulu* 復爐). These are often viewed as integral components in medieval and present-day Daoist liturgies, serving to both initiate and close communication between the priest and the divine realm.[781] The importance of incense is highlighted by Kristofer Schipper who notes "the name 'pure chamber' [i.e., quiescent chamber] no doubt derives from the incense burner and the *smoke baths* [italics in original]."[782] For Schipper, the concepts of spiritual purity that run throughout the Daoist tradition are realized through the senses in the forms of fragrances that fill the ritual space. Importantly, and perhaps curiously, in spite of the prominence of fragrant incense and censer rites in medieval and modern Daoist works, the *Abridged Archives* does not discuss the use of either.

Fortunately, we have been afforded historical documents that can help reconstitute several of the ritual protocols of the early Celestial Masters in order to analyze their use of aromatics. One such document was compiled by the polymath Tao Hongjing 陶弘景 (456–536) at the end of the fifth century, entitled the *Secret Instructions to Ascend as a Perfected* (*Dengzhen yinjue* 登真隱訣; DZ421), hereafter *Secret Instructions*. This text was based on new divinely revealed teachings that appeared in visions to the mystic Yang Xi 楊羲 (330–c. 386) between the years 364 and 370. These teachings were recorded and came to form the basis of the new Supreme Purity (*shangqing* 上清) movement of Daoism, continuing many

[781] For an overview of these rites, see Poul Anderson, "Falu, Lighting the Incense Burner," in *The Encyclopedia of Taoism*, ed. Fabrizio Pregadio, vol. 1 (New York: Routledge, 2008), 400–401. For their appearance in a present-day Numinous Treasure ritual liturgy, see John Lagerwey, *Taoist Ritual in Chinese Society and History* (New York: Macmillan Publishing Company., 1987), 121–23, 146–47. For a translation of an invocation chanted while lighting the incense burner, see Kristofer M. Schipper, *The Taoist Body* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), 97.
[782] Schipper, 92.

of the practices of the Celestial Masters. Tao Hongjing was responsible for redacting many of these Supreme Purity materials and preserving them through his writings.[783]

The *Secret Instructions* are eminently practical. They are written as a manual for a priest, outlining procedures and prayers for several different liturgical sequences with additional annotations by Tao Hongjing himself. Importantly, due to Tao Hongjing's comments, we are given some insight as to what parts derive from the "old methods of Hanzhong" (*Hanzhong jiu fa* 漢中舊法), a reference to the period when the Celestial Masters had secured a small independent theocracy in Hanzhong 漢中 between 191 and 215. Moreover, according to Tao Hongjing, a portion of the Hanzhong rites were preserved on an "ancient document of mulberry paper" (*guzhi gushu* 穀紙古書) adding further insights into the early practices of Celestial Masters before their Great Diaspora to the north in 215 and later spread to the coastal south a century later.[784]

By reviewing Tao Hongjing's scrupulous notes, the segments that can be reconstructed and faithfully traced to the Hanzhong community are limited to the parts of the ritual within the quiescent chamber that relate to exteriorizing the bodily spirit officers and,

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[783] For a summary of the Supreme Purity revelations, see Isabelle Robinet, *Taoism: Growth of a Religion* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1997), 114–148; for a more detailed analysis, see Isabelle Robinet, *La révélation du Shangqing dans l'histoire du taoïsme*, 2 Vols (Paris: École française d'Extrême-Orient, 1984). For an overview of Tao Hongjing's life, see Michel Strickmann, "On the Alchemy of T'ao Hung-Ching," in *Facets of Taoism: Essays in Chinese Religions*, ed. Holmes Welch and Anna Seidel (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1979), 123–94. Tao Hongjing's original manuscript for the *Secret Instructions* was much larger and apparently contained copious information about drug recipes, see comments in Robinet, *Révélation*, Vol. 2, 347–51.

[784] DZ421:3.6a. "Great Diaspora" is a phrase used by Kleeman to refer to the period after the dissolution of the Hanzhong theocracy and subsequent spread to the north, see Kleeman, *Celestial Masters*. *Guzhi* here refers to the paper made from the fibrous bark of the *Broussonetia papyrifera*, the "paper mulberry," a plant commonly used in China to make paper since the third century, if not earlier, see Tsuen-hsuin Tsien, *Science and Civilisation in China, Vol. 5, Chemistry and Chemical Technology, Part I: Paper and Printing* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), 56–59. Kleeman uses the generic term "rice paper," see Kleeman, *Celestial Masters*, 247.

by implication, dispatching petitions.[785] Moreover, Tao Hongjing has conveniently copied the document he saw on mulberry paper, entitled the *Hanzhong Method for Entering the Diocese and Holding Audience in the Quiescent Chamber* (*Hanzhong ruzhi chaojing fa* 漢中入治朝靜), hereafter the *Hanzhong Method,* into his *Secret Instructions*. The title is partly misleading, however, as it only contains four basic invocations, to be spoken while rotating counterclockwise from the east, to the spirits of the four cardinal directions.[786] Importantly, among rites that can be traced to the Hanzhong community, there is no discussion on the use of censers or incense, or invocations to the various spirits that would come to attend to the incense burner in latter renditions of the liturgy for the quiescent chamber.

While it remains possible the early Celestial Masters' censer protocols simply did not survive in documented form to the fifth century, the complete absence of all peripheral mention to the censer or burning incense (or to spirits in charge of these items) in the records known to Tao Hongjing remains curious. It might be the case the lack of references to censers reflects broader historical trends in China at the end of the second century and start of the third century when burning incense as part of ritual was not yet fully integrated into the religious fabric of Chinese society. As we saw with Yu Ji, the act of burning incense was considered unique enough for Yu Pu to note it among his repertoire of esoteric activities – it was not yet "naturalized" so as to be irrelevant to his biography.

Comparatively, the main text of the *Secret Instructions* detailing the late fourth century Supreme Purity method for entering the quiescent chamber (*rujing fa* 入靜法)

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[785] Tao Hongjing explicitly notes, "The rite for exteriorizing the officers is derived from the old methods of Hanzhong," 出官之儀本出漢中舊法。DZ421:3.13a. For the connection to dispatching petitions, as well as the initiation rite of receiving the registers (*shoulu* 授籙) of the spirits and the use of talismans (*fu* 符), see Lü, "Daoist Rituals," 1254–55.

[786] DZ421:3.10b–11a, trans. Kleeman, *Celestial Masters*, 248–49.

portrays the censer as integral to the rite's performance. In addition, a censer is also required for the rite of drafting the petition as well as the performance of the daily morning and evening rites. This thorough integration of the censer signals just how important the vessel and incense had become in the ritual imagination of the Supreme Purity priests by the end of the fourth century.

Michel Strickmann has shown that changes to ritual procedure most likely occurred when the Celestial Masters made their way to Jiangnan in the coastal south after the fall of the Western Jin in 317. Specifically, Strickmann claims that Celestial Master priests had fallen prey to the "old obsessions of the south," citing the introduction of a new liturgical phraseology in the *Secret Instructions* as part of the closing rites that included the wish for the spontaneous appearance of fungal growths (*zhicai* 芝草[787]), Golden Liquor (*jinye* 金液), and Cinnabar Essence (*danjing* 丹精) in front of the incense burner.[788] According to this view, the fleeing Celestial Masters were influenced by the deep interests in alchemy and other occult arts practiced by the distinctive and "nameless" religious tradition of the south.[789] It may also be the case that they also adopted the ritualized use of the incense burner, which

[787] *Zhi* denoted a wide range of bacterial and fungal organisms, as well as more typical plants. Whatever the natural referent, *zhi* was often viewed as a divine medicine with special religio-therapeutic properties, see discussion in Dominic Steavu, "The Marvelous Fungus and The Secret of Divine Immortals," *Micrologus: Nature, Sciences and Medieval Societies* 26 (2018): 353–83.

[788] Strickmann, "T'ao Hung-Ching," 169. Strickmann translates the invocation as such: "Thurifer-emissary, Lords Dragon and Tiger of Left and Right, may there suddenly be in this oratory the Mushroom, Liquefied Gold, Essence of Cinnabar, and all transcendent powers intermingling before the flame of this incense-burner" 香官使者，左右龍虎君，當令靜室忽有芝草，金液丹精，百靈交會在此香火前。DZ421:3.10a. See also the treatment of this passage in Needham and Lu, *Science and Civilisation in China,* Vol. 5, Part 2, 130–31.

[789] The "nameless religion" was first used by Strickmann to denote the otherwise unnamed traditions of Jiangnan encountered by the Celestial Masters; see description and relevant citations in Dominic Steavu, *The Writ of the Three Sovereigns Book: From Local Lore to Institutional Daoism* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2019), 249n.71. A discussion of the alchemical elixirs noted in Supreme Purity sources can be found in Robinet, *Révélation*, Vol. 1, 44–48.

by the fourth century appears to have been a commonplace tool for Chinese Buddhists and increasingly viewed as a device for contacting the realm of the spirits.[790]

4. Third Century Incense Culture: A Scent Revolution

When we look to the period immediately after the dissolution of the Hanzhong community in 215, we are immediately met with a dearth of information regarding the activities of the Celestial Masters. Due to the lack of textual resources and new political environment, it is difficult to discern the activities of the Celestial Masters in the north, although there is evidence suggesting ritual performances continued without the centralized governing body of the priesthood.[791]

If we shift our attention away from early Daoist scriptural sources, we find evidence that the third century was a rapid period of development for Chinese olfactory culture. By getting a grasp on some of these changes we can find a better perspective regarding the shifts in practice for the Celestial Masters in the early fourth century. Let us first turn to the archaeological record. On one hand, tomb excavations show bronze censers declining in

[790] Unfortunately, I have been unable to consult the work of Ursula-Angelika Cedzich who also highlights the lack of special censer instructions in early Celestial Masters materials, see Ursula-Angelika Cedzich, "Das Ritual der Himmelmeister im Spiegel früher Quellen, Übersetzung und Untersuchung des liturgischen Materials im dritten *chüan* des *Teng-chen yin-chüeh*." (Ph.D. dissertation, Julius-Maximilians-Universitât, 1987). I have relied on the synopsis of this work given in Anna Seidel, "Early Taoist Ritual [Ursula-Angelika Cedzich, Das Ritual Der Himmelsmeister Im Spiegel Früher Quellen]," *Cahiers d'Extrême-Asie* 4 (1988): 199–204. Isabelle Robinet makes a similar statement in regards to this situation: "The incense burner is an instrument of purification; it seems to have been introduced by the Shangqing [i.e., Supreme Purity] school," Robinet, *Taoism*, 172. Lü Pengzhi also notes "these [incense] rites are a new creation of the [Celestial] Masters once they had come to the south and undergone the influence of the alchemical *fangshi* [i.e., masters of methods]," Lü, "Daoist Rituals," 1308, see also 1276.

[791] Masayoshi Kobayashi, "The Celestial Masters under the Eastern Jin and Liu-Song Dynasties," *Taoist Resources* 3, no. 2 (1992): 19–33; Kleeman, *Celestial Masters*, 111–89. The pertinent Celestial Masters documents dated to the third century are examined by Terry Kleeman. Relevant to our analysis, a survey of their contents does not reveal discussions on the use of incense or a focus on smell more broadly.

popularity, with only a total of approximately thirty surviving specimens dating to the entirety of the Six Dynasties period. Moreover, the tombs all belonged to prominent or otherwise wealthy families.[792] On the other hand, these finding are counterbalanced by the significant increase in ceramic censers. This jump was an effect of the quickly expanding porcelain industry with a capacity for the high-volume production of everyday wares. For example, in tombs excavated from Fujian dating to the Six Dynasties, we find nearly forty glazed porcelain censers recovered from this province alone.[793] Cui Yezhou has closely studied the manufacturing of incense burners throughout this period and shows that the total number of recovered ceramic and porcelain censers are not equal across all regions of China. As Cui demonstrates, the greatest number of porcelain censers have been recovered from tombs closest to where the largest medieval kiln sites were established. This includes the regions around the middle and lower Yangzi River, such as Hunan, Hubei, Anhui, Jiangxi, Jiangsu, Zhejiang, Fujian, and eastern Guangdong.[794] Notably, these patterns of excavation resemble the earlier Han period where higher concentrations of censers were recovered in the south. During the Six Dynasties, however, there was an apparent shift to the southeastern coast, including Jiangnan. It would appear that anyone travelling from the north, especially from the ancient northern capitals, to the south in the early medieval period would have

[792] Han, "Wei-Jin Nanbeichao shiqi de tong xunlu," 95; see also Cui, "Xianglu yanjiu," 38–40, 57–63. This is in contrast to the more than two hundred bronze censers dating to the Han, see Yang, "Handai tong xunlu yanjiu." Cui Yezhou notes that there is slight imbalance of bronze censers recovered in the north, especially around Shandong, Henan, and Beijing, see Cui, "Xianglu yanjiu," 63, 97, 116–17.
[793] Yao Qin, "Chutu xiangju yu Fujian zaoqi haiwai xiangliao maoyi," *Fijian wenbo* 3 (2015): 63; see also Cui, "Xianglu yanjiu," 36–37.
[794] Cui, 113. A list of tombs containing ceramic and porcelain censers and a typological analysis of their forms can be found in Cui, 31–38, 40–57. Cui Yezhou also analyzes the depiction of censers in Six Dynasties tomb art and finds comparatively more in the south where they were often integrated into scenes of indoor domestic activity, see Cui, 95.

encountered a distinctively different material scent culture focused on the use of incense and incense burners.

When turning to third century textual materials (excluding Buddhist scriptures), a cursory search reveals that discussions on the ritual use of censers and incense remain exceedingly scarce, just as they were a century earlier. The few documents that attest to burning aromatics again focus on their exoteric applications. For example we have several records traced to the military warlord Cao Cao 曹操 (c. 155–220), a figure with some relevance to the Celestial Masters. During the final, highly destabilized decades of the Han Dynasty, Cao Cao forced the surrender of Zhang Lu 張魯 (d. 216), the leader of the Hanzhong kingdom, in 215. As a consequence, many Celestial Masters families relocated to the north during the great diaspora, including to the cosmopolitan centers of Chang'an, Luoyang, and Ye 鄴, with the latter city becoming the final resting place of Zhang Lu's body. A year after the fall of Hanzhong, Cao Cao was elevated to the status of the vassal king of Wei, a position he held until his death in 220. That same year, Cao Cao's son Cao Pi 曹丕 (187–226) forced the Han emperor to abdicate, thus inaugurating the Cao-Wei Dynasty (220–265) of the Three Dynasties Period and posthumously awarding Cao Cao the title of Emperor Wu. According to the documents at our disposal, in the final decades of Cao Cao's life, the *de facto* autonomous ruler developed a somewhat complex relationship to incense and perfumes. An analysis of these sources can provide us a critical view into the culture of aromatics in the early third century in the north.

Among the surviving documents from Cao Cao's lifetime include several *Proclamations for Regulating Households* (*Neijie ling* 內誡令), including one that sets forth the following sumptuary ordinance:

> In the past, when all under heaven was just starting to settle, I set forth a prohibition disallowing those of my household from perfuming with aromatics. Afterwards, my daughters were matched with the imperial family and perfumed [garments?] for them. Because of this, they were allowed to burn incense. I do not like burning incense and I regret failing to have success with the prohibition. I hereby proclaim another prohibition disallowing the burning of incense. Perfumes concealed in clothing against the body are also disallowed.[795]
> 昔天下初定，吾便禁家內不得香薰。后諸女配國家為其香，因此得燒香。吾不好燒香，恨不遂所禁。令復禁，不得燒香。其以香藏衣著身，亦不得。

The proclamation reveals Cao Cao's dislike of vanity and showy ornamentation.[796] From what we can gather, an initial prohibition restricted to Cao Cao's family presumably targeted perfuming devices like censers and diffusion cages. Yet, when Cao Cao's daughters were "matched with the imperial family," pointing us to the year 213 when three of his daughters entered concubinage under Emperor Xian 獻 (r. 189–220) of the Han, they were able to circumvent the ban as new members of the imperial family. The above *Proclamation for Regulating Households*, likely issued after Cao Cao was enfeoffed as vassal king in 216, thus reimplements the original ban on censers with an additional proscription against the use of perfumes concealed in clothing. This would be in reference to scenting sachets, which according to contemporary fashion could be tied inside the sleeve of a garment at the elbow.[797]

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[795] TPYL:8.981.856, CCJ:3.53. Liu Jingmin believes the proclamation was issued after Cao Cao was enfeoffed as the vassal king of Wei, an event that occurred in 216, see Liu, *Songdai Xiangpu*, 31; de Crespigny, *Imperial Warlord*, 395–96, respectively. Three of Cao Cao's daughters entered the imperial harem in the fall of 213, all of whom were named Honorable Ladies (*guiren* 貴人), second in rank to the empress, early the following year, see de Crespigny, *Imperial Warlord*, 381, 398. This means Cao Cao's initial prohibition for his family members occurred before the fall of 213. It remains indeterminate as to when all under heaven "was just starting to settle."

[796] For comments on Cao Cao's preference for frugality, see de Crespigny, *Imperial Warlord*, 221, 440–43, 446–47.

[797] This practice is noted in Fan Qin's 繁欽 (d. 218?) poem "We Pledged our Love" (*Dingqing shi* 定情詩), see translation in Birrell, *New Songs*, 51–53; also see the entry for scenting sachet at HC#97b. A medieval depiction of a pair of scenting sachets tied at the elbow can be found in Yang, "Xunxiang fengsu," 67.

It is worth underscoring that in the context of this proclamation, incense burning is presented as a custom of adornment, albeit one that Cao Cao found overly indulgent. We know from a variety of sources, that Cao Cao lived in a society defined by personal perfuming practices. For example, we know that after Emperor Xian escaped to Xu in 196, Cao Cao presented many gifts to the child emperor and his retinue to account for the items lost in the tumultuous final years at Luoyang and Chang'an. This included sundry daily use items, including nearly forty censers, one of which was solid gold with an attached base plate, likely indicating a *boshan* censer emblematic of imperial authority.[798] Judging by the surviving itemized list of gifts, along with mirrors, pillows, and washing supplies, censers were viewed as essential equipment to life at court and for keeping up proper appearances.

Notably, the association with perfuming was not limited to the women of the court, but also to the most powerful men. Such as is the case with one of Cao Cao's most influential advisors and the Director of the Imperial Secretariat, Xun Yu 荀彧 (163–212), who was well-known in later centuries for his extravagant perfuming habits, such that he reputedly left behind a cloud of scent for three days in any place he lingered.[799] We also know through a series of five rhapsodies, one of which was composed by Cao Pi, that a foreign aromatic plant, often identified as Mediterranean rosemary (*midei* 迷迭), was cultivated on palace grounds and carried in silken pouches on the body.[800] Furthermore, a portion of a preserved letter tells us that Cao Cao had once gifted cloves, imported from the Indonesian Moluccan islands, to his rival Zhu Geliang 諸葛亮 (181–234), possibly as an insult for his bad breath

[798] CCJ:1.21–22; see also my comments to Golden Incense Burner at HC#99.
[799] See my comments to A Fondness for Incense at HC#94. We might speculate that Xun Yu enjoyed the regular tributes of incense and aromatics coming from Shi Xie stationed in Jiaozhi.
[800] Milburn, "Aromas," 462n.94 and Milburn, "Midiexiang," 37. The five rhapsodies are translated and analyzed in Milburn, "Midiexiang," 26–44 and Kong, *Fu Poetry Along the Silk* Roads, 22–35.

and poor counsel.[801] Olivia Milburn has suggested the early medieval period saw the ruling elite establish personal perfuming practices that distinguished themselves by their own special scent.[802] While personal perfuming devices are far older, the new dimension of scent culture in the third century was the growing availability of supra-regional luxury aromatics, thus providing the ruling elite another avenue to express high status and cultural sophistication. I believe this this should be seen as the cultural and social backdrop in which Cao Cao issued his proclamation suspending the use of incense and scenting sachets.

Importantly, as vassal king, it is believed Cao Cao's regulations for households extended beyond his own family to the general public.[803] If such a ban was widely enforced throughout the domain of Wei, it may have severely curtailed the use of incense in the north.[804] Yet, given that Cao Cao died in 220, likely no more than four years after announcing the ban, it seems unlikely a full public ban would have had a lasting impact. While possibly apocryphal, the short-lasting effect of such a sumptuary ordinance is suggested through a story of Cao Pi who reputedly startled a horse with a gust of perfume wafting from his robes.[805] In either regard, Cao Cao's distaste for burning incense, which he openly admits in the proclamation, restricted its personal use as perfume; nothing is said of its sacrificial or esoteric uses.

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[801] CCJ:3.69. For a discussion on the metaphorical implication of Cao Cao's gift, see Xiaofei Tian, "Material and Symbolic Economies: Letters and Gifts in Early Medieval China," in *A History of Chinese Letters and Epistolary Culture*, ed. Antje Richter (Leiden: Brill, 2015), 183.
[802] Milburn, "Aromas," 462 and Milburn, "Midiexiang," 37–38.
[803] de Crespigny, *Imperial Warlord*, 373.
[804] Cui speculates this ordinance may account for the relative scarcity of censers recovered from tombs during this period, see Cui, "Xianglu yanjiu," 97.
[805] SGZ:29.810. The story appears in the biography of Zhu Jianping 朱建平 (d. ca. 220), a master of methods skilled in physiognomic arts, including the physiognomy of horses (*xiangma* 相馬). According to the full anecdote, Zhu Jianping encountered a horse and predicted it would die that day. Accordingly, this was the same horse startled by Cao Pi's perfume, which caused the animal to bite the emperor's knee. In anger, Cao Pi had it immediately put to death.

As a last point, one more formal proclamation by Cao Cao deserves our attention since it potentially forms a contrasting viewpoint with the sumptuary ordinance. In an undated proclamation issued in response to buildings that were deemed unclean (*bu jie* 不潔), Cao Cao directs his subjects to burn liquidambar gum and sweet basil (*hui*).[806] Additional historical context is not provided, but in 217 there was a devastating plague that ravaged most of China, killing several of Cao Cao's family members and close friends.[807] I believe such an event could have spurred a decision to issue this directive dealing with unclean spaces. As we saw in Chapter 3, the roughly contemporaneous *Supplementary Record by Famous Physicians* explains that sweet basil (*xun*) was effective in "driving away stench and malign *qi*."[808] The contemporary medical use of liquidambar, collected by tapping trees that grow in the tropical south, is less straightforward since it was not introduced to materia medica literature until the seventh century.[809] If we view this proclamation as a response to a deadly epidemic, then it would not necessarily run counter to Cao Cao's aversion to ornamentation. In this case, the use of scented substances, both of which were regionally available, were viewed in a context of health and hygiene.[810]

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[806] 房屋不潔，聽得燒楓膠及薰草。CCJ:3.59, TPYL:8.982.863; cf. trans. Milburn, "Midiexiang," 37n.53 (who reads the aromatics as maple-resin and loosestrife). The oldest citation to this proclamation is found in the *Forest of Pearls in the Garden of the Dharma* (*Fayuan zhulin* 法苑珠林; T2122) which has *feng pu* 楓曝, "liquidambar dried in the sun," see T2122:573c12–13.

[807] de Crespigny, *Imperial Warlord*, 420–21. Liu Jingmin, without offering the rationale for her claims, asserts Cao Cao issued this proclamation in 219 or 220, see Liu, *Songdai Xiangpu*, 31. Milburn claims this proclamation was issued "in the context of family religious practice," but I see no evidence of this being the case, see Milburn, "Midiexiang," 37.

[808] 去臭惡氣。XXBC:20.834.

[809] See my comments to White Gum Aromatic at HC#33. To my knowledge, Cao Cao's proclamation is the earliest Chinese textual attestation for burning a native tree resin for its scent. While pine resin is also native, it was often prepared in such a way as to be ingested as medicine or part of a specialized dietary regimen, not burned; see footnote 441.

[810] This probably also accounts for the claim in the mid-fifth century *Treatise on the Guang Region* that Cao Cao concealed Sichuan lovage in his robes, see TPYL:8.983.971; see also my comments to Golden Incense Burner at HC#99.

We are left to wonder how this culture around incense impacted the Celestial Masters. If the Hanzhong priesthood was shielded from the slowly growing custom of using incense to communicate with the spiritual world at the end of the second century, their movement to the cosmopolitan centers of the north in the second decade of the third century might have introduced them to such practices or eased their adoption, especially if burning scented *flora* was viewed therapeutically. There is also the chance that Celestial Masters priests encountered Buddhist ritual, although this is also very difficult to assess. The activity of Buddhist translators has long been used as a proxy to measure regional Buddhist activity. There is no record of Buddhist translation activity in the southern Shu region during the Three Dynasties, nor is there much recorded activity in the north under the Cao–Wei.[811] The relatively active Buddhist community at Luoyang at the end of the Han slowly dispersed after the abdication of the Han emperor, with at least one famed translator, Zhi Qian 支謙 (fl. 223–253), arriving in the southeastern city of Jianye around 247. It was not until the prolific translator from Dunhuang, Dharmarakṣa arrived in Chang'an in 266 at the start of the Western Jin that sizable translation work began anew in the north.

Yet, in this period of presumed "inactivity," Buddhists were still arriving from the Western Regions and settling in and around urban areas. At the time, Chang'an was a city of one million people, with one contemporary estimate claiming that half the city's residents

[811] See the detailed discussion in Nattier, *Guide*, esp. 155–60. Zürcher characterizes the Cao-Wei era as a "period of non-activity" among Buddhist translators, see Zürcher, *Buddhist Conquest*, 55. Translation activity in the north remained slow throughout the Western Jin. The archaeological record tells a slightly different story, at least in the south. For example, anthropomorphic forms resembling the Buddha starts to be found on an assortment of tombs goods starting in the Eastern Han, especially in the regions of Shu, see Wu Hung, "Buddhist Elements in Early Chinese Art (2nd and 3rd Centuries A.D.)," *Artibus Asiae* 47, no. 3/4 (1986); and more recently, Bai, "Religious Beliefs"; Kim, "Image Worship"; and Minku Kim, "Claims of Buddhist Relics in the Eastern Han Tomb Murals at Horinger: Issues in the Historiography of the Introduction of Buddhism to China," *Ars Orientalis* 44 (2014): 135–54. It remains to be seen if such imagery speaks to Buddhist practice, however, or simply the adoption of "auspicious" symbols.

were non-Chinese foreigners (this includes ethnically non-Han families who lived in China for several generations).[812] During his translation career, Dharmarakṣa collaborated with an assortment of ethnically diverse Buddhist monks and laymen, including Parthians, Sogdians, Kucheans, Khotanese, Yuezhi, Gandhārans, and Indians. We also know that entire families were emigrating from their western homelands and relocating to China throughout the third century, some with children who grew up to became devout Buddhists.[813] Thus, while translation work ceased in the early and middle parts of the third century, it remains evident that a cross-cultural exchange of idea and customs continued apace across China.

The late third century also saw an increased knowledge about Indian olfactory culture through translated Buddhist scripture. Both Buddhist translators An Shigao and Lokakṣema cited sandalwood (*zhantan* 旃檀) and aloeswood (*mixiang* 蜜香) in their works, arguably two of the most prominent Buddhist aromatics of the early medieval period.[814] These fragrant woods, often presented as superior to other scented materials, were frequently paired in early Buddhist scriptures due to their complementary qualities. For example, sandalwood was ruddy in color whereas high-quality aloeswood was much darker, even black, due to its heavy saturation of oleoresin. Additionally, sandalwood was esteemed for its cooling medicinal properties when prepared as a paste, while aloeswood was known for its heating properties, making it ideal for burning as incense.[815]

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[812] As noted in Daniel Boucher, "Dharmarakṣa and the Transmission of Buddhism to China," *Asia Major*, Third Series, 18, no. 1/2 (2006): 32n.73.
[813] The diversity of Dharmarakṣa's collaborators is summarized in Boucher, "Dharmarakṣa," 30–31. For a summary of Buddhist activity during the first half of the third century in the north, see Zürcher, *Buddhist Conquest*, 55–57.
[814] For An Shigao, see T607:232c37; for Lokakṣema, see T224:472c29 and 474c29.
[815] McHugh, *Sandalwood and Carrion*, 85.

Dharmarakṣa's translation of the *Lotus Sutra of the True Dharma* (*Zhengfa hua jing* 正法華經; T263), hereafter *Lotus Sutra*, in 286 (and revised in 290) further opened the window into the Indic olfactory imagination filled with fantastic perfumes, marvelously scented flowers, and pungent aromatics.[816] It was also in this translation that Buddhist audiences were first introduced to the sweetly scented golden oleoresin known as frankincense (*xunlu* 薰陸). About a century later, frankincense was identified in an early esoteric Buddhist scripture as one of the "three types of famous incense" (*sanzhong mingxiang* 三種名香), building upon the original pairing of sandalwood and aloeswood.[817] As highlighted in Chapter 2, indigenous Chinese incense was lightly processed and loosely torn bits of roots, stems, and flower buds, so the Buddhist focus on resin and resin-saturated wood like aloeswood (sandalwood heartwood is infused with essential oils, not technically a resinous exudate) marked an important shift to tropical aromatics of a very different material and chemical nature. As noted by Yamada Kentarō, when leaves and flowers dry out they quickly lose their scent as their essential oils volatize, but resins are more resistant to this diffusion and retain their pungency for far longer. Heating (not necessarily burning) allows resins to release odors which appear very sharp to the nose.[818] In addition to such notable physical characteristics, Buddhist sutras such as the *Lotus Sutra* also contained edifying stories describing miraculous smells that spread throughout the ten directions or caused

[816] A long list of various perfumes, fragrances, and other odorants is discussed at T262:48b16–49b14, trans. Kern, *The Saddharma-Pundarika, or Lotus of The True Law*, 341–42; see also my comments to *campaka* flower fragrance at HC#81.
[817] As noted in the *Great Dhāraṇī Spirit-Spell Spoken by the Seven Buddhas and Eight Bodhisattvas* (*Qi fo ba pusa suoshuo da tuoluoni shenzhou jing* 七佛八菩薩所說大陀羅尼神咒經; T1332), see T1332:552b10 and 553b13–14. See also my commentary to frankincense at HC#9.
[818] Yamada, *Tōa kōryō shi kenkyū*, 113–16.

innumerable merits for those who made offerings of scented pasted, powders, and incense likely further bolstered interests in collecting exotic aromatics.

Evidence of a robust mid-third century commercial market in aromatics is attested in the *Abridged Account of* [*Cao-*]*Wei* (*Weilüe* 魏略), completed before 265, which records a list of approximately ten aromatics exported from the regions of the former Roman Empire (*da qin* 大秦). Reportedly arriving by both overland and maritime trade routes, Mediterranean rosemary, Mediterranean storax, Arabian frankincense, and northern Indian saffron (*yujin* 鬱金) are all cited among the imported exotica.[819] Aromatics would have been ideal commercial goods for merchants travelling long distances; they commanded high prices, were light in weight, and were in constant need of replenishment dur to their use by consumers.

Perhaps unsurprisingly, the earliest tale of Emperor Wu receiving tribute of foreign aromatics comes in the *Treatise on the Investigation of Things*, a work dated to the end of the third century. The third century is also when Chinese textual sources first start to refer to what we might term the art of perfumery and incense blending, possibly originating in or around the state of Eastern Wu.[820] Lastly, just as Eastern Han poets were some of the first to notice the changing smellscape of China in regards to supra-regional aromatics, the number of poems related to perfumes, incense, and other aromatics doubled between the Three Kingdoms and the Eastern Jin, while the number of poets discussing such themes tripled.[821]

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[819] SGZ:30.861. Unfortunately, many difficulties arise in parsing and identifying items in this list; see Table 2.2 in Chapter 2.
[820] We will return to this point below.
[821] A quantitative analysis and survey of the principal themes in poetry related to perfumes and aromatics can be found in Li Qixia, "Xiang wenhua yu Wei-Jin she xiang shi kaocha," *Liaocheng daxue xuebao (shehui kexue ban)* 4 (2018): 35–41. One figure composing poetry on aromatics was Cao Pi, see Milburn, "Midiexiang," 26–44 and Kong, *Fu Poetry Along the Silk* Roads, 22–35.

Overall, the culture around aromatics and the burning of incense appears to have taken a dramatic shift over the course of the third century. The material culture of smell moved from a focus on native roots, stems, and leaves, to foreign luxury imports, especially tree resins, gums, and scented woods. These changes happened in concert with the continued translation of Buddhist sutras that revealed an entirely new scent culture, including a ritual culture focused on creating aromatic displays during rites of worship. Nevertheless, if we can use the quantity of recovered porcelain censers as a proxy for the popularity of burning incense, the southeastern coast and other regions along the Yangzi River appears to have embraced the practice more than the Chinese capitals of the north.

5. Entering the Quiescent Chamber: Rites of the Early Supreme Purity Tradition

Through the careful work of Isabelle Robinet, we know that most, if not all of third *juan* of Tao Hongjing's *Secret Instructions* was drawn from a hagiography of Lady Wei Huacun 魏華存 (251–334), also known as the Lady of the Southern Marchmount (*Nanyue furen* 南嶽夫人), the apotheosized matriarch of the Supreme Purity tradition.[822] Before escaping the turmoil of the collapsing Western Jin by fleeing south with her sons to Jianye 建鄴, present-day Nanjing, Lady Wei was a reputed libationer for the Celestial Masters. As noted by

[822] Robinet, *Révélation*, Vol. 2, 403. For more on Wei Huacun, see Robinet, 399–405, James Robson, *Place of Power: The Religious Landscape of the Southern Peak (Nanyue) in Medieval China* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2009), 184–212, and Cedzich, "Twelve Hundred Officials" and the sources cited therein. It remains undetermined if the first part of the third *juan*, i.e., DZ421:3.1a–5b, should be considered as part of the *Biography of* [*Lady*] *Wei* (*Wei zhuan* 魏傳), see comments in Robson, *Place of Power*, 375–76n.41.

Robinet, this makes Lady Wei a key figure in connecting the Celestial Masters of the north with the Supreme Purity tradition emerging in Jiangnan.[823]

According to lore, in 334 Lady Wei received a numinous medicine made of licorice root (*gancao* 甘草) and transcended as an immortal. She later received secret teachings from Zhang Daoling, among others, before finally appearing in the visions of Yang Xi as one of the Perfected (*zhenren* 真人) who transmitted the new revelations between 364 and 370. According to the *Secret Instructions*, part of the secret oral instructions (*koujue* 口訣) received by Lady Wei from Zhang Daoling regarded the rites performed within the quiescent chamber.[824] Importantly, these instructions were considered a new promulgation (*xin chu* 新出) of liturgical procedures that would take precedent over the older protocols.[825] These new instructions were outlined in the root text of the *Secret Instructions* and in Tao Hongjing's interlinear commentary. In total, they comprise the recitation of the *Scripture of the Yellow Courtyard* (*Huangting jing* 黃庭經) and rites regarding the entrance into the chamber, petitions and talismans (*zhangfu* 章符), and the invitation of the spirit officers (*qingguan* 請官).[826]

If we examine the minutia of these new directions for entering the chamber, after performing ablutions and putting on special garments, a priest is supposed to swirl saliva in his mouth (*shukou* 漱口) three times and hold his breath while entering the ritual space,

[823] Robinet, *Révélation*, Vol. 2, 405.
[824] The relevant section is entitled, "The Secret Instructions Declared to the Lady of Nanyue by the Orthodox Unity Perfected and Ritual Master of the Three Heavens, Zhang (taboo character)[i.e., Zhang Daoling]" 正一眞人三天法師張諱告南嶽夫人口訣。DZ421.3.5b.
[825] Lü, "Daoist Rituals," 1274.
[826] DZ421:3.1a–5b, 3.5b–11a, 3.11a–14a, 3.14b–26b, respectively. These four sections are summarized in Robinet, *Révélation*, Vol. 2, 403–04. See also Robson, *Place of Power*, 192–93; Lü, "Daoist Rituals," 1274–75.

making sure the right foot steps over the threshold of the doorway, then followed by the left foot.[827] The next set of instructions pertain to visualizing the spirits and invoking their names over the incense burner. This portion is characterized as the "invocation of the censer" (*zhulu* 祝爐) in Tao Hongjing's commentary. According to Lady Wei, the priest envisions, with eyes half-closed, numerous spirits assembled around the interior space, including Orthodox Unity Merit Officers and the Emissaries of the Officers of the Left and Right, numbering four in total, as well as a Dragon Lord and Tiger Lord positioned on the left and right sides of the doorway threshold.[828] In addition, the priest envisions the Emissaries who Hold Incense (*pengxiang shizhe* 捧香使者), a pair of deities noted as those who "heroically attend to the incense burner" (*xiashi xianglu* 俠侍香爐) and the Jade Lass who Guards the Quiescent Chamber (*shoujing yunü* 守靜玉女), noted as the one who "heroically attends to the [incense] table" (*xiashi anji* 俠侍案几).[829] The priest then opens his eyes and focuses his

[827] DZ421:3.6b–7a.

[828] Merit Officers (*gongcao* 功曹) were high-ranking officials during the medieval period who evaluated the work of subordinate officials and had broad authority over promotions or dismissals. This title was adopted to designate certain kinds of spirits that assist the priest, see Hiroshi Maruyama, "Gongcao, Merit Officer," in *The Encyclopedia of Taoism*, ed. Fabrizio Pregadio, vol. 2 (New York: Routledge, 2008), 448 and Charles O. Hucker, *A Dictionary of Official Titles in Imperial China* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1985), 296 (#3489).

[829] DZ421.3.7a and Kleeman, *Celestial Masters*, 250. Versions of this passage are now used as the invocation for lighting the censer, see Lagerwey, *Taoist Ritual*, 122–23. As related to incense, the root text of the *Secret Instructions* only mentions the Emissaries who Hold Incense; for a full translation of this invocation, see Strickmann, *Chinese Magical Medicine*, 6. Moreover, during what is now the invocation for extinguishing the censer, the root text uses the name Emissaries of the Incense Office (*xiangguan shishe* 香官使者), see DZ421:3.10a. The comments of Tao Hongjing elsewhere provide another variant, Spirits who Attend to the Incense (*shixiang zhi shen* 侍香之神), see DZ421:3.24b. The more familiar name for this pair of figures is the Golden Lads who Attend to the Incense, [Stationed] on the Left and Right" (*zuoyou shixiang jintong* 左右侍香金童). We also sometimes find a singular Golden Lad paired with the Jade Lass (*yunü* 玉女) who both tend to the censer. According to Tao Hongjing's notation, there were three figures envisioned around the incense, two who attended to the incense burner and the Jade Lass who attended to the table, which referred to the table that supported the censer.

attention on the incense burner in the center of the room, vocally summoning and directing the spirits (many who were already explicitly visualized) who assist the priest.[830]

Tao Hongjing further explicates the next procedure described in the root text tersely as "burn incense and perform the affairs" (*shaoxiang xingshi* 燒香行事). He states the priest must "release your breath and first advance with your right foot towards the front of the censer, then have your left join and come together [with the right foot]. With your left hand, take three pieces [or pinches] of incense and burn all of them."[831] Similarly explicit instructions are given in the commentary to step away from the censer once the incense is lit: "First retreat with your right foot, then return the left to come together [with the right foot]. Inspect the smoke rise and hold your breath, then bow."[832]

At this stage it is important to note the censer plays an anchoring role, being returned to with regularity as the protocols unfold. When visualizing and invoking the spirits, the censer remains the chief visual support as the deities array themselves around the object. Furthermore, approaching and withdrawing from the censer is also attended to with great care, following a similar ritual gait leading with the right foot when initially entering the chamber. Finally, the lighting of incense is presented as a critical moment in the liturgy. According to the most veritable source, Lady Wei, "when lighting the incense, do not glance backward or look around," adding that, "if you glance backward or look around you will

[830] The directions concerning the half-closure of the eyes are only noted in Tao Hongjing's notations, see DZ421.3.7a.
[831] 通氣，先進右足至爐前，左足來併，左手三捻香，多燒之。DZ421:3.7b. *Nian* 捻 remains an ambiguous term in this context, but it means to pinch, twist, or nip with one's fingers. I have opted for the inelegant, yet diplomatic, translation, "to take." The material grabbed would likely be hand-rolled incense pellets or possibly loosely torn or pulverized scented plant matters; elongated incense sticks would not have been used in the fourth century.
[832] 先退右足，左還併，視煙起閉氣，乃拜也。DZ421:3.7b.

offend the Perfect Qi and provoke a demonic response."[833] This conveys the idea that a single moment of distraction during the vital process of lighting incense will invite malign influences that may overtake the priest and petitioner. James Robson reads this as indicative of Lady Wei's overall concern for ritual purity, Strickmann, on the other hand, has interpreted this passage to point to the need for "concentration on hallucinogenic smoke."[834]

Once the priest has lit the incense he can proceed to "hold audience" with the spirits in the four directions. This was the segment of the ritual that was preserved in the old Hanzhong method. The newly promulgated instructions alter the sequence, however; instead of moving counterclockwise starting from the east, the priest moves in a clockwise direction starting from the west.[835] It is at this time that the priest can turn to the affairs of drafting petitions and summoning the bodily officials to help to assist the petitioner. These are summarized in the last half of the *Secret Instructions*, but since the incense burner only plays a minimal role in these segments, I will pass over them here.[836] Notably, the description of entering the quiescent chamber rite also contains the protocols for leaving the chamber (*chujing* 出靜), but this simply reverses the pattern established above. As Tao Hongjing notes, when the priest exits the chamber he is to hold his breath, face the censer, and quietly incant (*weizhu* 微祝) the names of the spirits who were invoked at the start. The priest then

[833] 燒香時勿反顧，若反顧則忤真氣，致邪應也。DZ421:3.6b and repeated at DZ421:3.27a. This injunction is further repeated in Tao Hongjing's *Declarations of the Perfected* (*Zhengao* 真誥), see DZ1010:9.12b and 13a; as noted in Robson, *Place of Power*, 193. A similar injunction is repeated when entering or exiting the chamber, DZ421:3.6b, 6a.
[834] See Robson, *Place of Power*, 193; Needham and Lu, *Science and Civilisation in China,* Vol. 5, Part 2, 152n.b (quoting Strickmann), respectively.
[835] DZ421.3.7b. Lü Pengzhi sees the clockwise movement as evidence of Buddhist influence, Lü, "Daoist Rituals," 1277.
[836] Among these subsequent rites, the censer appears once again when it is required to remain lit while the priest is writing the petition, DZ421:3.12b.

leads with his left foot to cross over the threshold, followed by his right foot, thus bringing closure to the ritual inside the chamber.[837]

The overall structure of this early ritual sequence clearly foreshadows the later iterations of Daoist ritual where we find structural symmetry around the use of the incense burner. The newly promulgated schemata attributed to Lady Wei follows this basic sequence:

1) entering the chamber

2) invoking the censer (→ lighting the censer [*falu*])

3) holding audience with the spirits of the four directions

4) invoking the censer (→ extinguishing the censer [*fulu*])

5) exiting the chamber

This sequence held whether the primary purpose of the priest was to dispatch a petition to cure illness or to hold either of the two audiences (*er chao* 二朝) that were performed in the morning and evening as a type of daily service.[838] Arguably, the two defining moments in this sequence are where the spirits are invoked while the priest is directly gazing at the incense burner. Again, while these moments are characterized by Tao Hongjing as the "invocation of the censer," they were more commonly referred to in later scriptural works as lighting the censer (*falu*) and extinguishing the censer (*fulu*). Lü Pengzhi has suggested the now classic terminology was introduced in the middle of the fifth century by Lu Xiujing, the figure best known for his systemization of Numinous Treasure (*lingbao* 靈寶) liturgies and

[837] DZ421:3.10a. Tao Hongjing notes that first invocation was done mentally (*xinzhu* 心祝), but at the end it is done "subtly" (*wei* 微), which according to Tao Hongjing's more explicit instructions, means minimally moving one's lips (*xiaoxaio dong kou* 小小動口), see DZ421:3.10a.
[838] DZ421:3.6a; also see comments in Lü, "Daoist Rituals," 1275.

eventually honored as one of the "three masters of ritual instruction." According to Lü, these new names give "vivid expression to the symmetrical structure of the ritual."[839]

In addition to its importance in framing the ritual sequence, the incense burner was also a visual anchor in the center of the quiescent chamber. As noted above, and on the authority of Lady Wei, the doorway of the chamber should be on the eastern side, thus when initially looking at the censer the priest was facing west.[840] According to Tao Hongjing, the proper (*zheng* 正) arrangement of the ritual chamber consists of a "a single square stand, a single incense burner, and a single incense container" all positioned in the center (*zhongyang* 中央) of the structure.[841] Tao Hongjing does not allege these to be the sole objects in the room, which would be unlikely considering that paraphernalia for drafting the petition, such as a brush, ink, and paper, are all required later in the ritual procedure.[842] Yet this spatial arrangement still reveals the significance of the censer and its related apparatus. Placed strategically in the center of the chamber, the censer is a visual support around which both the ritual space and ritual timeline is organized. Tao Hongjing's characterization of the chamber space is markedly different from the commonly cited arrangement by Liu Xiujing

[839] Lü, "Daoist Rituals," 1308.
[840] DZ421:3.6b and 3.7b. During the rites of dawn, Tao Hongjing notes the priest should turn the square stand (*zhuanji* 轉機) supporting the incense burner so it faces proper north, suggesting there was a way to determine the orientation of the censer within center of the room [i.e., the censer had clearly defined "front"], DZ421:3.24a.
[841] 一方機，一香爐，一香匳 。DZ421:3.7b. Joseph Needham and Lu Gwei-djen, citing this passage, notes the pure chamber was "almost empty except for an incense burner," see Needham and Lu, *Science and Civilisation in China,* Vol. 5, Part 2, 131.
[842] The root text of the *Secret Instructions* specifically notes the use of "special" (*yi* 異) ink and "designated"(*bude za* 不得雜, lit. "non-miscellaneous") brush and ink stone, among sheets of "dark green paper" (*qingzhi* 青紙), DZ421:3.12b.

from earlier in the fifth century, where interior space contained an incense burner, fragrant lamp, a table for writing petitions, and a writing knife (for erasing).[843]

Furthermore, depending on the occasion, Tao Hongjing claims that multiple censers can be added to the room. For example, when performing the audience rite at dawn, one could employ two separate censers instead of needing to turn the censer stand in the middle of the ritual. Additionally, when the petitioner is sick and is called to enter the chamber, four incense burners are required, each carefully positioned at a distance from each of the four walls.[844] In such occasions one might imagine the ritual chamber filling with fragrant smoke as the priest works through the liturgy. The vision of working amid a smoky fog is supported by a quote from the *Secret Instructions* preserved elsewhere in the Daoist canon. It explains,

> When holding an audience [with the spirits] and making a submission [of prayers], one must first start a raging inferno with copious amounts of incense so as to cause it to rush out all at once; it is inappropriate for [the smoke] to be continuous and weak.[845]
> 夫朝奏之時，先烈火豐香，使一舉便到了，不宜綿綿翳翳。

A much later Daoist liturgical handbook notes that "otherwise one will not be able to open communication [with the spirits]."[846] The importance of keeping the smoke billowing is highlighted by a seventh century Daoist manual of regulations which imposes a fine of two *jin* of lamp oil should anyone in charge of the incense burner allow the smoke to be disrupted.[847]

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[843] See, *inter alia*, Yoshikawa, "Seishitsu kō," 134; Terry F. Kleeman, "Community and Daily Life in the Early Daoist Church," in *Early Chinese Religion, Part Two: The Period of Division (220–589 AD)*, ed. John Lagerwey and Pengzhi Lü, vol. 1 (Leiden: Brill, 2010), 404.
[844] For two censers, see DZ421:3.24b; for four censers, see DZ421:3.7b. For general comments on the preparation of the quiescent chamber, see Yoshikawa, "Seishitsu kō," 133–37.
[845] DZ1032:45.11b.
[846] 否則不能超達也。DZ220:1.5b. As noted in the twelfth century *Great Method of the Jade Hall of the Three Heavens of the Supreme Mysterious Origin* (*Wushang xuanyuan santian yutang dafa* 無上玄元三天玉堂大法); for more on this text, see Schipper and Verellen, *The Taoist Canon*, 1070–73.
[847] DZ463:8.15b–16a. As found in the *Summary of the Important Ceremonies, Rules, and Codices to be Practiced* (*Yaoxiu keyi jielü chao* 要修科儀戒律鈔; DZ463) citing the *Penal Writ of the Mysterious Capital*

In contrast to the surviving materials describing the Celestial Masters at the end of the second century, the incense burner emerged as a critical instrument in the ritual program for the Supreme Purity tradition. Due to the careful preservation of documents by Tao Hongjing, many of which were already over a century old, we can trace these shifts to the apotheosis of Wei Huacun, Lady Wei, a Celestial Master priest who emerged as the spiritual founder of the Supreme Purity through the mystic visions of Yang Xi. We do not know if the "new promulgation" of entering the chamber rites can be historically traced to Wei Huacun during her time as priest in the north, but she soon developed into the mouthpiece for these new rites; rites that emphasized the liturgical role of scented smoke. If we take the description in the *Abridged Archives* of the Celestial Masters rites as representative of their early third century practices – including the absence of incense – then the adoption of incense burners and incense smoke as axiomatic to the efficacy of Daoist liturgy in the medieval period should be seen as the direct effect of dramatic changes in the religious beliefs and attitudes towards aromatics in China during the third and fourth centuries, in addition to the influence of Jiangnan, a region that seems to have cultivated a particularly strong affinity for using smoking incense burners.

6. Reading the Rising Smoke: An Early Daoist Practice of Capnomancy

There has been much discussion over lack of images in quiescent chambers in contrast to the image-heavy spaces of Buddhist altars, shrines, and temple halls. A narrow focus on this line

(*Xuandu lüwen* 玄都律文). Other fines are noted as follows: if one knocks over the incense burner, the fine is two *jin* of incense; if one moves about too quickly when observing the incense, the fine is two *jin* of lamp oil; if one presents incense with unwashed hands or without rinsing one's mouth, the fine is two *jin* of lamp oil.

of inquiry too easily obscures an equally valid concern: why is so much importance placed on the incense burner? What ritual function and significance do censers have in this ritual context? The received *Secret Instructions* only provides subtle hints. After burning incense, described above as taking three pinches (or three incense pellets, depending on how the incense was processed) with the left hand and placing them the censer, the priest is told: "Inspect the smoke rise and hold your breath." Lady Wei also admonishes the priest who inadvertently "looks back" from the censer.

The more or less conventional medieval understanding is that smoke is the medium *par excellence* used by priests to communicate with the divine, a meaning given material weight through the visual experience of watching curls of smoke rise up and dissipate into the air above. It is notable, however, that the *Abridged Archives* description of the early Celestial Masters omits smoke as such a medium; the three spiritual offices of Heaven, Earth, and Water received petitions by having documents deposited on top of a mountain, buried underground, and cast into water, conveyances respective to the nature of the divine office that received it.[848] These procedures still reflect a bureaucratic logic of the spirit world, but remain without the need of fire and smoke to deliver the handwritten depositions. It appears the early Celestial Masters community only burned the petitions in large bundles on a special day at the end of the year, preserving them from desecration and decay in sealed boxes until that occasion.[849] Consequently, Ursula-Angelika Cedzich has demonstrated that "burning was

[848] See relevant passage in Kleeman, *Celestial Masters*, 29.
[849] Cedzich, "Twelve Hundred Officials" 26–27; see also Franciscus Verellen, "The Heavenly Master Liturgical Agenda According to Chisong Zi's Petition Almanac," *Cahiers d'Extrême-Asie* 14, no. 1 (2004): 301; Raz, *Emergence of Daoism*, 115. Verellen has recently amended the text used to establish this practice, *Master Red Pine's Petition Almanac*, adding "Petitions intended to be burnt are burnt," see Verellen, *Imperiled Destinies*, 80 (cf. Verellen, "Heavenly Master Liturgical Agenda," 301). This then introduces the question as to why some petitions were burnt and others kept under lock and key for a yearly ceremony.

originally neither essential for the presentation of the petitions nor even part of the same ritual."[850]

It is unknown when these procedures changed, as many early Daoist sources attest to burning the petitions.[851] We also know through early Daoist liturgies outside of the *Secret Instructions* that smoke was critical: "incense smoke transmits and submits [the prayer]" (*xiangyan chuanzuo* 香煙傳奏).[852] This phrasing is part of the extinguishing the censer incantation in the *Practical Almanac for the Offering of the Memorial of the Primordial Asterism* (*Yuanchen zhangjiao lichen li* 元辰章醮立成曆; D1288), hereafter *Practical Almanac,* a text dated broadly to the Six Dynasties.[853] In such cases, censers were clearly conceived as the instrument to volatize and transmit the intentions, concerns, and desires of the religious adept to the realm of the spirits.

The importance of incense and smoke is suggested by other portions of the *Practical Almanac*. For example, the basic offering service (*jiaofa* 醮法) is described as utilizing five different censers set up in the five directions around the altar space.[854] The priest is also instructed to not use old incense paste (*fei jiu xiangtie* 非舊香貼) and needs to have box (*lian* 奩) of spare incense, presumably to prevent any unintended disruption of smoke. I believe such instructions reveal a different concern for burning incense that bears further investigation. As we have seen earlier regarding instructions for making an inferno of smoke,

[850] Seidel citing the importance of Cedzich's work, see Seidel, "Early Taoist Ritual," 204.
[851] As underscored in Cedzich, "Twelve Hundred Officials," 20n.39. We may wonder if the adoption of the censer when Celestial Masters priests arrived in Jiangnan also introduced the importance of smoke more generally.
[852] DZ1288:1.21a. This refrain is picked up and appears with regularity, for example, in Du Guangting's *Liturgical Manual*, see. e.g., DZ507:3.6b, 4.a8, 6.7b, and elsewhere.
[853] Schipper and Verellen, *The Taoist Canon*, 135.
[854] A rare illustration of the altar is provided in the Ming Daoist canon, see the reprint in Schipper and Verellen, *The Taoist Canon*, 136. Notably, the altar and prescribed offerings are similar to another early Daoist text, the *Petition Almanac of Master Red Pine*, to be discussed below.

portions of the *Secret Instructions* are preserved in other documents in the Ming Daoist canon and elsewhere.[855] One such preserved fragment can be found in the early eleventh century *Seven Writing-Slips from the Bookcase of the Clouds* (*Yunji qiqian* 雲笈七籤; DZ1032), hereafter *Bookcase of the Clouds,* which provides an important addendum to our understanding about spiritual communication:

> It is incense that the Celestial Perfected use in order to communicate feelings and the Earthly Spirits rely on to convey messages. It is not only abstinential purity, prayer, and visualization [that can be performed?], but burning incense is necessary. The Golden Lads who Attend to the Incense on the right and left must summon the Perfected and convey their intentions.[856]
> 香者，天真用茲以通感，地祇緣斯以達信，非論齋潔，祈念，存思，必燒香。左右侍香金童，必為招真達意。

A slightly different reading of this important passage is preserved in the "Summary of Attending to Incense" (*shixiang chao* 侍香鈔) section of the early eighth century *Summary of the Important Ceremonies, Rules, and Codices to be Practiced* (*Yaoxiu keyi jielü chao* 要修科儀戒律鈔; DZ463):

> It is incense that the Celestial Perfected use in order to communicate feelings and the Earthly Spirits rely on to convey messages. Therefore, prayer and visualization[857] [can be performed?], but burning incense to the left and right is necessary. Especially so since this smoke is able to summon the Mysterious and convey its intentions. There are also the ones who attend and guard [the censer] who thus declare the praise [offered by the priests?] and report on the convictions [of the spirits?].[858]
> 香者，天真用茲以通感，地祇緣斯以達言。是以祈念，存注，必燒之於左右。特以此煙能照[859]玄達意，亦有侍衛之者宣讚辭誠故也。

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[855] A list of these sources is noted in Robinet, *Révélation*, Vol. 2, 347–50.
[856] DZ1032:37.11a.
[857] While *cunsi* 存思, in the previous passage, straightforwardly refers to the practice of visualizing and actualizing spirits, *cunzhu* 存注, "visualization and infusion," seems to imply a similar act, with the adepts visualizing and infusing the spirits into the body; see discussion of *zhu* in Raz, *Emergence of Daoism*, 242n.104.
[858] DZ463:8.15b–16a.
[859] Reading 照 (also written 炤) as 招, following DZ1032:37.11a.

The precise meaning of these passages are difficult to interpret, but I view them as representing an important departure from viewing rising incense smoke as a unidirectional means of communication. Here the spirits, both celestial and terrestrial, appear to use incense smoke to communicate their intentions and messages *back* to humans.

The precise means through which this divine communication *via* incense remains opaque, but there is one early, roughly contemporary source that provides an intriguing clue. The *Petition Almanac of Master Red Pine* (*Chisong zi zhangli* 赤松子章曆; DZ615), hereafter *Petition Almanac*, is a handbook of petition models for Celestial Master priests, with a few portions that can be traced to Eastern Han, but which shows signs of editing throughout the Tang.[860] The received version of this text contains a subsection now entitled, "Dispatched Petitions and Incense Smoke" (*shangzhang xiangyan* 上章香煙), in which the prognosis of the ill petitioner is portended through observing the path of censer smoke, a practice also known as capnomancy:

> First observe the incense smoke; if it moves south and then changes direction to the east, the sick person will have difficulty and distress; if it rises upward in a direct path, this is very auspicious; if the smoke moves away from the body of the Master [i.e., priest], there was some error with the petition; if the smoke rises and dissipates midair, the sick person will die; if the smoke is wispy and moves in all directions, then the petitioner is of two minds and is not concentrated or sincere.[861]
> 先看香煙。南轉向東，病者難差。直起逕衝，大吉。煙遼身師，與章生俱有罪過。煙上中滅，病者死。煙細從四邊起，生人有二心，不精誠。

[860] For overview and analysis of this text, see Verellen, "Heavenly Master Liturgical Agenda" and Verellen, *Imperiled Destinies*. For comments on the complicated matters of dating this text, see Peter Nickerson, "The Great Petition for Sepulchral Plaints," in *Early Daoist Scriptures*, ed. Stephen R. Bokenkamp (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997), 250–51; Verellen, "Heavenly Master Liturgical Agenda," 293–94.
[861] DZ615:2.10b. Verellen only notes this passage in passing: "The way the smoke rises from the burner portends the success of the petition," Verellen, "Heavenly Master Liturgical Agenda," 298; see also Verellen, *Imperiled Destinies*, 95.

Through the careful observation of the movement patterns of the smoke the priest and petitioner can have an immediate response to the success or failure of the petition, with indications ranging between recovery and death, or signaling errors in protocol. The communion of the spirits is signaled directly through the incense burner, which as is often noted, should always be within easy view of the priest in the center of the chamber. Notably, the presence of the censer indicates this practice does not extend beyond the arrival of the Celestial Masters in the south in the fourth century.

A similar focus on vision and the observation of smoke can be found in the *Array of the Five Talismans of the Grand High Numinous Treasure* (*Taishang lingbao wufuxu* 太上靈寶五符序; DZ388), hereafter *Five Talismans*, a text with origins in the "nameless religion" and cultural practices of Jiangnan. The oldest portions were likely compiled at the end of the third century or early fourth century.[862] According to the *Five Talismans*, the transmission rite of the eponymous pentad of talismanic charms was to take place in a quiescent chamber or outside at a temporary altar. When the adapt summoned the necessary spirits, here represented by the Five Celestial Thearchs, he was to observe the movement of the smoke, created by a fivefold blended incense, streaming from the five censers placed beside each talisman.[863] Note the use of five censers mirrors the description of the altar in the *Practical Almanac*, suggesting both may have some affinity with the old practices of the south. The adept is specifically instructed to "carefully inspect the fragrant smoke" (*xiangshi xunyan* 詳

[862] Gil Raz, based on the political symbolism in the narrative portions of the text, argues the scripture was composed after the fall of the Wu kingdom in 280, but before the formal establishment of the Eastern Jin in 317, see Gil Raz, "Imperial Efficacy: Debates on Imperial Ritual in Early Medieval China and the Emergence of Daoist Ritual Schemata," in *Purposes, Means and Convictions in Daoism, a Berlin Symposium*, ed. Florian Reiter (Wiesbaden: Harrasowitz, 2007), 84n.4.
[863] DZ388:3.4a. The relevant passages, upon which I have relied to make sense of this rite, are described in Raz, *Emergence of Daoism*, 105–109; see also Raz, "Imperial Efficacy," 86; Lü, "Daoist Rituals," 1269.

視薰煙), the direction of which, the text proclaims, would reveal the sequence of spirits arriving. The very last line of the transmission right closes by stating, "burning incense delivers the spirits" (*ran xiang song shen* 然香送神).[864] In this scenario, again, the divine world is communicating to the human realm through the censer. As highlighted by Gil Raz, the older iterations of this transmission rite employ the slaughtering of a goose, but later versions replace the goose with offerings of silk, evidence of the rejection of blood sacrifice by early Daoists.[865] Notably in this case, incense is not employed as a substitute for a bloodless offering, as one might otherwise assume, but is instead viewed as an integral medium of spiritual communication to the human realm.

These practices of capnomancy outlined above also do not align perfectly with a bureaucratic view of the ethereal world, where legal procedures are employed to provoke the spirits into action. I believe the interest in reading messages into incense smoke bespeaks of another class of esoteric art: divination. While divinatory practices have a long and established history in China, Dominic Steavu has shown the local traditions of Jiangnan in the south were heavily inflected with the arts of prognostication. For example, in the early fourth century, Ge Hong applauds the *Writ of the Three Sovereigns* (*Sanhuang wen* 三皇文) for its ability to summon divinities who reply to inquiries on various matters, noting "whether far or near, abstruse or profound, all can be known in advance."[866] When the Celestial Masters arrived in Jiangnan and encountered the "old obsessions of the south," this

[864] DZ388:3.7b.
[865] Raz, *Emergence of Daoism*, 110–116.
[866] Translation from Steavu, *Three Sovereigns*, 18. For further discussion on the apotropaic and prognostic practices reflected in the *Writ of the Three Sovereigns*, see Steavu, 17–48.

included, in addition to alchemical and other religio-medical techniques, various forms of divination.

While the ancient *chai* and *liao* sacrifices (as well as the *yin* sacrifice, in the eyes of Zheng Xuan) all appear to have had smoke production as integral to their performance, I am not aware of any classical discussion regarding reading trails of smoke as a discrete divinatory practice. Smoke scrying, however, has a natural affinity to the art of interpreting anomalous *qi* manifestations, typically understood as atmospheric phenomena, such as winds, clouds, or mist. This practice is well attested in Warring States documents, such as *Master Mo*, where "watching *qi*" (*wangqi* 望氣) was performed during wartime by *wu*-shamans who are said to have been provided with ample drugs (*yao*) and lodged close to battlefield altars so they could render offerings to the spirits. Notably, changes in atmospheric conditions revealed when the enemy was advancing or retreating, or predicted if the battle would be a success or failure.[867] A manuscript discovered in the second century BCE tombs at Mawangdui, given the title by modern scholars as *Miscellaneous Prognostications by Celestial Patterns and Qi Configurations* (*Tianwen qixiang zazhan* 天文氣象雜占) also depicts various shapes of clouds and correlates these to militaristic affairs.[868]

These specific arts of divination were firmly rooted in the sense of vision, relying on the shamanic practitioner to not casually look, but to look *for*, to surveille, to investigate. The skill of inspection (*shi* 視) in particular was considered among the repertoire of those

[867] Johnston, *Mozi*, 839. For a history on military divination in China and an overview of watching *qi*, see Yates, "Military Divination." For brief comments on similar practices of medieval masters of methods, see Raz, *Emergence of Daoism*, 62–63.
[868] See Yates, "Military Divination," 17n.9 and sources cited therein.

practicing divinatory arts.[869] Unsurprisingly, the directive in the *Five Talismans* to "carefully inspect the fragrant smoke" reveals which deity is approaching, a strikingly similar activity and outcome to the *wu*-shaman on the battlefield who portends the movement of enemy forces. Equally, the command in the *Petition Almanac* to "observe the incense smoke" in order to reveal the success or failure of the petition also speaks to similar military divination goals. Thus, such directions in the *Secret Instructions* to "inspect the smoke rise" may not point to merely watching the upward conveyance of the petition or prayer of the supplicant, but indicate an underlying practice, rooted in the prognostic arts of Jiangnan, in looking for signs in the smoke.[870]

It should be underscored that we have evidence the Celestial Masters looked for signs conveyed by the spirits before they arrived in Jiangnan. According to Stephen Bokenkamp, a Celestial Masters document likely dated to 255 uses the uncommon expression *jueqi* 決氣, which he understands to mean "breaking through the pneumas" or "distinguishing (voices emanating from) the pneumas."[871] Bokenkamp speculates this points to communication from the spirit world received through mediums. This likely would have been *wu*-shamans or figures closely aligned with their repertoire of esoteric arts. In the view of Cedzich, *jueqi* "appears to refer to the flow and differentiation of *qi* effected and communicated by the Dao

[869] See, for example, the repeated instances of "inspection" (*shi*) in Stephan Kory's study on early medieval omen watching and mantic observation, Stephan N. Kory, "Omen Watching, Mantic Observation, Aeromancy, and Learning to 'See': The Rise and Messy Multiplicity of Zhanhou 占候 in Late Han and Medieval China," *East Asian Science, Technology, and Medicine* 50 (2019): 67–131. For example, Kory cites Xu Shen's second century gloss on divination (*zhan* 占): "to inspect an omen enquiry" 視兆問也, Kory, 71.
[870] It has also been proposed the activities in the quiescent chamber were intended to bring about hallucinatory experiences through burning or ingesting various plants, especially hemp; see several citations to primary sources in Needham and Lu, *Science and Civilisation in China,* Vol. 5, Part 2, 152n.a; see also comments in Steavu, "Marvelous Fungus," 374–75 and sources cited therein. Given that *wu*-shamans were to be provided with drugs according to *Master Mo*, such practices may have been continued here.
[871] Bokenkamp, *Early Daoist Scripture*, 151.

itself."[872] While Bokenkamp's analysis highlights the aural and verbal nature of the activity, a view directly supported by the context of the Celestial Masters' document, Cedzich attempts to bridge an understanding of *jueqi* to a larger realm of interpretive activity where "everything was analyzed, categorized, and assessed by reference to the pneumata of the Dao."[873] Notably, early Daoist sources regularly condemn spirit communication through trance possession (which, if anything, only confirms its recurring frequency), thus we might speculate Celestial Masters priests also started to look for confirmatory signs of the spirits in other areas of the sensorium.[874] If the southeastern coast was a cultural hub for incense burning, as is suggested by the archaeological record, the careful inspection of smoke, perhaps under the influence of local practitioners of the art, may have been adopted by the Celestial Masters upon arriving in Jiangnan.

In sum, the rituals held in the quiescent chamber as described by the received root text of the *Secret Instructions* rely on the use of a censer placed in the center of the structure. Its position at both the beginning and end of the ritual sequence implies that it was envisioned as an apparatus that drew down the spirits when lit and then caused them to withdraw when extinguished. Yet, when examining a subset of Daoist texts of presumably old provenance with connections to Jiangnan, specifically the *Secret Instructions, Petition Almanac,* and *Five Talismans*, the purpose of the censer is revealed to be more complex. It could function as a bridge that could both dispatch messages to the divine realms as well as reveal the intentions or actions of the spirits. Communication through the censer was a pathway travelled in both directions.

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[872] Cedzich, "Twelve Hundred Officials," 19.
[873] Cedzich, "Twelve Hundred Officials," 25.
[874] For references to the condemnation of trance possession and *wu*-shamans, see Cedzich, "Twelve Hundred Officials," 18–19n.36, 68–69, 80n.234.

7. Olfactory Practices in Jiangnan and Early Incense Blending

Just before the celestial Masters arrived in the south in 317, the alchemist Ge Hong is believed to have completed his *Inner Chapters of the Master who Embraces Simplicity* (*Baopuzi neipian* 枹朴子內篇; DZ1185), hereafter *Inner Chapters*, thus preserving a snapshot of the religious environment of Jiangnan before the influx of new ideas and practices from the north. For our purposes, this text also provides a glimpse into the beliefs and attitudes towards aromatics and correlated olfactory practices before the northern immigration. In contrast to the semi-arid northern steppes, the subtropical southern coast always held a distinctive botanical profile, but the supra-regional trade reshaping northern markets was also reshaping the coastal port cities. Ge Hong's *Inner Chapters* expresses awareness of international commerce and at one point notes the presence of crystal bowls crafted in foreign countries.[875]

In a different passage, Ge Hong offers a valuable comment that we can analyze for its description of the contemporary smellscape of the coastal south. In a discussion on the gratifying allures of smell, Ge Hong reports that "there is no human nose that dislikes fragrances; thus, sulfur, saffron[876], thoroughwort root[877], storax, dark gall, white gum, lovage,

[875] 外國作水精碗。DZ1185:11.3b, trans. Ware, *Alchemy*, 52. Crystal (*shuijing* 水精) was long thought to be a Roman export among the Chinese. For example, the *Book of Later Han* claims that Roman palaces fashioned columns made from crystal, HHS:88.2919.

[876] *Yujin* 鬱金 came to identify several golden colored aromatics in the medieval period, both native to China and foreign imports, and it would be impossible to know which one Ge Hong was envisioning here. Given that saffron was known to the Chinese by the late third century, I have chosen to highlight saffron here. For more on the history of saffron in China, see my comments to Yu Gold Aromatic at HC#7.

[877] *Zhi1lan* 芝蘭 poses a problem worth discussion. Metaphorically, this phrase has come to refer to the pervading positive influence of virtuous people who are represented by these fragrant plants. The *locus classicus* for this pairing is *Master Xun* (*Xunzi* 荀子), where it is used as an exemplar of a plant (or plants) with

loosestrife, spring sweet basil, and autumn thoroughwort are prized like fine gems."[878] There are three important points to draw from the *Inner Chapters*' list of nine odorants (it cites thoroughwort twice). First, Ge Hong make reference to several plants that are associated with the ancient smellscape and closely connected to "Encountering Sorrow" from the *Songs of Chu* anthology. This includes thoroughwort, lovage, loosestrife, and sweet basil. While autumn thoroughwort is pulled directly from "Encountering Sorrow," spring sweet basil appears to have been coined by Ge Hong, probably to form a poetic pairing of seasons.[879] *Jieche* 揭車, now sometimes identified as a type of loosestrife, also has a *locus classicus* in "Encountering Sorrow" where it is treated as a plant with a less powerful scent than

highly favorable fragrances (e.g. John Knoblock, *Xunzi: A Translation and Study of the Complete Works, Volume II, Books 7–16*. (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1990), 109: "iris and orchid") Yet, elsewhere in *Master Xun* we also come across the phrase *zhi₂lan* 芷蘭 which also refers to an aromatic plant or plants (cf. John Knoblock, *Xunzi: A Translation and Study of the Complete Works, Volume III, Books 17–32* [Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1994], 249, "orchid and angelica" [transposing the Chinese graphs], also cf. Sukhu, *Shaman*, 88, "thoroughwort that produces a fragrant root"). I suggest that at an indeterminate point in history, many instances of *zhi₂* 芷, now considered a fragrant type of wild angelica root (*Angelica dahurica*), were replaced with the orthographically similar *zhi₁* 芝, which is often taken as a type of medicinal fungus in many medieval textual sources. This potential copyist error was also noted by Wang Niansun 王念孫 (1744–1832) who believed the similarity in clerical script between *zhi* 止 and *zhi* 之 may have accounted for the confusion, see HNZ:17.1187 [sic]. As Wang highlights, *zhi₁* is not understood as a fragrant plant. Moreover, Gopal Sukhu has argued that *zhi₂lan*, often found transposed as *lanzhi₂* 蘭芷 in classical sources, should be read as a singular item, namely "thoroughwort root," see Sukhu, *Shaman*, 88, 219n.9. This seems reasonable given the frequent context of this phrase concerns the hidden (i.e., subterranean) fragrance of this plant. This can be clearly seen in the "Seven Remonstrances" from the *Songs of Chu* where it says, "Thoroughwort root is hidden, but remains fragrant," 蘭芷幽而有芳, CC:30.239 (cf. Hawkes, *Songs of the South*, 248, "Even the hidden orchid and iris in those days were fragrant"). While many modern translators prefer to see flowers as the principal exemplars of ancient Chinese aromatic botanicals, we have seen that plant rhizomes and rootstalks were among the most valued of the ancient odorants. Taking all of this into consideration, and in order to match the paired binomial *suhe*, "storax," in Ge Hong's list, I have chosen to translate *zhi₁lan* as "thoroughwort root," even though that is not the most literal rendering of the phrase. It should be noted that Ge Hong elsewhere writes considerably about various kinds of magical fungi, one category of which is "plant mushrooms" (*caozhi* 草芝), see Steavu, "Marvelous Fungus," 362. While I believe Ge Hong was drawing upon older literary traditions such as *Master Xun*, one might argue he was envisioning *zhilan* along the lines of these "plant mushrooms," i.e., as a type of fungus. It remains to be seen, however, if such substances had a salient fragrance.

[878] 人鼻無不樂香，故流黃鬱金，芝蘭蘇合，玄膽素膠，江離揭車，春蕙秋蘭，價同瓊瑤。 DZ1185:12.8b. An alternative translation can be found in Ware, *Alchemy*, 211.

[879] For the citation to autumn thoroughwort, see CC:1.5, cf. trans. Hawkes, *Songs of the South*, 68 ("autumn orchids"). *Hui*, sweet basil, was also during this period sometimes considered as type of *lan*, thoroughwort, see for example, Guo Pu's commentary at SHJ:2.4702.

thoroughwort.[880] So too is the case for *jiangli* 江離, now identified as lovage, which appears in the same verse as loosestrife.[881] While all of these botanical species were likely known directly to Ge Hong, an expert herbalist, the context of their literary use in "Encountering Sorrow" also makes them symbols of ritual purity and divine presence.

Secondly, these indigenous items are interspersed with several imported goods, including sulfur, known since the third century as a product from the Malay Peninsula (but also found in China), saffron, an intensely scented aromatic made from the crimson stigmas of the crocus flower in northwestern India, and storax, the pungent balsam originating in the Mediterranean.[882] While the latter two substances were rare exotica, storax was noted in contemporary Chinese medical literature as having a unique esoteric value. The *Supplementary Record by Famous Physicians* claims storax, when ingested over a long duration, could cause the body to become light and allow communication with the spirits.[883] Such esoteric properties were otherwise reserved for native Chinese plants and minerals and demonstrates both how long the Chinese knew about the Mediterranean import (since at least the first century) and how valued it had become to adepts seeking immortality.

Lastly, there are two further items that are provided with descriptive, almost mystical, monikers: dark gall (*xuadan* 玄膽) and white gum (*sujiao* 素膠). These may very well be arcane names for more familiar substances, perhaps for musk and liquidambar,

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[880] CC:1.41; see also my comments to loosestrife at HC#39.
[881] See the relevant footnote at HC#20c.
[882] Naturally occurring sulfur was known since the Zhou, see Zhang, "Ancient Chinese Sulfur." Notably, sulfur was one of five minerals recovered from the second century BCE tomb of King Zhao Mie of Nanyue, see Guangzhou shi wenwu guanli weiyuanhui, *Nanyue wang mo*, Vol. 1, 75, 141. Nevertheless, the roughly contemporaneous *Traditions of Foreign Countries during the Wu* notes sulfur as originating from the Malay Peninsula, see T2122:573c07–08; TPYL:8.982.862 (and Table 2.2). Consequently, it was probably known both as regionally available and as a foreign import.
[883] XXBC:12.321. Other aromatics with such powers are noted in the introduction to this chapter.

respectively.[884] Overall, these scented materials were claimed to have been "prized like fine gems," reflecting the commercial value of such goods in Ge Hong's time as well as their utility in more esoteric applications.

Another text relevant to our analysis of the medieval southern smellscape is the *Grand Purity Scripture on the Divine Elixir of Golden Liquor* (*Taiqing jinye shendan jing* 太清金液神丹經; DZ880), hereafter *Scripture on the Divine Elixir*, a composite work that touches on the practices of alchemy of the Grand Purity (*taiqing* 太清) tradition. The third section is attributed to the Master who Embraces Simplicity, the pen-name of Ge Hong. Kristopher Schipper comments on this attribution saying that, "We have no proof that this text is by Ge Hong's hand, but neither is there conclusive evidence to the contrary."[885] Curiously, this final section of the *Scripture on the Divine Elixir*, following a lengthy prologue, is written in the style of a gazetteer, examining the location, political organization, customs, and commercially traded goods of nearly two dozen foreign countries. Most attention is paid to small states around the Mekong Delta and Malay peninsula as well as prominent countries further west, including the Roman Empire. The purpose of such a text for aiding alchemists is made clear by the author: "Now I have compiled the countries which produce cinnabar. I recorded these foreign countries to expand the minds of the ignorant and have appended [this record] to the end of *Golden Liquor*."[886] Cinnabar was considered an essential ingredient for transmuting gold, which in turn could be used to lengthen one's life.

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[884] Ge Hong refers to *xuadan* elsewhere in the *Inner Chapters* an ingredient for a decoction (*tang*); see DZ1185.15a12. In another passage talking about commonly used medicines, he notes the equally arcane "leaning" or "sideways gum" (*ce zhi jiao* 側之膠) and later notes that variant names are sometimes used in prescriptions; see DZ1185.16.7b-8a, trans. Ware, *Alchemy*, 270–71. My suggestions of musk and liquidambar are speculative, but musk grains were obtained from a gland in the musk deer and dark in color, while liquidambar was a pale-colored resin drawn from trees growing on the southern coast.
[885] Schipper and Verellen, *The Taoist Canon*, 105.
[886] 今撰生丹之國，紀識外邦，並申愚心，附於金液之後。DZ880:3.5b.

Consequently, knowledge about cinnabar deposits would prove useful for aspiring alchemists.[887] Scanning the gazetteer, in addition to cinnabar, we also find other substances such as sulfur, copper sulfate, and amethyst, as well as various metals such as gold, tin, and iron, listed among the exports of various countries. Undoubtedly, information such as this would be also invaluable for adepts hoping to source materials for alchemical experimentation.

The gazetteer section of the *Divine Elixir of Golden Liquor* has received some scholarly attention.[888] Rao Zongyi (Jao Tsung-i) was the first to study it in detail, concluding based on rhyming patterns that it should not postdate the fifth or early sixth century.[889] Moreover, the foreign Chinese toponyms for regions in the Southern Seas mostly reflect the earliest strata of place names (in any language) from the third century as seen in the *Treatise on Strange Things of the Southern Regions* by Wan Zhen and the *Traditions of Foreign Countries during the Wu* by Kang Tai.[890] Rao offers no firm decision as to whether the work should be attributed to Ge Hong, but keeps the possibility open.

It is notable that the author of the gazetteer expresses a relatively thorough understanding of maritime trade, including the distances in which ships can sail within certain spans of time.[891] Elsewhere, the author shares a basic principle of celestial navigation,

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[887] Importantly, the *Inner Chapters* speak of the superiority of transmuted gold over natural gold for pursuits of longevity, see Ware, *Alchemy*, 267–68.

[888] An overview of the relevant scholarship can be found in Han Jishao, "Ge Hong nanhai youji *Taiqing jinye shendan jing* juan xia xinzheng," *Sichuan daxue xuebao (zhexue shehui kexue)* 4, no. 241 (2022): 88–89; see also the brief comments in Schipper and Verellen, *The Taoist Canon*, 105.

[889] Rao Zongyi, "*Taiqing jinye shendan jing* (juan xia) yunanhai dili," *Zhongguo wenhua yanjiu xuebao* 3, no. 1 (1970): 35–36.

[890] These works are discussed in Chapter 2, Section 4. See also the convenient tabular chart of toponyms from the *Divine Elixir of Golden Liquor* in Rao, "Taiqing jinye shendan jing," 74–75. At times, the author shares detailed information about countries that is not drawn from the above works, including the theory that Laozi, in the apotheosized form of Lord Lao, had visited the Romans in order to convert them, see DZ880:3.13b.

[891] See summary in Rao, "Taiqing jinye shendan jing," 63–65.

nothing that one should "face the *ji*-constellation with one's back towards Polaris."[892] This bespeaks a first-hand knowledge of sea travel, to which the author readily admits: "In the past while taking some leisure time I travelled to the south. Initially, I only wanted to see Jiaoling [i.e., Lingnan in the far south], but by chance of fate I proceeded to Funan."[893] Even though the author routinely refers to himself as Hong 洪 in these passages, most scholars are hesitant to affirm Ge Hong travelled overseas and subsequently compiled the gazetteer. Expanding upon the analysis of Rao, Han Jishao argues there is no reason to discount Ge Hong as the author. The biggest hurdle remains that fact that such an ambitious excursion is nowhere recorded in the surviving autobiographical elements of Ge Hong's life. Han counters that *Inner Chapters* are widely recognized as incomplete and fragmentary, thus leaving room for the possibility of lost materials.[894] In addition, according to Han, not only can we postulate when such a trip may have taken places, we can also assert that Ge Hong was in close proximity to the necessary shipping routes and had the motivation to undertake such a voyage. Specifically, Ge Hong could have had the opportunity to travel while he was living in Guangzhou between the years 306 (around the age of 24) and approximately 314 (age 32). Furthermore, he could have composed the gazetteer sometime after 332 (age 50) when he requested to be appointed magistrate in Guangxi following notification that cinnabar has been discovered in Jiaozhi in the far south.[895]

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[892] 迎箕背辰。DZ880:3.6a. A similar comment is restated at DZ880:3.7a. *Chen* 辰 is *beichen* 北辰, the northern circumpolar star. The positioning noted here would indicate facing south, as is noted in the text.
[893] 昔以少暇，因旅南行。初謂觀交嶺而已。有緣之便，遂到扶南。DZ880:3.1b.
[894] Han, "Taiqing jinye shendan jing," 241.
[895] Han, "Taiqing jinye shendan jing," 241-43. I directed the reader to Han full argument, I only offer the broadest timeline. A *vita* of Ge Hong's life can be found in Knechtges and Chang, *A Reference Guide*, Vol. 1, 269–72.

Resolving the authorship of the gazetteer section of the *Scripture on the Divine Elixir* need not concern us because the relevant passages, namely those speaking to scented *flora*, bear no indication of a late composition. The descriptions are quite apposite of the fourth century, regardless if they were compiled by Ge Hong. The comments on aromatics are appended to the very end of the gazetteer. It would appear the author found an equal value in charting the provenance of various aromatics as he did for other alchemical substances. While some phrasing remains conjectural, the passage reads as such:

> There are numerous aromatics of various kinds and each has its own origin. The wood that [half-]sinks and [half-]floats [i.e., aloeswood] is exported from Rinan.[896] *Douliang*, dark and numinous, is exported from Dianxun.[897] Cloves from the fragrant creeping plant grow in Java.[898] The root of hidden thoroughwort grows in Wulun.[899] Costus is from India, saffron is from Kāśmīra, storax is from Parthia, and frankincense is from the Roman Empire. Some are from herbs and trees and each is precious. Some are flowers, some are resins, some are heart-woods, and some are branches.[900]
> 眾香雜類，各自有原。木之沈浮，出於日南。都梁青靈，出於典遜。雞舌芬蘿，生於杜薄。幽簡[901]茹來，出於無倫。青木天竺，鬱金肘[902]賓，蘇合安息，薰陸大秦，咸自草木，各自所珍，或華或膠，或心或枝。

[896] Rinan was the southernmost Chinese commandery comprising present-day central Vietnam. Aloeswood was known to the Chinese as a product of Rinan since the mid-to-late third century, see my comments to aloeswood at HC#3.

[897] Dianxun is a variant name for Dunxun 頓遜, see Rao, "Taiqing jinye shendan jing," 38–40. Dunxun occupied a strategic position on the Malay Peninsula where merchants would portage ship cargo over the isthmus; see e.g. Paul Wheatley, "Tun-Sun," *The Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland* 1/2 (1956): 17–30. *Douliang* referred to a now unknown foreign plant, see my comments to the Aromatic from Douliang at HC#34. Dunxun was reported in the mid-to-late third century *Treatise on Strange Things of the Southern Region* as producing Malayan patchouli, which was compared to the *douliang* plant in the same text. This likely accounts for why the *Scripture on the Divine Elixir* claims *douliang* is from Dunxun; see also my comments to patchouli at HC#38.

[898] On identifying Dubo 杜薄 as Java, see Rao, "Taiqing jinye shendan jing," 44–45. This report is inaccurate, the clove tree only grew on the Moluccas. For the early trade of Moluccan cloves, see my commentary to cloves at HC#8.

[899] Rao suggests Wulun is an otherwise unknown kingdom located around present-day Pyay (also known as Prome) in Myanmar, see Rao, "Taiqing jinye shendan jing," 45–46. Hidden thoroughwort (*youlan* 幽蘭) was a metaphor for the hidden virtue of a sage that goes unrecognized, see Sukhu, *Shaman*, 88. The *locus classicus* for hidden thoroughwort is "Encountering Sorrow" in the *Songs of Chu* anthology, see CC:1.30. There seems to be no historical evidence justifying the origin of this plant overseas.

[900] DZ880:3.17b; see also the analysis of this passage in. Rao, "Taiqing jinye shendan jing," 65–69.

[901] Reading 簡 as 蘭.

[902] Reading 肘 as 罽.

As noted above, all of the aromatics listed here are what one might expect to see circulating in fourth century China. Such a diverse range of goods could only be the result of rather robust international trade. Even if the gazetteer cannot be attributed to Ge Hong, it reflects not only the impact of commercial trade on the native smellscape of China, but also the potential interest in amassing a collection of aromatics for alchemists and others who were practicing occult arts in Jiangnan and elsewhere. While the author expressly claims the purpose of his brief treatise was to gather information on the international distribution of cinnabar, he apparently also felt it was beneficial to add a short addendum on available scented plants and plant products.

One final passage also attributed to Ge Hong's *Inner Chapters* is worthy of note. Preserved in the tenth century encyclopedia, the *Imperial Readings of the Taiping Era* (*Taiping yulan* 太平御覽), we find a fabulous story about the overseas collection of frankincense. The *Scripture on the Divine Elixir* had claimed the resin's origins were in the Roman Empire, but Rome was as best a re-exporter of the good that was sourced on the southern Arabian Peninsula and Horn of Africa (a "false frankincense" also came from India). In the following account of the *Inner Chapters*, however, we are provided a more fanciful story that recalls the burgeoning tales of the strange genre. While this passage may not be authentic to Ge Hong's work, I include it here as an example of how lore also circulated alongside the most important types of aromatic exotica:

> Frankincense is exported from Fufen Island[903] located in the sea. Frankincense is a tree resin. The tree is cut and holes are bored to cause the resin to drip out. The barbarians take it and wait for merchants and customers. That which is exchanged is only occasionally found due to the concern about the *jie*-beast, an imposing animal who eats [the resin]. Whether slashed or stabbed, this beast does not die; if cast into a fire until all the firewood is exhausted, it is not

[903] I can find no other information about this location.

> burned. When struck by a staff, although the skin is not injured, the bones can be smashed which then leads to its demise.[904]
> 俘焚洲在海中，薰陸香之所出。薰陸香，木膠也。樹有傷穿，膠因墮，夷人彩[905]之，以待估客。所以賈不多得者，所患猲。掘[906]獸啖之。此獸斫刺不世[907]，投火中薪盡不焦。以杖打之，皮不傷而骨碎，然後乃死。

As with other tales of the strange, this story is framed with familiar trappings. The practice of notching the tree to gather the scented resin is faithful to ancient descriptions of frankincense harvesting. Yet, ultimately, the gathering of frankincense is presented as a heroic battle against the *jie*-beast 猲, a fierce animal that can only be defeated with a well-placed strike of the staff. We might presume that absent any danger to life, the cost of frankincense resin may not have seemed justified to weary Chinese buyers. Notably, similar lore circulated about storax in the fourth century, as it was claimed to be the excrement of lions.[908] The fantastic origins of these aromatics likely made them appealing to adepts, alchemists, and other practitioners of esoteric arts who believed their spiritual cultivations could benefit from the use of such special materials.

Let us now turn to the two occasions where Ge Hong speaks of burning incense (*xiang*) in his *Inner Chapters*. Described as an ethnography of Jiangnan culture, the fact that Ge Hong's treatise so rarely touches upon incense is rather striking.[909] As we have seen, there

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[904] TPYL:8.982.861.
[905] Reading 彩 as 采.
[906] Reading 掘 as 倔.
[907] Reading 世 as 死.
[908] See my comments to frankincense at HC#5. In the gazetteer section of the *Scripture on the Divine Elixir*, frankincense is also briefly noted in the entry to the Roman Empire. There it is claimed that a "frankincense method" (*xunlu shu* 薰陸术) is used for cooking, a practice that consequently acumulated so much aroma in the air that the entire country was free from foul odors, see DZ880:3.13a. This story may not be entirely fabricated, as it was believed in first century Rome that the wood from frankincense and myrrh trees could be used as kindling for cooking fires, see Nigel Groom, "The Frankincense Region," *Proceedings of the Seminar for Arabian Studies* 7 (1977): 87.
[909] Dominic Steavu describes the *Inner Chapters* as an "ethnography" and an "anthology of Jiangnan lore," see Steavu, *Three Sovereigns*, 12 and 17, respectively.

is plenty of evidence that Chinese olfactory culture was already rapidly changing in the third and fourth centuries. The translation of Buddhist scriptures and the spread of Buddhist practice, as well as the increasing appearance of foreign aromatics in gazetteers, poetry, and other literature all speak to this phenomenon. Nevertheless, the reality is that while we may today view incense as part of the basic fabric of medieval Chinese religious life, references to the practice of burning incense, even up through the first few decades of the fourth century, remain rather scarce.

That caveat notwithstanding, the context of both citations to incense in the *Inner Chapters* make it clear it was used during esoteric ritual activities. The first passage occurs as part of a discussion where Ge Hong chastises longevity-seeking adepts for following deceptive or ill-informed teachers. He states that "sometimes, there is a whole group [of people] who bow their heads in the direction of an empty seat and make various kinds of flesh and animal offerings or who burn incense to ask for good fortune; yet the sick are not healed."[910] The empty seat here refers to the practice of using a spirit seat or altar to house the location of the deity being invoked. In this scenario, both traditional blood sacrifices and burning incense are presented as ineffective in curing sick patients. Such an activity might refer to a figure like Yu Ji (or his later disciples) who was reported as burning incense and performing healing acts as well as gathering a sizable following in the coastal south a century before Ge Hong's lifetime.[911] Regardless of the group's specific affiliation, burning incense is

[910] 或舉門扣頭，以向空坐，烹宰犧牲，燒香請福，而病者不愈。DZ1185:14.7a; cf. trans. Ware, *Alchemy*, 234.

[911] It is generally believed that while Ge Hong had materials at his disposal discussing the activities of the Celestial Masters, he nevertheless fails to mention the group in his *Inner Chapters*, see Michel Strickmann, "The Mao Shan Revelations: Taoism and the Aristocracy," *T'oung Pao*, Second Series, 63, no. 1 (1977): 8; also Kleeman, *Celestial Masters*, 22n.3, 57–58. Regardless of Ge Hong's silence, recent scholarship has suggested the Celestial Masters were already in the southeast at this time, see Raz, *Emergence of Daoism*, 135n.22 (citing Bai, "Religious Beliefs"). Note that the discussion of incense above not in the context of employing demonifugic fumigation, but in the service of seeking good fortune (*fu* 福).

clearly presented within a context of ritual practice seeking favor of the spirits or other divine beings. Thus, along with An Shigao's gloss on Buddhist *pūjā*, Ge Hong's use of burning incense (*shao xiang*), so commonly seen in late medieval religious scripture, is among the earliest to signal an attempt at divine communication and assistance.

The second passage under consideration in the *Inner Chapters* is also significant and is directly related to ritual protocols for compounding elixirs of immortality. Ge Hong had access to numerous texts on alchemical techniques when compiling his *Inner Chapters* and his work summarizes dozens of methods for crafting various kinds of elixirs. For Ge Hong, the alchemical methods of the Grand Purity movement constituted what he considered the highest routes to attaining immortality, more preferable than the bio-spiritual cultivations of *qi*, sexual arts, or even the more commonplace prescription of herbal dietetics. In describing one process for transmuting alchemical gold, a potable gold ingredient for elixirs, Ge Hong instructs the alchemist to "constantly burn the fivefold incense (*wuxiang* 五香)," ending with the warning to "not let the incense be interrupted."[912]

There are a few points to raise concerning this all too brief injunction. First, it is notable that Ge Hong makes reference to an incense blend of five ingredients. A similar aromatic product, under the irregular name of "incense of five combinations" (*wuhui zhi xiang* 五會之香) was also required in the transmission rite of the *Five Talismans*.[913] Furthermore, the *Petition Almanac* also makes reference to a similar substance, called the "incense of five blends" (*wuhe zhi xiang* 五和之香). This is discussed in the context of calling upon Jade Lasses and other spirits to deliver water and incense to cleanse the home of

[912] 常燒五香，香不絕。DZ1185:16.13b; cf. trans. Ware, *Alchemy*, 278.
[913] DZ388:3.4a.

a petitioner.[914] Thus, in spite of the fact that all three blends are used in different ritual settings, they all appear in texts that have a strong resonance with the Jiangnan region.

This point is significant enough to merit further comment. I have argued that medieval processing and preparation methods for creating incense blends revealed a close relationship with older Chinese methods of drug making, including pulverizing, sifting, and mixing the materials with honey to form pill or pellets. This affinity should also include crafting complex multi-ingredient blends. The oldest textual evidence we have for an art of blending incense in China comes in the mid-to-late third century in the *Treatise on Strange Things of the Southern Regions*, a regional gazetteer compiled under the Eastern Wu. This proof comes through a rather innocuous discussion of onycha, a common additive to perfumes made from the opercula of gastropod mollusks. The compiler, Wan Zhen, reports that onycha "can be blended (*he* 合) with various aromatics and burned, which causes the enhancement of the fragrance."[915] This passage attests not only to the practice of blending perfumes, but also points to a refined conception of synergy of scents, where individual ingredients can enhance the overall scent profile of a compound.

A position on the southern coast appears to play an important in these affairs. The mollusks necessary to manufacture onycha are generally believed to have been found along the southern shores of China. Moreover, Wan Zhen was governor of Danyang, a commandery located on the banks of the Yangze River with direct access to trade routes connecting the state of Wu with maritime Southeast Asia and it rich resources of tropical

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[914] Verellen, "Heavenly Master Liturgical Agenda," 327; Verellen, *Imperiled Destinies*, 63.
[915] 可合眾香燒之，皆使益芳。TPYL:8.982.865. The importance of this passage has been noted by Yamada, *Tōzai kōyaku shi*, 30–31; Yamada Kentarō, "Chin sunawachi kaori," *Nagoya gakuin daigaku ronshū* 7, no. 1 (1970): 10; Guoli gugong bowuyuan, *Xiangju tulu*, 16–17, 111n.30. See also my comments to onycha at HC#35.

aromatics. It may be the case that the religious traditions of Jiangnan, including the interest in compounding alchemical elixirs and herbal dietetics for lengthening life, played a role in developing nascent Chinese perfuming arts. By the mid-fifth century, the earliest Chinese blending manuals start to appear, including one attributed to Emperor Ming 明 (r. 466–472) of the Liu-Song, whose territory covered most of the sub-tropical and tropical south and not only had access to the valuable maritime trade routes, but also to an early Chinese industry in aloeswood harvesting in present-day Guangdong just west of the Pearl River Delta.[916] The critical role of the Jiangnan region for elevating and establishing a scent culture around incense is also attested through the archaeological record where, as we have seen, a disproportionate amount of ceramic and porcelain censers have been recovered from the middle and lower reaches of the Yangzi River.

The fivefold blends noted by Ge Hong, the *Five Talismans*, and the *Petition Almanac* are the earliest textual citations to multi-ingredient incense compounds in China.[917]

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[916] For more on the history of the early blending manuals, see my introduction to the *Materia Aromatica*; for more on the history of aloeswood harvesting in China, previously thought to date from the Tang, see my comments to aloeswood at HC#3.

[917] An important point should be made regarding the circulation of two different blending recipes that are reputed to originate in the Eastern Han. The first is entitled the "Aromatic Recipe of the Han Palaces" (*Hangong xiangfa* 漢宮香方) and is supposedly annotated by Zheng Kangcheng 鄭康成, more commonly known as the exegete Zheng Xuan. Liu Jingmin has already demonstrated that this recipe is a product of a much later era, appearing texts no earlier than the Song and bearing many hallmarks of the late medieval period, see Liu, *Songdai Xiangpu*, 253–58. There is strong evidence suggesting this recipe was part of Hong Chu's original manual, but was later lost, see Shang Haifeng, "Bei Song ben Hong Chu *Xiang houpu* bianzheng jiyi," *Gugong Xueshu Jikan* 36, no. 1 (2019): 19–20. Specifically, there is evidence to suggest the recipe was transferred through the hands of Hong Yan, Hong Chu's younger brother, see Liu, *Songdai Xiangpu*, 253. The second recipe is entitled "Palace Aromatics of the *Jianning* era of the Han" (*Han jianning gongzhong xiang* 漢建寧宮中香), which according to its name would place this blend's origin during the reign of Emperor Ling (r. 168–189). This recipe suffers from many of the same chronological problems as the first. The earliest source I can find that includes this recipe is Chen Jing's *Newly Compiled Materia Aromatica* of the late Song or early Yuan, see SKQS:844.271b16–272a05. Additionally, the ingredients list is also filled with late medieval nomenclature, such as the curious clove bark (*dingxiang pi* 丁香皮) and gradations of aloeswood that were not firmly established until Ding Wei, specifically the pair of Yellow-Aged Aromatic (*huangshu xiang* 黃熟香; see HC#23) and Freshly Produced Aromatic (*shengjie xiang* 生結香; see comments to HC#22). As I have shown, there is no reason to believe there was regular access to a broad assortment of supra-regional aromatics to sustain such a sophisticated art of perfumery during the Han. Yamada Kentarō has further commented that

Regrettably, none of these sources identify individual raw materials. It is common to find mixtures of five scented ingredients in later Daoist scriptures, often under the heading of "fivefold aromatic" (*wuxiang*), but in most cases the recipes are for creating scented water used for ritual lustration, a practice we will return to below. It is possible these ablution recipes were modified to make incense by omitting the liquid ingredient or simmering the decoction into a paste and then further dried.[918]

One corrupted incense recipe, listed under a fivefold incense (*wuxiang*) subsection, can be found in the *Brief Exposition on the Transmission of the Scriptures, Rules, and Registers of the Three Caverns* (*Chuanshou sanding jingjie falu lüeshuo* 傳授三洞經戒法籙略說; DZ1241), hereafter *Brief Exposition*. This work was compiled in 713 by Zhang Wanfu, one of the "three masters of ritual instruction" in the Daoist tradition. Despite it categorization, the received text lists a total of six aromatics and two minerals: aloeswood, frankincense, sandalwood, costus, cloves, camphor, *sha* 砂 (presumably cinnabar grains, *zhusha* 朱砂[919]) and *xiong* 雄 (presumably realgar, *xionghuang* 雄黃).[920] It is unlikely such a recipe was known to Ge Hong given the heavy reliance on supra-regional aromatics (camphor was also a relatively late arrival in China); it makes better sense as a product of the

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perfumers during the Song and afterwards sometimes named blends as an expression of their veneration for the past, Yamada, *Tōa kōryō shi kenkyū*, 177. Unfortunately, such recipes are often cited to prove the "ancient" art of incense blending in China when in reality these recipes are the products of a much later and highly developed smell culture, see e.g., Needham and Lu, *Science and Civilisation in China,* Vol. 5, Part 2, 135; Jung, "Cultural Biography of Agarwood," 107; Milburn, "Aromas," 453–54; King, *Garden of Paradise*, 91.

[918] The *Scripture of the Forty-Four Methods on Yellow Silk* (*Huangsu sishi si fangjing* 黃素四十四方經; DZ1380) gives instructions for making a ritual wash with wild angelica root and costus root before noting these could also be used to make incense and then burned, see DZ1380:18b; the recipe is repeated at DZ1138:50.3a and DZ1032:41.8b–9a. Notably, the wash is used for dispelling the Three Corpses while the incense is used for communicating with spirits. For more on this text, see Schipper and Verellen, *The Taoist Canon*, 179.

[919] Cinnabar grains are noted in a scented ablution recipe discussed below.

[920] 沈香(一)薰陸(二)白檀(三)青木(四)丁香(五)龍腦(七)砂(三)雄(四)。DZ1241:31b The interlinear enumeration of ingredients is also jumbled and incorrect, thus it seems there is considerable problems with the text as it now stands. For more on this scripture, see Schipper and Verellen, *The Taoist Canon*, 458.

Tang when it was recorded by Zhang Wanfu. The subsequent passage provides an explanation for why such a blend would be used: "when spreading the smell of the five fragrances, it draws down the numina of the five directions."[921]

This relationship between five fragrances and five numinous spirits is indebted to the pentadic theory of the Five Phases, a system of cosmology that matured in the Western Han under the masters of methods hailing from the ancient region of Qi. The one-to-one correlation between spirit and scented ingredient is best expressed in the *Five Talismans* where five censers are set up, one for each of the Five Thearchs, and one for each of the five talismans that are transmitted through the rite.[922] Moreover, while the *Practical Almanac* does not mention the use of a blended incense, it also uses an array of five censers set up on tables in five directions around the altar space. It appears the Five Phases cosmology that informed many forms of Chinese religious practice also inspired the use of multi-ingredient incense compounds for use in ritual.[923]

The second point I wish to highlight regarding Ge Hong's comments in the *Inner Chapters* concerns the stern warning against letting the incense burn out. There are, to be certain, clear connections to other passages we have examined, such as the injunction in the

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[921] 撤[→撤]五薰之炁，降五方之靈也。DZ1241:31b.

[922] For an investigation on the cosmological underpinnings of the *Five Talismans* and the historical development of the Five Thearchs, see Raz, "Imperial Efficacy."

[923] I argue, in essence, the opposite of what Olivia Milburn has previously suggested. She sees the division of Five Odors, as correlated with the Five Phases, to reflect religious and social practices that stressed the purity of singular aromatics and consequently "discouraged the development of complex scents," Milburn, "Aromas," 453. Her argument hinges on the belief that the Five Odor osmology operated discursively to keep different odorants separate in real-world perfuming practice. I would point to the fact that osmologies, by definition, are classifications of the olfactory sensorium, thus distinguishing between individual, distinctive scents is to be expected. In Chapter 2, Section 4 I propose that it is better to read osmologies in our sources as the identification of various odorants and smells that were deemed most salient to a time and region. Thus, I argue the Five Odors reveal the deep cultural interest in sacrificial scents and specifically the various types of odors related to flesh and food sacrifice. Moreover, because the Five Phase cosmology was so influential in motivating various styles of religious practice, exemplified for example in the *Five Talismans*, one could see how this cosmological theory would inspire, not restrict, the use of multi-aromatic blends, especially those with five ingredients.

Secret Instructions to burn copious amounts of incense all at once in a large bonfire of smoke. At the same time, Ge Hong does not appear to be focused on observing the incense smoke as it rises in the air as other directives in the *Secret Instructions*. Turning back to the relevant passage in the *Inner Chapters*, we find that burning fivefold incense is at the tail end of a sequence of events where spirit seats (*zuo*) to Taiyi 太乙, the Mysterious Woman (*xuannü* 玄女), and Laozi are constructed and offerings are presented.[924] We encounter a similar scenario elsewhere in Grand Purity materials where incense is used as part of a transmission ceremony from master to pupil. The *Instructions on the Book of the Divine Elixirs of the Nine Tripods by the Yellow Emperor* (*Huangdi jiuding shendan jingjue* 黃帝九鼎神丹經訣; DZ885), hereafter *Nine Tripods*, requires that a spirit seat be constructed to the Mysterious Woman after which one "burns incense and announces, 'I wish to transmit the Way to long life to (*so-and-so*).'"[925] Notably, the transmission can only occur if the sky is clear and there is no wind. I propose that in these scenarios an unceasing conflagration of smoke was thought to create a stable bridge of communication to the spiritual realm whereby the continuous fragrant smell verified the spirit's continuous presence during the ritual procedures. This use of incense is not predicated upon a bureaucratic and legalistic logic of the spirit world, but a sense of hygienic and ritual purity that invited the spiritually pure to remain in the human realm to properly oversee the necessary affairs, or in the cases above, the creation of an elixir of immortality or the transmission of instructions for how to do so.

[924] DZ1185.16.13b, see trans. Ware, *Alchemy*, 277.
[925] 燒香上白，欲以長生之道用傳某甲。DZ885:1.b1; also see trans. Pregadio, *Great Clarity*, 88, 161 (and summary at p. 82). Elsewhere, incense is burned immediately before an adept ingests the final elixir, see DZ885.1.5a, trans. Pregadio, *Great Clarity*, 169 (and summary at p. 99).

Concerns over purity are most commonly expressed in Daoist scriptures through regulations on bathing, but there is at least one scripture that clearly expresses this idea through the medium of incense. The *Grotto Perfection Mystery Scripture of the Secret Books on Great Cinnabar of the Grotto Perfection Supreme One and Lord Emperor* (*Dongzhen taiyi dijun taidan yinshu dongzhen xuanjing* 洞真太一帝君太丹隱書洞真玄經; DZ1330), hereafter *Grotto Perfection*, is a work dated broadly to the Six Dynasties and bears some evidence of Buddhist terminology. If we turn to the relevant portion of the text, we first find instructions to perform ablutions to ward off malign *qi* and other demonic influences, which are then followed by directions and an explanation for why burning incense is apsolutely necessary:

> Burn costus root, frankincense, and gum guggul in the retiring chamber in the space around one's head in order to pass through the stench of the Five Turbidities. This will halt the demonic and evil *qi* between the ground and forty *li* straight up into the heavens. It is the smoke of the incense that destroys the scent of the turbid stench and dispels the fog of evil filth. Therefore, Heavenly Men, Jade Lasses, and the Emperor of Supreme Unity accompany the fragrant scent and descend, resting on the face and eyes of the disciple. When burning incense at midnight also consistently visualize [the spirits] and maintain it [i.e., the incense smoke] – do not abandon it or forget about it.[926]
> 燒青木香及熏陸安息膠于寢處頭首之間者，以開通五濁之臭，止地上魔邪之炁，直上沖天四十里. 此香之煙也，破濁臭之炁，開卻邪穢之霧，故天人玉女，太一帝皇，隨香炁中而來下，憩子之面目間焉。燒香夜半時，亦常存而為之，勿廢忘也。

While the *Grotto Perfection* is not concerned with the creation of elixirs or the transmission of esoteric knowledge, this passage unremittingly focuses on removing foul stench from the air and forging a pathway of scented smoke so the heavenly spirits could descend with haste. Accordingly, burning incense made from a mixture of frankincense, costus root, and gum guggul was thought to create a column of scented air reaching forty *li* into the sky, thus bridging the celestial and terrestrial realms – for as long as the adept kept the censer filled

[926] DZ1330:7a–7b; also see DZ1032:41.2b–3a.

with incense. Thus, Ge Hong's warning to "not let the incense be interrupted" in the *Inner Chapters* could fall along the same conceptual lines for maintaining air purity, as well as the concern expressed in the *Nine Tripods* for waiting until there was no wind to unduly scatter the sweet-smelling incense.

8. An Ancient Olfactory Practice: Aromatic Baths and Smell Taboos

Arguably, the most important role of aromatics in the Grand Purity tradition – indeed, as embedded in their very name – was in service to ritual purity.[927] This titular purity was in fact a synonym for heavenly paradise, something Ge Hong envisioned as "a pure space where the saintly man wanders unrestrained."[928] According to Licia Di Giacinto, this means the notion of purity is "basically synonymous with salvation (in a Daoist sense)."[929]

Turning again to Ge Hong's *Inner Chapters*, he advises all adepts who engage in making alchemical gold to perform purificatory abstentions (*zhai* 齋) for one hundred days. This includes making lustrations (*muyu* 沐浴) with five aromatics (*wuxiang* 五香), allowing the adept to cultivate an "essential cleanliness" (*jingjie* 精潔).[930] In this case, Ge Hong is not referring to burning incense, but by bathing with a special mixture of fresh water infused with the essential oils extracted from a set of five aromatics. A list of ingredients for creating

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[927] Qing 清 is variously rendered into English as "purity" or "clarity," see brief comments in Licia Di Giacinto, "Purity between Semantics and History: Notes on Daoist Soteriology and Interreligious Encounters in Early Medieval China," in *Discourses of Purity in Transcultural Perspective (300–1600)*, ed. Matthias Bley, Nikolas Jaspert, and Stefan Köck (Leiden: Brill, 2015), 155–56.
[928] Pregadio, *Great Clarity*, 38; also cited by Di Giacinto, "Purity," 166.
[929] Di Giacinto, 167.
[930] DZ1185:1.5a, trans. Ware, *Alchemy*, 75–76. In this context, ritual purification would also involve dietary modifications and sexual restrictions. Ge Hong's comments that purification practices are necessary for both creating alchemical gold and the Golden Elixir, see DZ1185.1.1a–b, trans. Ware, *Alchemy*, 261.

a fragrant decoction (*xiang tang* 香湯) of five ingredients is preserved in the *Nine Tripods*, a text that was known to be among Ge Hong's collection of alchemical works. The ingredients and measurements listed therein are as follows[931]:

1) freshly drawn well water (*jinghua shui* 井華水)
2) white grain powder (*bailiang fen* 白糧粉), one *dou* and two *sheng*
3) cinnabar grains (*zhusha* 朱砂), one *liang*
4) pale honey (*baimi* 白蜜), one *dou*
5) the ash of mulberry kindling (*sanxin hui* 桑薪灰), one *dou*.

By the measure of medieval Chinese sources, none of these ingredients were considered remarkably fragrant, with the possible exception of honey which was often added as a binding agent to many incense blends. Regardless of what we might identify as a having a weak odor, the purificatory purpose of this wash is explicit. The designation of this decocted bathing water as "aromatic" reflects a generic belief that fragrant things are pure as well as medicinal.

This leads us to the question on the origins of infusing scented plants into bathing water. It has precedent in antiquity where decoctions were not only used for bodily hygiene, but also for establishing the purity of a religious adept. For example, in the North China Plains, the *Rites of Zhou* underscores the importance of ritual lustration, assigning it to the duties of the female *wu*-shaman who performed ablutions during seasonal rites that prayed for the removal of defilement and ill-fortune.[932] Derk Bodde has suggested the rites of the

[931] DZ885:5.10b–11b, also see Pregadio, *Great Clarity*, 88. This recipe is specifically drawn from the instructions regarding the *Talismans of the Yellow Emperor's Writ of the Jade Terrace* (*Huangdi yutai pian tufu* 黃帝玉台篇圖符) which employs the use of a special mixing spoon and a specifically calculated number of stirs.

[932] ZLZS:26.1763, trans. Biot, *Le Tcheou-li*, Vol. 2, 104; see also brief comments in Von Falkenhausen, "Spirit Mediums," 290–91. The Han commentarial tradition specifies that lustration included the use of "fragrant and aromatic herbs and medicine" 香薰草藥, ZLZS:26.1763. Other examples of bathing as ritual purification are noted in Schafer, "Bathing Customs," 56–60. See also my comments to Clouding the Imperial Palace Aromatic at HC#56.

wu-shaman involved the use of thoroughwort (*Eupatorium* spp.) infused water.[933] This is based in part on the assertion in the *Book of Odes* that the purging of ill-fortune was linked to the gathering of thoroughwort. Consequently, the scented water used by the *wu*-shaman may have been treated as an apotropaic wash, corresponding to the removal of defilements. Moreover, in the south, the classical scented bath was known as a Thoroughwort Decoction (*lantang* 蘭湯), a term which has its origins in the "Lord of the Clouds" (*Yunzhong jun* 雲中君) of the *Songs of Chu* anthology.[934] Notably, this thoroughwort bath is prepared as part of a ritual lustration for a shaman (*ling* 靈) who wishes to commune with a spirit named Lord of the Clouds. As we have seen, Ge Hong was well aware of the plants in the *Songs of Chu* anthology and the discourse on purity and lustration must have informed his views on proper ritual practice as much as it informed many of his contemporaries in Jiangnan. In the culture of the south, cleanliness was close to godliness.

This collapsing of bodily cleanliness, olfactory hygiene, and spiritual salvation is encountered elsewhere in Ge Hong's writing and likely reflects much broader views circulating during his time. For example, we find injunctions against eating the five pungent herbs (*wuxin* 五辛) and fresh fish during purification procedures, foods that above all were considered harsh and malodorous in Chinese culture.[935] Elsewhere in the *Inner Chapters* Ge Hong warns that "the methods for becoming an immortal require the avoidance of stench and bloody odors and the ceasing of grains to purify the intestines."[936] In this scenario, the traditional macrobiotic means to salvation are paired with what we might term a "smell

[933] See Bodde, *Festivals*, 276 and 278.
[934] CC:2.2.57, trans. Hawkes, *Songs of the South*, 103; Sukhu, *Songs of Chu*, 41.
[935] DZ1185:4.19a, trans. Ware, *Alchemy*, 93. There are numerous lists of the five pungent herbs (also known as *wuhun* 五葷), but the members are typically of the *Allium* genus.
[936] 仙法欲止絕臭腥，休糧清腸。DZ1185:2.8b; cf. trans. Ware, *Alchemy*, 44.

taboo" around foul odors. Instead of operating logically on the idiom of macrobiotic fasting, the smell taboo alerts us to an underlying salvific logic of purity; neither the divine, nor aspirants to divinity, should be impure.

We also find smell taboos among the instructions of the *Nine Tripods*. In one passage, adept is foretold of inviting calamity if he used any of the "malodorous items" (*chouwu* 臭物) among the five pungent herbs or if he burned a chicken or lit dog hair afire.[937] Elsewhere the text reaffirms the necessary avoidance of the "stench of the five pungent herbs" (*wu xinhun chou* 五辛葷臭). Moreover, when constructing a talisman chamber (*fushi* 符室) the *Nine Tripods* instructs the adept to use a "fragrant mud" (*xiangni* 香泥) to plaster the four walls before hanging the talismans.[938] All of these rules clearly establish that the Great Purity alchemical tradition was greatly concerned with regulating smells and foul odors. In fact, every stage of the compounding process was suffused with requisite smell practices that enabled the successful completion of the elixir.

While the recipes are difficult to date, and some are surely later than the Six Dynasties, the early eleventh century collectanea *Bookcase of the Clouds* contains several different formulas for the fivefold aromatic bath, many significantly different from the one preserved in the *Nine Tripods*. One recipe is part of the *Scripture on Bathing the Body and Mind* (*Muyu shenxin jing* 沐浴身心經), a short text extolling the virtues of spiritual and bodily hygiene practices. In listing each of the five ingredients, the scripture explains the spiritual efficacy for each: Wild angelica root expels the three worms, peach wood bark repels noxious *qi*, biota leaf draws down the perfected and the immortals, sweet basil gathers

[937] DZ885:19.14b, see also trans. Pregadio, *Great Clarity*, 86.
[938] DZ885.7.3b and 4.4a, respectively; see also the synopsis in Pregadio, *Great Clarity*, 96.

the numinous sages, and costus root eliminates filth and summons the Perfected.[939] Another passage in the *Bookcase of the Clouds*, quoting the *Scripture of the Three Sovereigns* (*Sanhuang jing* 三皇經), a variant name for the *Writ of the Three Sovereigns* of Jiangnan, provides a different recipe:

> When performing ablutions during purificatory abstentions, all must wash with a decoction of five aromatics. The formula for the decoction of five aromatics uses one *jin* of thoroughwort, one *jin* of cherry blossoms, one *jin* of the Aromatic from Lingling [i.e., sweet basil], one *jin* of costus root, and one *jin* of sandalwood. Now, slice the five ingredients and use two *hu* and five *dou* of water and bring to a boil. Take one *hu* and two *dou* [of the decoction] and wash oneself. This decoction will repel the malign, remove the inauspicious *qi*, and draw down the spirits and the numina. Use it to wash or to treat headaches.[940]
> 凡齋戒沐浴，皆當盥汰五香湯。五香湯法，用蘭香一觔，荊花一觔，零陵香一觔，青木香一觔，白檀一觔。凡五物切之，以水二斛五斗煮取一斛二斗，以自洗浴也。此湯闢惡，除不祥炁，降神靈，用之以沐，並治頭風。

Both of these recipes arguably use ingredients that possess far stronger aromas than the ones listed in the *Nine Tripods*. Moreover, we are given a more specific rational for why spiritual practitioners bathe their bodies. More than simply cleaning bodily filth, lustrations with the fivefold aromatic bath help remove impediments to spiritual progress, such as dispensing with malign forces, killing the three bodily worms that lead to one's death, or removing the influence of inauspicious *qi*. Furthermore, the fragrant bath in both cases also acts as a means to connect to the spiritual realm – it helps draw down the spirits. In these cases, however, we are not operating in the realm of the visual and of rising smoke. The underlying sensory logic here is not visual, but olfactory. As the adept washes his body, both healing and purifying it, he is made in the likeness of the perfected beings of the spiritual realm. There is a sympathetic principle of smell and purity that motivated this washing behavior and that

[939] DZ1032.41.5b; see also trans. Raz, *Emergence of Daoism*, 106n.42 (who treats it as an incense blend). Several other formulas are found in the *Bookcase of the Clouds,* see DZ1032.41.1a–11a.
[940] DZ1032:41.3b-4a.

simultaneously expressed ideas of salvation. Not bathing in fragrant waters was seen as the path to perdition.[941]

This allows us to return to Lady Wei. James Robson has highlighted that a principal concern of the Supreme Purity tradition, and Lady Wei in particular, was ritual purity. To support this point, Robson directs our attention to Lady Wei's proclivity for bathing, noting that she is "particularly concerned with making the body a purified receptacle of the Way."[942] Specifically, she urges bathing and ablutions as a means to remove the foul stench of the body so numinous beings and Perfect Qi will not be threatened and enter the body.[943] As we have seen, there is ample evidence that the Grand Purity tradition of Jiangnan was deeply concerned with smell taboos, olfactory hygiene, and bodily cleanliness, thus the incorporation of censers into Celestial Masters chamber rites was also likely accompanied by the addition, or at least emphasis upon, ritual lustrations. Lastly, it is worth nothing that early Celestial Master ritual structures were called quiescent chambers, the term used throughout Tao Hongjing's *Secret Instructions*, as well as in the *Abridged Archives* and the audience rites document of the Hanzhong community. This term underscores a conceptual metaphor drawn from ideas based on stilling one's passions and senses to create a lucid mind directed towards clear action; not necessarily on notions of cleanliness or purity. In contrast, later Daoists coined a new term for this ritual structure based on the metaphor of hygiene, "pure dwelling" (*qingshe* 清舍), although it was only one of many terms that were used seemingly interchangeably.[944]

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[941] See relevant quotes culled from the Daoist canon in Di Giacinto, "Purity," 168–69.
[942] Robson, *Place of Power*, 194.
[943] Robson, 193–194.
[944] The early Celestial Masters documents deserve a thorough analysis for the language of purity. Looking at just one example, the *Yangping Parish* (*Yangping zhi* 陽平治), a short exhortatory treatise that was likely composed in the early third century, does not explicitly talk about purity, even though it criticizes the immoral

Di Giacinto has demonstrated there was an evolving semantics of purity in early medieval China that needs to be further analyzed, including the variegated use of the categories of purity/hygiene and quiescence/stillness in our primary sources.[945] When we look at the language in the *Secret Instructions*, we find the text often referring to activities that lead to a clean and purified state. There are also subtle references in the newly promulgated rite for entering the chamber to the Grand Purity tradition. As noted by Tao Hongjing, the list of spirits of the four directions are all members of the Grand Purity pantheon.[946] Thus, we are left with strong evidence that the rites for entering the quiescent chamber, as preserved in a hagiography of Lady Wei and copied by Tao Hongjing into his *Secret Instructions*, bear the influence of the "nameless religion" of Jiangnan and the Grand Purity alchemical tradition. These are traditions steeped in the language of purity and hygiene which are themselves reflections of the older shamanic practices described in the *Songs of Chu*.

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activities of the Celestial Master community. One passage in the document talks about people being "confused and befuddled" (*hunzhuo* 混濁), which Kleeman translates as "filthy and defiled," see Kleeman, *Celestial Masters*, 115. While this is a generally apposite rendering, the broader context suggests this characterization does not necessarily fall into a discourse of purity, but of mental clarity and lucidity in terms of knowing the appropriate actions to take (one might compare this to a discourse on light or vision). Moreover, this passage from *Yangping Parish* seems to mirror a section in the *Xiang'er Commentary to the Laozi* (*Laozi Xiang'er zhu* 老子想爾注), one of the founding documents of the Celestial Masters, which states, in the translation of Kleeman: "As they [i.e., adepts seeking longevity] learn to be pure and still, their thoughts will often seem confused and muddy," Kleeman, *Celestial Masters*, 89. "Confused and muddy" (*chishu* 癡濁) again appears to refer to a lack of mental clarity, thus Kleeman's rendering of *qingjing* 淸靜 as "pure and still" might be better rendered as "clear and still" in this specific context. Kleeman defends his translation on the grounds that clarity "does not convey the lack of corruption or defilement that was central to Daoist conceptions of the divine," Kleeman, 88n.51. The question we must ask is not if the Celestial Masters were concerned about moral transgressions, this is not disputed, but whether they expressed morality through a discourse of purity. These issues become muddled when we observe that the Great Purity and Supreme Purity traditions use *qing* 淸, "clear/pure," in their names, but nevertheless continuously draw upon themes of purity, not only in terms of conduct and morality, but in many other facets of practice, such as the use of ritual lustration and sweet incense.

[945] Di Giacinto, "Purity."

[946] DZ421:3.8a–9a. This is noted in Robinet, *Révélation*, Vol. 2, 403.

9. Conclusion

For most of the medieval period in China, incense was viewed as a bridge to the realm of the spirits. According to Du Guangting, burning incense during Daoist liturgy was among the "utmost pressing tasks" that had to be attended to with special focus and attentiveness. Such beliefs were developed in concert with a bureaucratic paradigm giving shape to the world of the spirits, such that incense smoke was seen to function like a postal horse delivering messages to the heavens. These ideas, however, were not part of ancient Chinese sacrificial religion, but were products of a developing Han discourse about the afterlife. Moreover, as these ideas were finding expression in our sources, there was a rapidly changing culture of smell in the third and early fourth centuries, a veritable scent revolution, that not only introduced a wave of supra-regional aromatics, but also gave further depth to the Chinese imagination about the utility of smell for spiritual practice.

One of the earliest noted individuals in China to burn incense was the enigmatic healer Yu Ji (or Gan Ji). When placed in the proper context of his biography, the act of burning incense is best read as an esoteric art in line with his other occult practices. It is unknown if Yu Ji started burning incense in his natal region of the northeast, home to many masters of methods vying for the attention of the imperial court, or if he was introduced to the practice when he moved down the coast to Jiangnan, another center of cultic arts. In either scenario, Jiangnan, located south of the lower reaches of the Yangzi River, becomes critical to our understanding of early medieval scent culture and ritual practices centered on smell.

If we are to trust the limited documents at our disposal, the early Celestial Masters of Hanzhong did not originally burn incense in their rites of healing and expiation performed in quiescent chambers. This would change, in what is arguably a most dramatic turn, when the censer became the anchor of early Daoist ritual, both in terms of its physical placement in the petitioning chamber, hardly ever out of sight of the priest, and its placement in the liturgical sequence, found at critical junctures at the beginning and end of the ritual program. The addition of the censer, and possibly even an emphasis on performing ritual ablutions, was most likely the result of the "nameless religion" of Jiangnan encountering the fleeing Celestial Master community.

Importantly, while Supreme Purity scriptures are flush with a bureaucratic understanding of the spiritual world and a concomitant belief in the human-to-spirit communicative function of incense, this does not exhaust the uses of incense or attitudes towards smell during the early medieval period. There are a few early Daoist sources, some with roots in the culture of Jiangnan, such as the *Five Talismans*, *Petition Almanac*, and select portions of the *Secret Instructions*, which emphasize the importance of reading the movement of incense smoke. This reflects an older interest in prognostic arts among those in the south and this practice of capnomancy may be the outgrowth of the ancient military divination technique of observing *qi* manifestations in the atmosphere. This use of incense as a medium of communication for the spirits to talk to humans appears with less frequency in later sources, although it is never completely erased from Daoist liturgies.

Lastly, the bureaucratic idiom falls short in describing the use of incense on another front, namely when incense is burned in the attempt to remove foul odor and create a constant bridge of scent with the heavens. In contrast to a focus on vision and the careful

observance of smoke patterns, this moves us squarely into the domain of olfaction, where hygiene, purity, and salvation all intersect in ritual discourse. These aspects are more clearly expressed in Daoist sources through the injunctions for performing ritual lustrations, often with scented water. Again, the cultural practices of Jiangnan are possibly speaking to us through these texts. Ultimately, such a focus on bathing, smell taboos, and dietary restrictions based on foul odor, can be traced to the ritual culture of adornment expressed in the *Songs of Chu*, where scented plants worn on the belt-sash perfumed the body and symbolically expressed the person's virtue and proximity to divinity.

Conclusion

> "When the perfected immortals burn incense, all can smell it for a hundred *li*. The accumulated smoke becomes clouds and the accumulated clouds become rain, thus giving the human realm that which they all collectively value: aloeswood and frankincense."
> Ding Wei, *Traditions of Heavenly Aromatics*

At the climax of the *Sumāgadhāvadāna*, a Buddhist tale translated into Chinese no less than four times, the protagonist Sumāgadha rushes to the top of her home to seek help from the Buddha. She had been forced to marry into a family who supported non-Buddhist ascetics and became distraught when asked to feed them and venerate at their feet. In an act of piety – as well as desperation – Sumāgadha goes to the top of the highest available structure, freshly bathed and dressed in perfumes, to burn incense as an offering to the Buddha. Unlike so many other devotional practices recorded in our medieval sources, the inner workings of this ritual act are revealed to us. The incense smoke rises into the air and forms billowing clouds, covering the entire city until finally reaching the Buddha who is residing in a far-off region. The Buddha's disciple, Ānanda, who is often narratively placed in the position of the naïve listening (or reading) audience, asks the Buddha why the fragrant smoke has appeared. The Buddha explains that fragrant scent is the Buddha's emissary (*foshi* 佛使) which informs him when he is being summoned. Subsequently, the Buddha and his disciples rise into the air, just like the incense that had beckoned them, and fly to the home of Sumāgadha. Upon arrival

they convince her husband and family to reject the heretic ascetics and become followers of the Buddhist teachings.[947]

This episode in the *Sumāgadhāvadāna* provides a rationale for basic Buddhist worship centered on smell. Fragrant offerings and incense break through the physical boundaries of distance and visibility to call upon the Buddha directly. Moreover, from a different vantagepoint, we can also point to the strong correlation between the Buddha and sweet-smelling fragrances in Indian olfactory imagination. Consequently, use of scented offerings, in the words of John Strong, "make a space in which an absent Buddha can be present in the here and now."[948] The retelling of fantastic stories such as that of Sumāgadha and the performance of similar Buddhist *pūjā* rites on Chinese soil had a profound impact on the shared imagination of those living in medieval China. Moreover, the influence of Buddhist lore and Buddhist praxis was enhanced through a rapidly changing material culture of smell that was increasingly focused on supra-regional luxury aromatics imported from the tropics. These would be the same substances that came to form the core of materia aromatica compiled during the Song.

These external forces meshed with an already dynamic culture of smell and religious practice in China. This overall complexity is exemplified through the competing beliefs, practices, and implicit ritual logics we encounter in our sources, including the strategic deployment of the aroma of blood sacrifice to nourish the spirits, the perfumes of plant charms to attract and symbolize divine presence, and the fragrance of aromatic baths to signal ritual purity and gain spiritual sanction. Incense smoke was at times viewed as

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[947] This summarizes the relevant portion of the story as preserved in the *Ekottarikāgama* (*Zengyiahan jing* 增一阿含經), T125:661a01–665b9. For more on this Buddhist story, see Tatelman, *Glorious Deeds*, 29–30 and footnote 744.
[948] Strong, "Gandhakuṭī," 395.

purificatory, but was also envisioned as a visual medium that could send messages to a bureaucratized world of the spirits. All of these olfactory discourses intermingled during the first four centuries of the common era to create an incredibly complex tapestry of ritual practices around the sense of smell and smelly objects.

By revealing this highly integrated character of the medieval olfactory imagination, this study challenges the common assumption that general contours Chinese religion have always centered around a singular practice: burning incense. Such a belief is also built upon the idea that Chinese smell culture has remained remarkably stable over the *longue durée*. As we have seen, materials from a broad range of genres, including imperial histories, classical ritual treatises, regional gazetteers, tales of the strange literature, poetry, and Buddhist and Daoist scripture all collectively point to a pivotal shift in the landscape of smell during the Eastern Han and early Six Dynasties. In terms of religious practice, it was during this period in which burning incense emerges in our textual sources as a valid means to communicate with the world of the spirits and other divine entities. Previously, this broadly communicative function was ascribed to the scents of sacrificial foods, such as animal flesh, grain, and ale, and the sweet fragrances of plants worn on the body or infused into bathing water, such as thoroughwort, wild angelica, and sweet basil. Throughout the long medieval period, these native odorants would be largely overshadowed by scented materials of a very different nature – tropical tree resins, gums, and scented woods – and specifically materials like sandalwood, aloeswood, and frankincense. While these materials were used in a variety of ways, they were most typically burned.

That fact that early medieval China underwent a shift in the native smellscape did not go unnoticed by Song era connoisseurs of aromatics. In examining China's ritual past these

scholars sought to identify the odorants used in ancient sacrifice, but this investigative process of combing through classical works also had an implicit bias; they searched for ancient analogues for the specific type of aromatics that dominated Song society, namely, incense. Thus, native *flora* like southernwood and mugwort were often identified as ancient types of incense, consequently bolstering a belief that while the specific materials of smell culture may have changed over time, their use as burnt offerings to the empyrean remained remarkably consistent. While not all medieval authorities so easily submitted to a view of an unchanging history of incense, to wit, the medieval "incense debates" of the court highlighting the absence of incense rites in the classics, this perspective has remained pervasive to the present day.

We might say certain historical evidence has "conspired" to help paint this picture, including three critical points addressed in the first three chapters of this study: first, the ambiguity of the term *xiang* to both mean the aroma of sacrifice as well as incense; second, the many medieval stories that place incense in the hands of ancient cultural heroes and historical figures of antiquity; and third, the recovery of numerous incense burners from late Warring States and Western Han tombs.

To start cutting aways at this Gordian Knot of incense history, Chapter 1 began by analyzing documents on ancient sacrificial religion for salient smells. Instead of finding an interest in burning incense (*xiang*) to commune with the ancestors and spirits, ancient sacrificial procedure was chiefly motivated by the creations of the aromas (*xiang*) of grain, meat, and alcohol offerings. Importantly, this olfactory practice was predicated on a logic of attracting the spirits with food odors as well as nourishing them through the spiritual consumption (*xin*) of life-sustaining aromas (*qi*), thus triggering a cycle where the spirits

bless the supplicants with bountiful crops. Notably, the presumed prototype of ancient incense, southernwood, was never described as being burned like its later medieval incense counterparts, but was to be mixed with food offerings, thus conforming to general alimentary principle of feeding the spirits. In other words, the smells that were most salient in our early ritual texts were not the fragrances of burning plant matter, but the aromas of food sacrifice.

Chapter 2 then sought to unravel the "Emperor Wu hypothesis." This view rests on the belief that the famed Western Han emperor ushered in a new era of smell culture through the regular tribute and trade of exotic aromatics. By analyzing official histories, we found such claims to be overstated, as there is no established evidence of a regular supra-regional movement of aromatics until the Eastern Han. Moreover, the numerous stories of Emperor Wu receiving gifts of foreign perfumes and incense are limited to literature produced in the medieval period, including many episodes recounted through the tales of the strange genre. Instead of reading these stores as preserving otherwise lost historical anecdotes of Emperor Wu's life, these episodes were analyzed as products of the Six Dynasties, a period in which trade in foreign luxury aromatics was rapidly expanding. Moreover, because the study of late Warring States/Western Han smell culture is too often dominated by the question of foreign aromatics, the second chapter also investigated the distinctive ritual practices that were emphasized in the temperate north in contrast to the tropical and sub-tropical south. While state ritualists were performing sacrifice in service of generating nourishing food aromas, the *wu*-shamans of the south developed beliefs and practices centered on bodily adornment, ritual purity, and by extension, realizing divine presence.

The first two chapters thus ask us to critically re-examine the beliefs and attitudes around smell and state sacrifice and, moreover, to question how the Chinese landscape of

fragrant plants may have differentially informed religious practices. Areas in need of further exploration include analysis of northern ritualist lustration practices and their relationship to the southern shamanic practices, as well as piecing together a more robust picture of shamanic adornment and spirit possession. This will be necessary to establish a better understanding of the porous northern-southern ritual culture of smell during the Western Han.

Chapter 3 addressed the third major issue confronting us regarding the history of incense in China, the apparent "paradox of the censer." In spite of the fact that burning scented plants is absent from our early descriptions of sacrificial and shamanic practice, the Han archaeological record was strewn with chalice-shaped censers from the north in Shaanxi to the south in Guangdong. What animated the repeated creation of such scenting equipment if not some religious pursuit? The same textual materials of the Western Han and early Eastern Han provide the answer: the use of incense and censers is continually presented as a safeguard against odor and illness.

This point is further supported by archaeological evidence on three fronts. First, due to the great quantity of incense burners recovered in the south, it has been theorized that chalice-shaped censers first developed in the region due to a variety of climate-related factors, including a desire to expel mosquitoes and other noisome insects, to drive away disease-causing miasmas and illness, and to inhibit the growth of mold. Second, several early censers have been found with special openwork frames that can support textile and fabric, thus allowing the diffusion of heat and fragrant smoke through the articles. Often overlooked, such apparatus were continuously made throughout the long medieval period. Third, censers are sometimes recovered from areas of a tomb that represent domestic life, oftentimes clearly

distinct from compartments and chambers where ritual vessels are stored. Overall, based on the best available textual and material evidence, censers were conceived as tools of hygiene and health. It is only at the end of the Eastern Han when tomb art starts to hint at a change in their use and textual sources unambiguously start referring to incense and incense burners as ritual tools of spiritual communication, worship, or the occult arts.

Of course, contra *argumentum ex silentio*, a lack of textual references to the ritual use of censers is not proof they were never used in such a manner. Nevertheless, the fact that we see broad patterns in the use of incense begin to change around the second and third centuries should cause us to reflect. A similar point can be made regarding foreign aromatics. We cannot exclude from possibility the importation of supra-regional resins, woods, and other aromatics during the Western Han, yet the patterns of increasing variation in the types of imports point again to the second and third centuries as crucial periods. Consequently, instead of viewing references to incense, censers, and foreign aromatics in our sources during the Eastern Han and early Six Dynasties as already well-established and perfunctory, we should treat them as reflecting an important transitional period in Chinese olfactory culture and deserving of our careful attention and analysis.

Additionally, the second and third centuries have long been viewed as critical periods in Chinese religious history, involving both the inauguration of Chinese Buddhist translation activities and the emergence of regional healing cults and alchemical arts that formed the foundation of early Daoism. Consequently, Chapter 4 turned our attention to earliest strata of Buddhist translation and analyzed these documents for new olfactory practices and the impact they had on Chinese beliefs and attitudes towards smell. Among the most novel practices included the scattering of scented powder and smearing of fragrant paste on shrines

and holy sites when venerating the Buddha. More importantly, however, the use of scented offerings were not simple substitutions for sacrificial blood offerings, but instead signaled an entirely different conceptual approach to ritual praxis. According to Buddhist scripture, the Buddha was functionally equivalent to fragrant smell in the context of worship. As a consequence, one goal of *pūjā* rites was to render a space fragrant so as to evoke the Buddha's presence. In contrast, the ancestors, spirits, and other divinities of the native Chinese pantheon were themselves inert in relation to olfaction. A closer analogue can be found in the adornment practices of the south, but the perfume of scented plants was not worn in sympathy with the imagined fragrance of the spirits, but was symbolic of the moral purity of the *wu*-shaman who could summon, and possibly act as a purified receptacle for, the descending spirit. Ultimately, Buddhism introduced a novel conceptualization of the divine based on smell and a different governing logic in regards to ritual practice.

Chapter 5 returned to indigenous Chinese religious practice at the end of the Han and the beginning of the Six Dynasties. In the later medieval period, it was standard to claim incense opened a pathway of communication to the heavens. While this is based on a broadly-established bureaucratic logic of sending messages heavenward through the help of various spiritual functionaries, incense burning is not clearly established in the documents pertaining to the early Celestial Masters of the second century. Censers appear as part of expiation and healing rites only when Celestial Masters priests migrate to the coastal south, in Jiangnan, at the beginning of the fourth century. Afterwards, incense burning becomes central to the performance of all rituals in the quiescent chamber and the censer emerges as a visual anchor for priest and the object around which the liturgical protocol unfolds. The adoption of the censer may be understood as the influence of the Grand Purity tradition and

the nameless religions of Jiangnan, whose interests in alchemy and other esoteric arts reshaped the practices of the Celestial Masters, ultimately giving rise to the Supreme Purity tradition. We can find other potential elements of regional influence in our early Daoist sources. If we focus narrowly on the production of smoke, it appears regional divinatory practices may have left traces in handful of documents, specifically in the use of capnomancy to determine the sequential arrival of spirits as well as the prognosis of a sick patient. Another avenue of influence more directly related to smell was the importance placed on hygiene, lustration, and ritual purity. This can be found through various smell taboos regularly noted in works of the Great Purity lineage and its focus on bodily hygiene, the latter of which has roots in the shamanic practices of the ancient state of Chu.

Ultimately, through the arguments presented above, this study argues there was significant shift in the smell culture of China in the early medieval period, and more narrowly in and around the third century, thus subverting common presumptions of a relatively stable ritual culture of aromatics from antiquity through the Song any beyond. As we have seen, not only was there a rapid expansion of the types of supra-regional aromatics arriving in urban markets and coastal harbors – the changing smellscape noted by the Song compilers of incense catalogues – but there was also a pronounced change in Chinese attitudes towards aromatics and how they could be deployed in religious practice. This includes a shifting purpose of incense where it was increasingly viewed as effective in opening communication with spirits and other divine beings during Buddhist, Daoist, and state ritual.

We can point to several possible lines of influence that lead to this veritable scent revolution. But as the Gordian Knot of early olfactory history is unraveled, the surviving textual and material record has yet to reveal all of the contributary factors and their relative

importance. Nevertheless, broad changes in smell culture can be correlated to the introduction and growth of Buddhism, as well as ongoing internal social and religious dynamics involving sacrificial practices, shamanic and divinatory arts, drug making and alchemy, and the custom of fumigation.

The particular importance of the third century is suggested through several layers of evidence. For example, the first decade of the third century is when we find the earliest citations to individuals involved in burning incense (*shao xiang*). This includes the regional inspector of Jiaozhi, Zhang Jin, the governor of Jiao prefecture, Shi Xie, and the enigmatic healer from Langya, Yu Ji, all figures who were generally characterized as behaving in odd manners while living on the coastal frontiers of the empire. Moreover, at the beginning of the third decade of the third century we also find the earliest indication of using incense for sacrifice, in this case, referring to Cao Cao's concubines who were barred from using incense during mortuary observances. It is also later in the third century when we have our first attempts by Chinese authors to place exotic incense in the hands of cultural heroes of the past to domesticate the anomalous, as seen in the *Treatise on the Investigation of Things* with Emperor Wu's tributary gift that halted an epidemic. Lastly, at the very end of the third century, the prodigious translator of Buddhist scripture, Dharmarakṣa, begins to work in the northern capital with assortment of ethnically diverse Buddhist monks and laymen, subsequently further opening up the distinctive Indic olfactory imagination to Chinese audiences, specifically through such works as the *Lotus Sutra*.

In many other ways, however, the early medieval period remains a black box for our current understanding of evolving Chinese religious practice and smell culture. This study has offered a few speculations regarding the changes that occurred "off record," specifically

in regards to the early ritual use of incense. One possible vector of influence is the Han imperial court, especially as it pertains to the activities of the royal harem. The women of the court may have been less constrained by sacrificial precedent and thus given more opportunity for adopting novel and more personal approaches to long-standing ritual practices. Moreover, the adoption of incense as part of the courtier's mourning rites may have started through the informal practice of fumigating the deceased emperor's robes and headwear in preparation for sacrificial food offerings. Overall, the apparent change in mourning practices involving incense were occurring against the backdrop of the increasing circulation of luxury foreign aromatics from the Western Regions and the Southern Seas, goods that were first driven by the elite consumption habits of the court.

Another vector of influence remains the large geographic terrain of the Chinese south, a region that was conceptually for many northerners a storehouse of semi-exotic objects and home to those who practiced occult arts. Most notably, the Han and Six Dynasties archaeological record establishes the south as having a disproportionately higher amount of incense burners, suggesting a distinctive culture built around burning scented plants. In spite of the material record, however, the poems in the *Songs of Chu* anthology are curiously silent on burning scented plants or using censers. At the same time, religious practices tied to Jiangnan in the early fourth century suggest the ritual use of smoke was already well integrated into southern culture. On one hand, it is possible that occult activities rooted in observing *qi* manifestations, such as capnomancy, supported the use of censers beyond their function as fumigation devices. On the other hand, the broadly therapeutic use of smoke, especially in regards vermifugal and exorcistic fumigation, likely also played a significant role in the adoption of incense as a means of spiritual communication. This is most strongly

suggested through the shared procedural steps of early drug manufacturing and incense blending, the early evidence of which is found through the five-ingredient blends used in Jiangnan. Lastly, these above speculations also dovetail into the ultimately ambiguous role of Buddhist offertory practices during this period. At the very least, we might say the Buddhist ritual use of incense formed an elective affinity with ongoing changes in Chinese smell culture. It appears it was the combined effect of many lines of influence, none of which may have been sufficient on its own, that lead to such changes in the attitudes and beliefs around the use of odorants, such as sacrificial flesh and alcohol, and those of sweet-smelling incense, such as aloeswood and frankincense.

It would be improper to claim that religious beliefs and practices were the only aspects of a shared olfactory imagination in medieval China, but religion nevertheless played a significant role in shaping a particular vision about the meaning of smell. As we have seen, a critical examination of the sense of smell and the nature of odors also quickly branches out into many broader fields of cultural, economic, and political significance. Due to these interlaced networks of meaning, smells mattered considerably in ancient and medieval China. Any critical study of medieval Chinese religion must address the senses and the sensorium in some capacity; hopefully smells and smelly things will no longer be left out of this discussion.

PART TWO – STUDY AND TRANSLATION OF HONG CHU'S *MATERIA AROMATICA*

Northern Song Incense Culture – An Introduction to Hong Chu's *Materia Aromatica*

1. Introduction

By the end of the Tang, to cite the words of Edwards Schafer, "a man or woman of the upper classes lived in clouds of smoke of incense and the mists of perfume."[949] It was also during the late medieval period we find the emergence of a canon of specialized literature devoted to cataloguing and describing perfumes, rare incense, and other exotic aromatics. This literature crystalized the existing culture of into a more-or-less formal and sophisticated art of the nose. As we have seen in previous chapters, it is possible to shine a light on the Northern Song as a critical juncture for discussions regarding the use of incense in the sphere of religious practice. For example, we can point to the "incense debates" of the Song court and the staunch defense offered by the Buddhist monk Zanning who argued the act of burning incense was rooted in traditional Chinese olfactory culture while at the same time also modulated by Indian Buddhist ritual. Furthermore, a generation earlier, Du Guangting formalized elements of the Daoist liturgy, highlighting the burning of incense as one of the "pressing tasks" of the ritualist, as it had been since at least the early fourth century. These discussions of orthopraxy were also occurring during a period of changing material culture around the burning of incense, most notably with the repurposing of ancient sacrificial bronze forms, the material tokens of China's august past, into new sets of ritual paraphernalia and elite decoration.

[949] Schafer, *Golden Peaches*, 155.

These above events also need to be viewed against a larger backdrop of economic change occurring during the transition from the Tang to the Song that had direct bearing on the circulation of foreign aromatics. Lin Tianwei, Tansen Sen, and Angela Schottenhammer have all pointed to the significance of perfumes, incense, spices, and drugs – often collectively designated under the category of "aromatic-drugs" (*xiangyao* 香藥) – in sustaining and expanding supra-regional trade throughout the late medieval period.[950] Lin was among the first to show that foreign luxury aromatics constituted the most important class of import commodities during the Song, both in terms of volume and commercial value. On the supply side of this equation during this period were Dashi Arab merchants who had interest in expanding their contacts with a sizable Chinese consumer market. Consequently, by the end of the tenth century, Central Asian land routes had largely been supplanted by Muslim dominated maritime trade routes as the most viable means for transporting bulk goods. This "shift" to the seas also rapidly developed the markets of Southeast Asia, allowing a greater amount of regional goods to be introduced into the supply chain.[951] In terms of patterns of consumption, Schottenhammer has shown that Chinese exports were comprised mostly of durable manufactured goods and highly refined products, such as silks or porcelain, while many imports commodities were raw materials and other natural products. These differences created an overall trade imbalance as China exchanged silver and bronze

[950] For a discussion on the various uses of *xiangyao* during the Song, see Lin, *Songdai xiangyao*, 301–29.
[951] The complexities regarding the history of the maritime routes through Southeast Asia cannot be rehearsed here, but it should be noted the seas have always been integral, if not primary, to the supra-regional movement of aromatics into China, especially since many of the most significant imports originated on the Indonesia Archipelago and Indochinese Peninsula. Long before the dominance of Dashi Arab sailors, the indigenous Yue of the Chinese south, Sumatran Malays, and South Indian sailors all functioned as critical middlemen in transporting goods through Southeast Asian waterways. For a convenient summary of nearly two millennia of trade through maritime Southeast Asia, with an emphasis on the role of Buddhism in diplomatic exchange, see Tansen Sen, "Maritime Southeast Asia Between South Asia and China to the Sixteenth Century," *TRaNS: Trans-Regional and -National Studies of Southeast Asia* 2, no. 1 (2014): 31–59.

coinage for goods that were quickly taken out of circulation due to use and consumption.[952] Moreover, Sen has argued that the Chinese demand for foreign commodities, especially from the Western Regions in the early medieval period, were driven in part by Buddhist clergy who sought the appropriate goods and paraphernalia for conducting religious practice, especially esoteric rites.[953] Yet, just as a demand for Buddhist-related items seemed to drop in the tenth century, the social elite developed what seemed to be an insatiable appetite for exotica and luxury goods, especially fragrant tree resins and scented woods.[954] This vast economic engine was further stimulated by new liberal policies in the eleventh century that allowed Chinese merchant ships to accrue a higher volume of foreign goods, thus lessening the dependence on foreign merchants to fulfil demand.[955] While the scent revolution of the third century saw a proliferation in the variety of novel aromatics entering China, the important changes in smell culture during the Song included a vast increase in quantity, and thus availability, of supra-regional aromatics.

These broad-ranging changes to the import-export economy and the further rebalancing of material smell culture to the products from Southeast Asia also went hand-in-hand with significant social changes regarding Song state administration. Previously during

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[952] Schottenhammer, "Maritime Power," 509–18.

[953] The question remains as to the extent in which the establishment of a clerical class of Daoist priests and ritualists played in the demands of foreign aromatics. While incense was indispensable to many elements of Daoist practice, Daoists scripture did not call upon the explicit use of foreign exotica as frequently as Buddhist scripture. Moreover, the Tang-era *Various Accounts of the Essential Elements of the Three Caverns* (*Sandong shuji zashuo* 三洞樞機雜說; DZ839) cites a few scriptures, including a now lost *Materia Aromatica of Divine Immortals* (*Shenxian xiangpu* 神仙香譜), as explicitly prohibiting a handful of foreign aromatics, see DZ839:11b.

[954] Sen, *Buddhism, Diplomacy, Trade*, esp. 185–96. Schottenhammer suggests that true luxury goods only circulated among upper class, while cheaper aromatic woods, resins, and other aromatics were bought by regular households, monasteries, and temples, see Schottenhammer, "Maritime Power," 509.

[955] Schottenhammer, 466–67. While freeing in many regards, the new economic policies also set time restrictions – no more than nine months – for Chinese ships to remain overseas. This caused merchants to focus on opportunities closer to home, specifically in Southeast Asia. In addition to trade, is worth noting that foreign tributes of aromatics continued to pour in throughout the Song, for an overview see Lin, *Songdai xiangyao*, 161–203; Liu, *Songdai Xiangpu*, 121–40.

the Tang, scholar-officials, often known as literati (*shi* 士), were defined primarily by their elite family pedigrees and by their pursuit of careers in public office. By the Song, the importance of aristocratic birth had receded and a greater focus was placed on education and cultivating a lifestyle of ever-deepening refinement. As noted by Yunshuang Zhang, "Song literati paid great attention to self-identification by cultivating their own values and tastes, aiming to be perceived as elegant (*ya* 雅)."[956] Importantly, as Zhang illustrates, the literati attempted to exhibit their erudition and cultural refinement through the use of their personal studio spaces for intellectual pursuits and artistic creation. By the end of the eleventh century, incense in particular had emerged as lens through which literati could express their scholarly elegance in literary works. For example, poetry could draw upon perfumes and fragrances to evoke a range of social and religious themes, including as a barrier to the vulgar world, as a token of close interpersonal relationships, and as an attribute of spiritual Awakening.[957] More central to our interests, these intellectual and creative pursuits became embodied in a new subgenre of literature called "registers of aromatics" (*xiang pu* 香譜), or as I term them, materia aromatica.[958]

This chapter will serve as a more expansive introduction to the catalogue of aromatics compiled by the late Northern Song official Hong Chu 洪芻 (1066–c.1127), which remains

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[956] Yunshuang Zhang, "A Floating Studio: The Boat Space in Song Literary Culture," *Journal of Song-Yuan Studies* 49, no. 1 (2020): 207.

[957] For a discussion of these themes as related to smell and incense, see Stuart Sargent, "Huang T'ing-Chien's 'Incense of Awareness': Poems of Exchange, Poems of Enlightenment," *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 121, no. 1 (2001): 60–71. For the development of so-called "incense poetry" (*xiang shi* 香詩) in the Northern Song, see Shang Haifeng, "'Xiang, chan, shi' de chuhui – Cong Bei Song Huang Tingjian dao Riben Shiting shidai 'Shangu chao,'" *Hanxue Yanjiu* 36, no. 4 (2019): 73–111.

[958] As carefully detailed by Liu Jingmin, individual works discussing aromatics were categorized differently by Song and Yuan bibliographers. These works were categorized in at least five different ways: 1) "category books" or encyclopedia (*leishu* 類書); 2) "provisions, commodities, and utensils" (*shihuo qiyong* 食貨器用); 3) "registers and catalogues" (*pulu* 譜錄); 4) miscellaneous arts (*zayi* 雜藝); and 5) agricultural works (*nongjia* 農家).

the earliest extant Chinese work devoted to the subject. Broadly speaking, this chapter will trace the contours of the developing literary discourse around aromatics as they unfolded throughout the medieval period leading to publication of specialized writings on smell. Early medieval smell culture was shaped significantly by the use of aromatics in Buddhist, Daoist and state ritual contexts. All of these influences would continue to exert themselves in the compilation of treatises devoted to the erudite study and appreciation of aromatics. Overall, Song authors scoured a wide array of literary sources to compile their materia aromatica, including poetry, gazetteers, supernatural stories, and medical works – in addition to Buddhist and Daoist scriptures.

To begin, we will first examine some of the textual precursors to the materia aromatica subgenre that appeared in the Six Dynasties, Sui, and Tang. The bulk of the remaining chapter will focus on the life of Hong Chu and his catalogue of aromatics, including what recent scholarship has revealed about the work's circulation after Hong Chu's untimely death. Ultimately, Hong Chu's treatise, known today simply as the *Materia Aromatica* (*Xiang pu* 香譜), has become one of the more influential works of the genre and helped breathe life into a sophisticated culture of smell, perfumery, and incense that permeates East Asia.

2. Books on Aromatics: An Overview of Materia Aromatica

By the grace of hindsight, we can say the religious, economic, and socio-political conditions of the late eleventh century outlined above were sufficient to not only motivate the initial compilation of catalogues on the topic of aromatics, but also to sustain a lasting interest for

updating and expanding them throughout the Song and beyond. In many ways, these works took the shape of highly specialized manuals, filled with passages drawn from a large body of older literature, in addition to containing ingredient lists and detailed directions for blending perfumes and incense. Most of these works were identified by their authors as *pu* 譜, a term which has been variously translated as a manual, register, catalogue, and treatise. This term was used as a title suffix and can be found incorporated into the titles of specialized treatises devoted to different material objects and natural artifacts. Consequently, the study of perfumes, incense, and aromatic drugs during the Song must also be viewed within this broader literary movement focused on the "study of things."

A list of the known works devoted to aromatics compiled during the Northern and Southern Song can be found in Table 6.1.[959] The first work on the list, the *Traditions of Heavenly Aromatics* (*Tianxiang zhuan* 天香傳) compiled by the once renowned official Ding Wei 丁謂 (966–1037), is a bit of an outlier since its principal focus is the aloeswood trade on Hainan during the early eleventh century. But it still bears some of the hallmarks of later works, including the citation of older texts that make reference to smell or aromatics. The remaining surviving works were mainly comprised of itemized entries for different fragrant materials, stories concerning perfumes and incense, various documents pertaining to smell culture, and a catalogue of blending recipes. In many cases, individual entries are distinguished by an identifying headword.

[959] The most important (pre-modern) Chinese *materia aromatica* compiled after the Song remains Zhou Jiazhou's 周嘉冑 (1582–c.1658) *Cart of Aromatics* (*Xiang sheng* 香乘) completed during the Ming. It can be found at SKQS:844.349a–581b.

Table 6.1: Works Devoted to Aromatics Compiled During the Song

Author	Title	Status
Ding Wei 丁謂 (966–1037)	*Traditions of Heavenly Aromatics* (*Tianxiang zhuan* 天香傳)	extant[960]
Shen Li 沈立 (1007–1078)	*Materia Aromatica* (*Xiang pu* 香譜)	lost (excerpts remain[961])
Hong Chu 洪芻 (1066–c. 1127)	*Materia Aromatica* (*Xiang pu* 香譜)[962]	extant
Zeng Zao 曾慥 (d. 1155)	*Addendum to the Materia Aromatica* (*Xiang houpu* 香後譜).	*extant[963]
Mr. Hou 侯氏 (d.u.)	*Materia Aromatica of the Daylily Hall* (*Xuantang xiang pu* 萱堂香譜)[964]	lost
Anonymous	*Samādhi of Fragrant Adornment* (*Xiangyan sanmei* 香嚴三昧)[965]	lost
Ye Tinggui 葉庭桂 [or 葉廷珪] (*jinshi* 1115)	*Record of Aromatics of the Southern Barbarians* (*Nanfan xiang lu* 南蕃香錄)[966]	lost (excerpts remain[967])
Yan Bowen 顏博文 (*jinshi* 1118)[968]	*History of Aromatics* (*Xiang shi* 香史)	lost (excerpts remain[969])
Qian Zhai 潛齋 (d.u.)	*Supplement to the Materia Aromatica* (*Xiang pu shiyi* 香譜拾遺)	lost
Zhang Zijing 張子敬 (d.u.)	*Extended Materia Aromatica* (*Xu xiangpu* 續香譜)	lost

[960] For more information on this work, see Liu, "Tianxiang zhuan"; Liu, *Songdai Xiangpu*, 150–56; Liu Fan, "Ding Wei *Tianxiang zhuan* yu Hainan chenxiang lunshu," *Nanhai xue Kan* 5, no. 2 (2019): 109–14; for partial translation see the *Traditions of Heavenly Aromatics* at HC#119.

[961] Liu Jingmin recompiled over fifty entries from Shen Li's lost work, see Liu, *Songdai Xiangpu*, 469–76. For more information on this text, see Liu, *Songdai Xiangpu*, 181–86, 222–24.

[962] As we will discuss later in this chapter, the original title of this work was the *Addendum to the Materia Aromatica* (*Xiang houpu* 香後譜).

[963] As discussed below, this work is now thought to be a variant manuscript of Hong Chu's catalogue, not an original work of Zeng Zao.

[964] A work in the private collection of You Mao 尤袤 (1127–1194), see Liu, "Hong Chu ji qi Xiangpu," 60.

[965] A work in the private collection of Chen Zhensun 陳振孫 (c. 1183–1262), see Liu, "Hong Chu ji qi Xiangpu," 60. The title refers to the sweet fragrance a person's body will spontaneously emit when they practice the Samādhi of Recollecting the Buddha (*nianfo sanmei* 念佛三昧). This is described in the apocryphal *Śūraṃgama Sutra* compiled during the Tang, see T945:128a29–b03.

[966] This work also circulated under the name of *Catalogue of Famous Aromatics* (*Mingxiang pu* 名香譜), see Liu, "Chen shi Xiangpu," 63.

[967] Liu Jingmin recompiled twenty-six entries from Ye Tinggui's work, see Liu, *Songdai Xiangpu*, 481–85. For more information on this text, see Liu, 167–73, 234–39.

[968] Also commonly identified with his style name, Yan Chiyao 顏持約.

[969] Liu Jingmin recompiled seven entries from Yan Bowen's work, see Liu, *Songdai Xiangpu*, 486–88. For more information on this text, see Liu, 239–49.

Author	Title	Status
Official Storehouse of Wugang (*Wugang Gongku* 武岡公庫)[970]	*Materia Aromatica* (*Xiang pu* 香譜)	lost (excerpts remain[971])
Chen Jing 陳敬 (ca. 13th cent.)[972]	*Newly Compiled Materia Aromatica* (*Xinzuan xiang pu* 新纂香譜)	extant[973]

In style and structure, the surviving Song works devoted to aromatics are similar, although not exact, to traditional Chinese pharmacological literature classified as *bencao* 本草, a term often rendered as materia medica, or "medical substances." In the attempt to underscore the development of aromatics (*xiang*) as a discrete arena of elite discourse during the Northern Song, I have coined the term materia aromatica to collectively refer to the above works and other later Chinese texts devoted to the same subject.

As way of further context, the Song dynasty saw an expansion in the variety of literary products and one of these outgrowths was what we might call "books about things." This includes works such as Fan Chengda's 范成大 (1126–1193) pair of monographs on plum trees and tree peonies, Cai Xiang's 蔡襄 (1012–1067) works on lychees and tea, and Dou Ping's 竇蘋 (d.u.) treatise on wine, among many others.[974] As demonstrated by Liu Jingmin, in order to appropriately organize these novel literary works, the book collector and bibliographer You Mao 尤袤 (1127–1194) devised a new classification he called "registers and catalogues" (*pulu* 譜錄).[975] He employed this new bibliographic category in his *Library*

[970] Wugang county is in present day Hunan. In 1106, during the later Northern Song, Wugang was identified as an army command (*jun* 軍), see Liu, "Chen shi Xiangpu," 65.
[971] Liu Jingmin recompiled twenty-nine entries from this work, see Liu, *Songdai Xiangpu*, 477–80. For more information on this work, see Liu, 224–34.
[972] The book was published by Chen Jing's son, Chen Haoqing 陳浩卿, see Liu, "Chen shi Xiangpu," 47.
[973] SKQS:844.239a–347a. For more information on this work, see Liu, "Chen shi Xiangpu"; Liu, *Songdai Xiangpu*, 205–20.
[974] A partial list of relevant works from the Song are given in Liu, 60.
[975] The following summarizes the research of Liu, 57–65.

Catalogue of the Suichu Hall (*Suichutang shumu* 遂初堂書目) which detailed the books in his private collection. This included the catalogues of aromatics by Ding Wei, Shen Li 沈立 (1007–1078), Hong Chu, and Mr. Hou 侯氏 (d.u.) listed in the table above.[976] I treat materia aromatica as a subgenre of this "registers and catalogues" bibliographic category, albeit a subdivision that was not recognized by You Mao himself.[977] The genre nomenclature is based on Shen Li's exemplar, which I render as the *Materia Aromatica* with capital letters to distinguish it as an individual book within this subgenre. I apply the same rationale to the *Materia Aromatica* of Hong Chu, which as we see below was compiled in deference to Shen Li's original masterwork.

It is worth nothing that works written as *pu* were not afforded great literary prestige. According to Ronald Egan, "ordinarily such works are thought to be too utilitarian to be considered fully *wen* 文, 'literary.'"[978] In spite of such an assessment, the Northern Song began to see a shift in literati culture that placed greater emphasis in such practical manuals, as attested through the composition of works addressing narrow topics such as tree peonies, tea, or wine. In the case of materia aromatica, I would argue that scholarly elegance was not necessarily expressed through carefully considered composition (as most of their contents are compilations of older sources), but through the breadth, depth, and comprehensiveness of the topic at hand. Their value was not in their literary form, but in the technical expertise they

[976] For the emergence of the new bibliographic category of *pulu* in the Southern Song, which ultimately derived from the subdivision of "computations and arts" (*shushu* 數術) into "calendrics and listings" (*lipu* 曆譜), see Liu, *Songdai Xiangpu*, 58–61. The category of *pulu* was adopted after Yao Mao's catalogue and can be found, for example, in the *Siku quanshu*.
[977] You Mao further divided *pulu* into seven subdivisions, of which aromatics were grouped along with tea, flowers, herbs, and trees, see Liu, *Songdai Xiangpu*, 61–65.
[978] Ronald Egan, *The Problem of Beauty: Aesthetic Thought and Pursuits in Northern Song Dynasty China* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2006): 360.

contained. In other words, materia aromatica were not meant to be models of exquisite writing, but the means to train the reader in the increasingly sophisticated arts of the nose.

By the end of the Song, the act of scenting the air through burning incense was included as one of the elite, urbane activities known as the four arts (*siyi* 四藝) or the four elegances (*siya* 四雅). Speaking to the former glories of the capital of Lin'an, present-day Hangzhou, Wu Zimu 吳自牧 (ca. late 13th cent.) described the world of the cosmopolitan elite by quoting a proverb that was in circulation during his time:

> Burning incense, tasting tea, hanging pictures, and arranging flowers are the four kinds of affairs left to others that should not belabor the household.[979]
> 燒香點茶，挂畫插花，四般閑事，不宜累家。

As understood by Liu Jingmin, the above saying referred to the specialized skills and honed arts of individuals who served in various agencies of the centralized government or who worked for wealthy families. In serving the personal needs of the imperial family or households of the elite, dedicated personnel were in charge of providing and arranging incense, tea, paintings, and flowers during banquets and other formal gatherings.[980] Consequently, as the proverb implies, due to the specialized knowledge each domain required, these duties were not to be left to the uninformed hosts. From the perspective of the guests at such formal social gatherings, the engagement with such activities signaled a

[979] As found in his *Record of Dreams of Sorghum* (*Mengliang lu* 夢梁錄), see citation in Liu, *Songdai Xiangpu*, 71.

[980] Liu, 71–72. In the central government, the Six Services (*liu ju* 六局) referred collectively to the agencies who served the personal needs of the imperial household, see Hucker, *Dictionary of Official Titles*, 316 (#3784). According to Liu, one agency was called the Palace Aromatics Service (*xiangyao ju* 香藥局), which as the name suggests specialized in burning incense, see Liu, *Songdai Xiangpu*, 72 (this is distinct from the Palace Medical Service [*shangyao ju* 尚藥局], Hucker, *Dictionary of Official Titles*, 413 [#5076]).

sensually rich and culturally refined lifestyle that appealed to one's aesthetic sense of smell, taste, vision, and touch.

Although we do not know precisely the contexts in which materia aromatica were read or the purpose for which they were compiled, Liu hypothesizes that one function may have been as textbooks or manuals to train people for these specialized activities.[981] Many works on aromatics did provide invaluable practical information on incense, including physical descriptions that may help in identification, various recipes for mixing blends, and directions for storage and how to use the many kinds of implements and utensils. To view the surviving materia aromatica as strictly pragmatic, however, would suggest a mistaken belief about their contents, most of which comprises passages of varying practical utility.[982] Taken as a whole, these works gathered a rather broad swath of information about incense, perfumes, spices, and drugs, and in the process attempted to paint a comprehensive overview of Chinese olfactory culture that focused on sweet smelling things. A familiarity with these works would not only mean one would be aware of the names of aromatics, their origins, and uses, but also a broader lore that supported and animated a deeper interest in olfactory materials and associated olfactory practices. Such knowledge would not only have a direct utility, but could also train one's discerning sense of taste and scholarly elegance, and consequently allow one to accrue powerful social and symbolic capital.

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[981] Liu, *Songdai Xiangpu*, 72. Elsewhere, Liu notes the flourishing of the materia aromatica subgenre was due to the enjoyment of incense by literati, Liu, 101.

[982] Valuable research still remains to be done in comparing the individual catalogues on aromatics to determine if the authors focused on different areas of interest or had different goals or intentions with how their works were to be used. A tabular comparison between Chen Jing's and Hong Chu's catalogues can be found in Liu, *Songdai Xiangpu*, 220; a more extensive tabular comparison between four catalogues (although Zeng Zao's work should now be combined with Hong Chu's work) can be found in Liu, 441–68.

3. Precursors to Materia Aromatica

The eleventh century was not the first time Chinese authors composed dedicated treatments on aromatics. Several formularies (*fang* 方), or what we might call recipe books, were compiled earlier in the medieval period, with the first appearing in the fifth century. These works are now, unfortunately, all lost. We know of their existence through the "Bibliographic Treatise" (*jingji zhi* 經籍志) compiled for the *Book of Sui* and by examining their titles and attributed authorship we can glean some insight into the early Chinese arts of perfumery.

For example, we find a one *juan Formulary of Aromatics* (*xiang fang* 香方) attributed to Emperor Ming 明 (r. 466–472) of the Liu Song.[983] As we have discussed in Chapter 5, some of the earliest evidence we have for incense blending in China comes from the region of Jiangnan in the coastal south, a region under the control of the Liu Song court with its capital at Jiangkang 建康. Consequently, it is not surprising to find an early compilation of blending recipes originating from this area. Moreover, cut off from the Central Asian trade routes to the west, the Liu Song court relied on its administrative jurisdiction over the tropical far south and the maritime trade routes for its importation of exotic luxury goods. Had Emperor Ming's book of recipes survived, it would have opened a fascinating window into fifth century southern commerce and appraised us of the materials that formed the smell culture of the southern elite. Notably, it is during the fifth century when we start to see clear evidence of domestic aloeswood harvesting in present-day Guangdong just west of the Pearl River Delta, hinting such commercial ventures were supported by a growing interest in

[983] SuiS:34.1048; see also Liu, *Songdai Xiangpu*, 52, 54, 258.

aromatics perfume blending. Moreover, the *Treatise on Nanyue* (*Nanyue zhi* 南越志), compiled during the Liu Song, distinguishes between at least three different grades of aloeswood, again pointing to a more sophisticated approach to the connoisseurship of incense.[984]

Additionally, the "Bibliographic Treatise" lists a more sizable five *juan Formulary of Miscellaneous Aromatics* (*zaxiang fang* 雜香方) by an anonymous compiler.[985] If anything, the magnitude of this work suggests relative maturity of incense blending that had developed before the start of the Tang. Moreover, we also know of work called the *Formulary of Superior Aromatics* (*shangxiang fang* 上香方), attributed to the famed southern court historian Fan Ye and compiler of the *Book of Later Han*, the first imperial history to discuss the trade and tribute of foreign aromatics.[986] While Fan Ye's single *juan* work no longer exists, his brief preface has survived and can be found reprinted in the *Book of the Song* (*Song shu* 宋書) as well as within several later materia aromatica compilations.[987] The preface cites a total of eleven substances, including musk, aloeswood, sweet basil, patchouli, elemi, spikenard, storax, gum guggul, saffron, jujube paste, and onycha reduction.[988] This list reveals a variety of raw materials that attest to long-distance trade (albeit through merchant middlemen) with the Mediterranean, India, and maritime Southeast Asia. The inclusion of both jujube paste and onycha reduction further confirms the sophistication and maturity of

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[984] For more on these points regarding aloeswood, see my comments to aloeswood at HC#3 and Jian Aromatic at HC#22.
[985] SuiS:34.1048; see also Liu, *Songdai Xiangpu*, 52, 258.
[986] SuiS:34.1043; see also Liu, *Songdai Xiangpu*, 52, 258–62. This work also circulated under the title of *Formulary of Blended Aromatics* (*hexiang fang* 和香方). To the above work we could also add the one *juan Formulary for Miscellaneous Aromatic Ointments* (*zaxianggao fang* 雜香膏方), SuiS:34.1043. This might be an early manual for making scented cosmetics, see Liu, *Songdai Xiangpu*, 54–55.
[987] E.g., SKQS:844.229a.
[988] There is some debate over the parsing of the elements of the preface. For a full translation of Fan Ye's preface and analysis, see my comments to the Preface on Aromatics at HC#84.

perfume blending in the fifth century since both are principally used as additives to enhance tactile and olfactory elements of the recipe. Specifically, jujube paste was used as an agglutinant to help form the pulverized mixture into pellets and to aid in the even combustion of the final product. Onycha possessed a foul smell on its own, but when properly processed with honey and alcohol and added to incense blends it was believed to add a depth and durability to the fragrance.[989]

Lastly the "Bibliographic Treatise" also refers to the now lost two *juan Methods of Blended Aromatics by Nāgārjuna Bodhisattva* (*longshu pusa hexiang fa* 龍樹菩薩和香法).[990] This work is also recorded in medieval Buddhist catalogues, including the eighth century *Record of Śākyamuni's Teachings Compiled During the Kaiyuan Era* (*kaiyuan shijiao lu* 開元釋教錄; T2154) compiled by Zhisheng 智昇 (669–740). He provides an interlinear note saying this work originally comprised fifty methods (or recipes), but that the text was no longer recorded since it did not represent the teachings of the Tripiṭaka, or the Buddhist canon.[991] It is impossible to know if this work attributed to the famed Indian Buddhist Nāgārjuna (ca. 2nd–3rd cent.) was crafted in the vein of the above blending manuals or if it aligned with early Chinese beliefs about the Indian master as a practitioner of medicine and alchemy. The *Book of Sui* lists two more works attributed to Nāgārjuna, including a four *juan Medicinal Formulary of Nāgārjuna Bodhisattva* (*longshu pusa yaofang* 龍樹菩薩藥方) and a single *juan Formulary for Nourishing One's Essence by Nāgārjuna Bodhisattva* (*longshu*

[989] For a more detailed discussion of this material, see my comments to onycha at HC#35.
[990] SuiS:34.1048; see also Liu, *Songdai Xiangpu*, 52, 258.
[991] T2154:540c09. Buddhist catalogues tend to list this work as a formulary (*fang* 方), not a book of methods (*fa* 法) as listed in the *Book of Sui*.

pusa yangxing fang 龍樹菩薩養性方), both of which are no longer extant.[992] One work that still survives is *Nāgārjuna's Treatise on the Five Sciences* (*longshu wuming lun* 龍樹五明論; T1420), which contains many therapeutic treatments for illnesses and directions for making protective talismans.

Despite the possible anomalous character of the manual attributed to Nāgārjuna, it is worth nothing that all of the above works dedicated to aromatics were grouped under the same classification in the "Bibliographic Treatise": medical formularies (*yi fang* 醫方). This clearly shows that the art of mixing perfumes and incense was, at least in the eyes of this team of bibliographers, envisioned under the broader purview of preparing medicinal drugs. This was due in part to the fact that aromatics (*xiang*) straddled the worlds of drugs and perfumes, combining under a single term both therapeutics and olfactory aesthetics. This dual function has a long history in China and can be inferred from the items recovered in the second century BCE tombs at Mawangdui. Fragrant materials such as Sichuan peppercorns, ginger root, and cassia bark were recovered from different kinds of scenting equipment, including cosmetics containers, scenting sachets, and ceramic censers.[993] Giving dimension to their potential use, these same three aromatics are also listed a range of therapeutic treatments found in medical manuscripts also excavated from Mawangdui.[994]

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[992] SuiS:34.1047 and SuiS:34.1049, respectively. Other works, including one on ophthalmology and another on *dhāraṇī* incantations, are elsewhere attributed to Nāgārjuna, see Dominic Steavu, "Buddhism, Medicine, and the Affairs of the Heart: Āyurvedic Potency Therapy (Vājīkarana) and the Reappraisal of Aphrodisiacs and Love Philters in Medieval Chinese Sources," *East Asian Science, Technology, and Medicine* 45, no. 1 (2017): 35n.67.

[993] A total of twelve pouches filled with aromatics were found in Tomb 1, two of which were placed in the left and right hands of the tomb's corpse, possibly as medical treatment. See discussion of these items in Chapter 2, Section 3.

[994] For discussion on the use of peppercorn, ginger, and cassia in these medical manuals, see Harper, *Early*, esp. 103–104.

As we have seen earlier in Chapter 3, we can also trace later medieval incense blending techniques back to older Chinese methods of drug processing. The act of crushing raw materials with a mortar and pestle is attested in the second century BCE Mawangdui medical documents and similarly the pulverization of aromatics becomes standard in the creation of complex incense blends during the medieval period. Metrological standards, such as the creation of pills "the size of small beans" are also found in the Mawangdui manuscripts. This has direct resonance with medieval perfuming, whereby small pellets are formed through incorporating jujube paste or warmed honey. Equally, one of the second century BCE medicinal recipes includes directions for making pellets "the size of a fingertip" by using honey or jujube paste to help hold the form.[995] In sum, we can conclude that that the art of perfumery in early medieval China was in many cases almost indistinguishable from pharmacology and alchemy. These close associations would continue into the twelfth century as we see in Hong Chu's *Materia Aromatica* which frequently draws upon materia medica literature to describe the various properties of aromatic substances. Moreover, by the end of Song, the more theoretical aspects for preparing medicinal blends, based on the classifications of drugs as sovereign (*jun* 君), minister (*chen* 臣), assistant (*zuo* 佐), and agent (*shi* 使), was adopted by perfumers for blending aromatics.[996]

Outside of the formularies and blending manuals from the fifth century it is difficult to determine when perfumery and incense blending became a specialized field of knowledge in China. In the early sixth century, the Daoist polymath Tao Hongjing identifies the six

[995] Harper, *Early*, 335. The creation of larger pellets is also attested, such as when Ge Hong directs one to pulverize realgar and garlic and form it into a ball the size of a chicken egg, see Ware, *Alchemy*, 292–93. We also have an early alchemical text describing the pulverization and sifting of numerous mineral, plant, and animal substances to which is added a juice to make pellets the size of a "yolk of a hen's egg," see Pregadio, *Great Clarity*, 88; see also Schipper and Verellen, *The Taoist Canon*, 104–05.
[996] Guoli gugong bowuyuan, *Xiangju tulu*, 19; Liu, *Songdai Xiangpu*, 266–71.

aromatics of aloeswood, frankincense, cloves, patchouli, elemi, and liquidambar as being essential ingredients for perfumers (*hexiang jia* 合香家), presumably testifying to the existence of professional class who specialized in producing blended fragrances.[997] Critically, while the *Supplementary Record by Famous Physicians* (*Mingyi bielu* 名醫別錄) attributes some therapeutic effects to these substances, Tao Hongjing reports these are "no longer formerly used in medicine," suggesting these six items were primarily used by perfumers, not physicians.[998]

As touched upon in Chapter 5, the earliest textual source that attests to an art of perfume and incense blending is the mid-to-late third century *Treatise on Strange Things of the Southern Regions* by Wan Zhen. In his discussion of onycha, he explicitly claims this material "can be blended with various aromatics and burned, which causes the enhancement of the fragrance."[999] Wan Zhen immediately follows this by offering a warning saying that onycha's smell is foul when burned in isolation. This offers a surprisingly complex view of perfumery, indicating a tradition that had already grown through periods of trial and error and developed a use for special additives that "enhanced" a blend, but were not in themselves fragrant. The fact that Emperor Ming and Fan Ye were both men of the south suggest their recipe catalogues were following directly from a long local tradition of incense and perfume

[997] 沉香，薰陸香，雞舌香，藿香，詹糖香，楓香。XXBC:12.313; see also Yamada, "Chin sunawachi kaori," 2–3; Yamada, *Tōa kōryō shi kenkyū*, 172–73; cf. Schafer, *Golden Peaches*, 159 and cf. Needham and Lu, *Science and Civilisation in China,* Vol. 5, Part 2*,* 143 who mistakenly claim this statement was made by the seventh century editors of the *Newly Revised Materia Medica*.

[998] 不正复入藥。XXBC:12.313. Later materia medica would nevertheless assign therapeutic properties to these six substances.

[999] 可合眾香燒之，皆使益芳。TPYL:8.982.865. The importance of this passage is noted by Yamada, *Tōzai kōyaku shi*, 30–31; Yamada, "Chin sunawachi kaori," 10; Guoli gugong bowuyuan, *Xiangju tulu*, 16–17, 111n.30. See also my comments to onycha at HC#35.

blending, perhaps even inspired by the alchemical practices of Jiangnan which valued five ingredient incense blends.

In addition to a handful of fifth century formularies, the focused study of aromatics in China was also bolstered by the compilation of "category books," or encyclopedia (*leishu* 類書). The history of the development of Chinese encyclopedia is too complex to address here, but it is worth noting that they functioned more like anthologies than summaries, bringing together a vast assortment of textual passages that were grouped under a singular lexical taxon. In the early seventh century, one such collection was completed on imperial decree, called the *Classified Collection of Literary Arts* (*Yiwen leiju* 藝文類聚). This contained a division entitled, "Drugs, Aromatics, and Herbs" (*yaoxiangcao* 藥香草), which listed, according to the calculations of Liu Jingmin, nine different aromatic materials, such as thoroughwort, ginger, sweet basil, and patchouli.[1000] Notably, however, most of the list represented locally (or regionally) available items while the highest luxury goods of the Tang, such as aloeswood and frankincense were not included.[1001] In spite of this, the editors of the *Classified Collection of Literary Arts* had taken an important step in sketching a discourse about aromatics by explicitly classifying several botanical substances together, especially those that did not have a suffix of "aromatic" in their names.

Arguably one of the more undervalued figures in shaping the medieval Chinese views of what is considered an aromatic was the Buddhist monk Daoshi 道世 (d. 683) who lived

[1000] Liu, *Songdai Xiangpu*, 46.
[1001] Of the items Liu highlights, the unidentified Midi Aromatic [HC#43] had the strongest identification as a luxury good from the Western Regions, but its inclusion in the encyclopedia was most likely due to its popularization by a series of poetic rhapsodies written in the beginning of the third century describing its cultivation in China; for more on these poems, see Milburn, "Midiexiang," 26–44 and Kong, *Fu Poetry Along the Silk* Roads, 22–35.

for most of his life in the capital at Chang'an. He compiled a hundred division encyclopedia entitled the *Forest of Pearls in the Garden of the Dharma* (*Fayuan zhulin* 法苑珠林; T2122) and completed by 668. One of the divisions was dedicated to "Flowers and Aromatics" (*huaxiang* 華香).[1002] Each division was segmented into three parts, beginning with a narration (*shuyi* 述意) where Daoshi offered an philosophical introduction to the section as a whole. This is followed by citations (*yinzheng* 引證) from Buddhist canonical (and sometimes non-canonical) sources. The last part is devoted to miraculous events brought about by karmic conditions (*ganyin yuan* 感應緣). In regards to the "Flowers and Aromatics" division, the most interesting segment for our purposes is the last part. It includes its own succinct table of contents listing seven entries, the last of which says "miscellaneous mundane excerpts" (*zasu chu* 雜俗出).[1003] The last "entry" here is actually comprised of many passages drawn from mostly non-Buddhist sources that describe a broad range of real and fictional aromatics and smells. In many ways this small subdivision of "Flowers and Aromatics" represents Daoshi's own virtual materia aromatica. For simplicity, I will sometimes refer to this subdivision in the *Forest of Pearls in the Garden of the Dharma* as Daoshi's catalogue of aromatics.

In examining the section's organization, Daoshi also appears to make a distinction between anomalous aromatics that are drawn from the tales of the strange (*zhiguai* 志怪) genre and (mostly) mundane aromatics that appear in gazetteers, imperial histories, and other documents.[1004] The first eleven entries are drawn from some of the most popular works of the

[1002] T2122:569a28–574b06.
[1003] The tripartite segmentation of "Flowers and Aromatics" is as follows: narrative (T2122:569a29–569b05), canonical citations (569b06–571c15), miracle tales (571c16–574b06).
[1004] It is worth noting that the first eleven entries are not given headwords; individual entries are distinguished by citing a new source text. Since anomalous aromatics and fragrances pulled from tales of the strange often did not appear in multiple medieval works, it was impossible to build up a collection of quotations like one would commonly find for real-world items. Thus, the apparent distinction made by Daoshi may not have been due to

tales of the strange genre, including the third century *Treatise on the Investigation of Things* (*Bowu zhi* 博物志), the fourth century *Records in Search of Spirits* (*Soushen ji* 搜神記), and the fifth century *Records Narrating the Strange* (*Shuyi ji* 述異記), among others.[1005] In contrast, the next thirty entries are provided headwords and often cite multiple sources to flesh out the substance's identity and properties. Table 6.2 lists the individually named aromatics that are cited by Daoshi, all of which fall under his "miscellaneous mundane excerpts."

Table 6.2: Daoshi's Aromatics in the *Forest of Pearls in the Garden of the Dharma* [1006]

	Daoshi's "Flowers and Aromatics" Division	***Materia Aromatica* Entry**		**Daoshi's "Flowers and Aromatics" Division**	***Materia Aromatica* Entry**
1	musk 麝香	HC#2	16	Jian Aromatic 薦香	HC#22
2	Solomon's seal 蕨蓾香	HC#60	17	aloeswood 木蜜香	HC#42
3	turmeric[1007] 鬱金	HC#7	18	Beng Aromatic[1008] 稝香	HC#41
4	storax 蘇合香	HC#5	19	thoroughwort 都梁香	HC#34
5	cloves 雞舌香	HC#8	20	aloeswood 沈香	HC#3
6	nutsedge root 雀頭香	HC#27	21	onycha 甲香	HC#35
7	frankincense 薰陸香	HC#9	22	Midi Aromatic 迷迭香	HC#43
8	sulfur 流黃香	--	23	sweet basil 零陵香	HC#20
9	costus root 青木香	HC#16	24	Yun Aromatic[1009] 芸香	HC#28
10	sandalwood 栴檀香	HC#4	25	thoroughwort 蘭香	HC#29
11	spikenard 甘松香	HC#19	26	Huai Aromatic 槐香	HC#31
12	Douna Aromatic 兜納香	HC#40	27	Doumo Incense 兜末香	HC#53

his belief about the historical veracity of anomalous aromatics, but due to the restriction of his sources or simply a difficulty in determining a clear distinctive name.

[1005] Not every text falls neatly into the tales of the strange genre, such as the *Traditions of Funan* (*Funan zhuan* 扶南傳), a third century gazetteer of the tropical south, and the *Records Describing Military Campaigns* (*Shuzheng ji* 述征記).

[1006] The "*Materia Aromatica* Entry" is the corresponding entry to Hong Chu's (HC) *Materia Aromatica* at the end of this study.

[1007] All of Daoshi's citations explain this as the ancient aromatic of state ritual, thus I do not translate it as saffron here, see comments to entry HC#7.

[1008] This is sometimes written, as in Hong Chu's *Materia Aromatica*, as Geng Aromatic (*geng xiang* 耕香).

[1009] All of Daoshi's citations explain this as a native Chinese plant, thus it is unlikely it should be considered foreign rue, see comments to entry HC#24.

	Daoshi's "Flowers and Aromatics" Division	*Materia Aromatica* Entry		Daoshi's "Flowers and Aromatics" Division	*Materia Aromatica* Entry
13	Aina Aromatic 艾納香	HC#18	28	Returning to Life Aromatic 又生香	--
14	patchouli 藿香	HC#38	29	Spirit Incense 神香	HC#47
15	liquidambar 楓香	HC#33	30	Startling the Spirits Aromatic 驚精香	HC#48

Distinct from the entries in the *Classified Collection of Literary Arts*, all of Daoshi's items have the word "aromatic" suffixed to their names. They also represent a far more diverse collection of items, ranging from foreign exotica to native Chinese plants. The last three, Returning to Life Aromatic, Spirit Incense, and Startling the Spirits Incense, also represent substances of the utmost miraculous power – the ability to dispel epidemics and revive people from the dead.

It is also notable that many of the fragrant items selected for inclusion in the chapter of "Flowers and Aromatics" would become staples for later imperial encyclopedia. The *Extensive Records of the Taiping Era* (*Taiping guangji* 太平廣記), completed three hundred years after the *Forest of Pearls in the Garden of the Dharma* in 981, contained a small subdivision of "Aromatic-Drugs" (*xiangyao*), while the *Imperial Readings of the Taiping Era* (*Taiping yulan* 太平御覽), completed in 983, incorporated three major divisions of "Aromatics" (*xiang*) that were listed separate from "Drugs" (*yao*).[1010] These three divisions on aromatics contained forty-one different individual entries, with an additional initial entry for *xiang* itself which was supported by more than three dozen passages that painted its meaning in broad strokes as denoting fragrance, incense, odor, aroma, and so forth.[1011]

[1010] See brief discussion in Liu, *Songdai Xiangpu*, 46–47.
[1011] TPYL:8.981.853–856.

The overlapping streams of influence, developed over the previous millennium, that ultimately lead to the composition of a work like Hong Chu's *Materia Aromatica* are deep and complex. Chinese olfactory culture helped sustain centuries-long discourse on the meaning and significance of *xiang* and aromatics. Foreign aromatics and foreign olfactory practices helped invest a greater interest in the creation of blending manuals and, eventually, specialized works dedicated to multiple facets of odorants in Chinese history. The growth of the genre of encyclopedia and its style of taxonomic classifications also forced compilers of materia aromatica to question which items should be incorporated and which should be excluded from the taxon of aromatics.

4. Overview of Hong Chu's Materia Aromatica

The earliest extant, (presumed) relatively complete, Chinese work devoted to perfumes, aromatics, and the culture of smell is Hong Chu's *Materia Aromatica*, completed in the early twelfth century.[1012] While Hong Chu was socialized into the culture of the literati who were enmeshed in a world of incense and perfumes, his most significant influence may have been his uncle. Hong Chu was the nephew of the celebrated poet and calligrapher Huang Tingjian 黃庭堅 (1045–1105). Hong Chu and his three brothers developed into reputable poets in the lineage of the Jiangxi School of poetry. Huang Tingjian was himself a self-educated connoisseur of incense who scoured documents to collect his own incense blends, composed poetry on the topic of incense, and who by his own admission, developed an "incense

[1012] The earliest proposed date for completion is 1104, see Shang, "Xiang houpu." Previous scholarship placed the compilation later in Hong Chu's life, sometime during the *xuanhe* 宣和 era (1119–1125), see Liu, "Hong Chu ji qi Xiangpu." Issues of dating will be discussed below.

infatuation" (*xiangpi* 香癖).[1013] Inclusive of these avuncular influences, Hong Chu's *Materia Aromatica* was inspired by a literary predecessor compiled by the official Shen Li, but which now only partly survives in scattered passages. In fact, it has recently been demonstrated that the original title of Hong Chu's catalogue was the *Addendum to the Materia Aromatica* (*Xiang houpu* 香後譜), in deference to Shen Li's pioneering work and the first to bear the title *Materia Aromatica*. After Hong Chu, numerous other registers of aromatics were composed in the later Northern Song up through the Yuan (and even into the modern period) generally expanding in length and complexity, but it was Hong Chu's work that has come to be identified as seminal to the history of incense and perfumes in East Asia.

An initial window into the shape of the literary discourse on aromatics can be seen in the textual divisions Hong Chu has chosen to employ in his work. Bracketing for now the problems concerning different editions of the received text, we can see several broad categories were envisioned as a guide to determine what olfactory artifacts were worthy of collection. The most representative modern edition of the Hong Chu's *Materia Aromatica* provides four general divisions or chapters: "Aromatic Products" (*xiang zhi pin* 香之品), "Strange Aromatics" (*xiang zhi yi* 香之異), "Affairs of Aromatics" (*xiang zhi shi* 香之事), and "Aromatic Recipes" (*xiang zhi fa* 香之法).[1014]

[1013] Shang Haifeng has recently placed Huang Tingjian at the crux of the spread of an aesthetically oriented incense culture during the Song through his adept combination of incense, poetry, and his own personal meditative techniques. This would later influence Japanese figures in the Muromachi period (1336–1573), including several Zen monks, who would have a bearing on the early development of Japanese *kōdō*, "the way of incense"; see Shang, "Xiang, chan, shi."

[1014] A reconstruction of an earlier version of Hong Chu's work suggests a fifth division, "Literary Writings on Aromatics" (*xiang wen* 香文), which has, at least in part, collapsed into the "Affairs of Aromatics" chapter, see Shang, "Xiang houpu" and discussion below.

The first chapter contains entries providing botanical descriptions, commercial origins, and the therapeutic applications of scented raw materials from around the known world. The second chapter collects tales about anomalous aromatics and other odd smells that have appeared in a variety of medieval sources. Unlike the first chapter which more typically draws upon two or more sources for each entry, the second chapter often relies upon a unique source. The third chapter is the most heterogeneous, collecting a spectrum of helpful terminological definitions for an assortment of aromatics-related equipment and olfactory practices, as well as choice selection of literary works, including inscriptions, early medieval poetry, and one short essay.[1015] Finally, the fourth chapter contains ingredient lists and instructions for making aromatic blends and a handful of other pertinent methods for properly age-cellaring and burning incense. If we envision a logic to this organization, we find a flow beginning with the establishment of basic knowledge concerning raw aromatic materials, including their geographic and botanical origins, as well as their reported therapeutic effects. This moves to more fantastic lore about the reputed miraculous effects of some aromatics. These topics are then rounded out with more refined literary discussions of olfactory culture before ending with practical instructions for the use of aromatics, perfumes, and incense in daily life.

The first chapter, "Aromatic Products," contains the highest number of references to medieval works and compiles the most detailed information under individual headwords, thus a few preliminary comments are in order. This chapter is comprised of forty-three

[1015] Unless a more complete record of the *Materia Aromatica* can be restored, none of the poems appear to date later than the middle of the sixth century. Thus, it seems Hong Chu consciously rejected a large body of poetic work on incense that spawned during the Tang and Northern Song, including those of his uncle. For a selection of Chinese poetry bearing on incense and aromatics, see Bedini, *Trail of Time*; Sargent, "Incense of Awareness"; Milburn, "Midiexiang"; Kirkova, "Sacred Mountains."

entries based on quotations drawn from approximately two dozen sources and a handful of personal observations by Hong Chu.[1016] A majority of the information is reportedly drawn from medieval materia medica, including the *Materia Medica of the Divine Husbandman* (*Shennong bencao jing* 神農本草經) with the added annotations of Tao Hongjing 陶弘景 (456–536), the seventh century *Newly Revised Materia Medica* (*Xinxiu bencao* 新修本草), and the eighth century *Supplement to the Materia Medica* (*Bencao shiyi* 本草拾遺). A small portion of Hong Chu's entries explicitly cite medical works from the tenth century, including the *Materia Medica of Overseas Drugs* (*Haiyai bencao* 海藥本草), the *Materia Medica of Shu* (*Shu bencao* 蜀本草) published before 965, and the *Materia Medica of the Kaibao Era* (*Kaibao bencao* 開寶本草) published in its final form in 974. Another major genre of works are regional gazetteers, mostly covering the Chinese far south, including the *Records of Jiaozhou* (*Jiaozhou ji* 交州記), compiled under the Eastern Jin, the *Treatise on Nanyue*, *Records of Jingzhou* (*Jingzhou ji* 荊州記), and *Treatise on the Guang Region* (*Guang zhi* 廣志), all compiled in the fifth century, and the *Records of Nanzhou* (*Nanzhou ji* 南州記), possibly compiled sometime previous to the eighth century.

Given that many of the above works are no longer extant, Hong Chu's *Materia Aromatica* appears to be a treasure trove of early medieval sources pertaining to Chinese smell culture.[1017] For scholars interested in studying a critical history of aromatics in

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[1016] I presume several of the passages within the *Materia Aromatica* that are preceded by "nowadays" (*jin* 今) to be supplemental comments added by Hong Chu. In all cases, these passages do not correspond to earlier surviving works.

[1017] Hong Chu's *Materia Aromatica* first came to my attention thorough its frequent citation in modern scholarship for resolving thorny issues of plant identification. For example, in Berthold Laufer's discussion of gum guggul, he claims, "the most important source for our purposes doubtless is the [*Materia Aromatica*] by [Hong Chu] of the Song," see Berthold Laufer, "Bird Divination Among the Tibetans," *T'oung Pao*, Second Series, 15, no. 1 (1914): 5–6n.1. As I discuss below, there are many obstacles to the scholarly utility of the

medieval China, however, great caution must be exercised in using Hong Chu's catalogue. Not only are there significantly different editions of the *Materia Aromatica* circulating (to be discussed below), but the more-or-less standard edition derived from the *Complete Library in Four Sections* (*Siku quanshu* 四庫全書), hereafter *Siku quanshu*, has many citation errors and omissions, thus making it easy to misinterpret the source of specific information for various entries.

To offer just one example as illustration, let us turn to Hong Chu's description for the Aromatic from Lingling (*lingling xiang* 零陵香; HC#20). As the entry stands in the *Siku quanshu* edition of the *Materia Aromatica*, passages are cited from two different works: the now lost *Treatise on Nanyue*, completed in the fifth century, and the *Guideways through the Mountains and Seas* (*Shanhai jing* 山海經), compiled during the Western Han, but likely edited through the Six Dynasties. When we compare this pair of passages to their textual counterparts, such as the *textus receptus* of the *Guideways through the Mountains and Seas* and the surviving portions of the *Treatise on Nanyue* preserved in other compendia, the correspondence between the relevant passages is strikingly incongruent. In fact, upon closer examination, Hong Chu has drawn information from an anonymous third source and blended it with the citations from these two texts. In this case, the anonymized source is the tenth century *Materia Medica of the Kaibao Era*. A simple, uncritical reading of the *Materia Aromatica* would not only make it appear as if the *Treatise on Nanyue* and the *Guideways through the Mountains and Seas* contained an overabundance of information on the Aromatic

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received editions of the *Materia Aromatica*. In terms of unique value, there are four passages attributed to the sixth century *Records of Emperor Wu of the Han and the Cavern Darkness of Separate Realms* (*Han Wudi bieguo dongming ji* 漢武帝別國洞冥記) that appear in no earlier compendia. These include: Sinking Light Incense [HC#54], Perfuming the Flesh Incense [HC#64], Spirits and Demons Incense [HC#71], and Jin Midi Incense [HC#73].

from Lingling (the latter text never even uses this terminology), but that such information was in circulation well before the tenth century. A careful reading of the first chapter reveals dozens of instances of misattributed, unattributed, or blended passages, thus we cannot uncritically accept the citations in the *Materia Aromatica* as accurate.[1018]

To add another layer of complexity, the omission of source materials sometimes gives the impression of Hong Chu's direct access to primary texts when this was almost certainly not the case. Returning to the example above, the *Materia Medica of the Kaibao Era*, itself now lost, but preserved in later materia medica literature, quotes the *Treatise on Nanyue* in its own discussion of the Aromatic from Lingling.[1019] Consequently, we need not assume Hong Chu had access to independent copies of each work he cites (the *Treatise on Nanyue*, for example, is not cited elsewhere in the *Materia Aromatica*).[1020] While the omission of secondary and tertiary sources is not unique to Hong Chu, the overall condition of citations presents an immediate obstacle to scholars using the *Materia Aromatica* to reconstruct earlier medieval scent culture.[1021]

[1018] I have attempted to identify all such occurrences in the footnotes and commentary to my translation of the *Materia Aromatica*.

[1019] The *Materia Medica of the Kaibao Era* is frequently quoted in the sixteenth century *Systematic Materia Medica*. In the case above, the *Treatise on Nanyue* is explicitly cited as deriving from the *Materia Medica of the Kaibao Era*, while the relevant passage from the *Guideways through the Mountains and Seas* is noted as being first cited by Tao Hongjing. It is likely that Tao Hongjing's citation of the *Guideways through the Mountains and Seas* was also later copied by the *Materia Medica of the Kaibao Era* even though this is not explicitly noted in the *Systematic Materia Medica*. For more on these issues, see the Aromatic from Lingling at HC#20 and the relevant footnotes to the Chinese text.

[1020] These issues of improper citation have led some scholars astray. For example, O.W. Wolters believed Hong Chu possessed an independent copy of the *Treatise on the Guang Region* that corresponded to a copy reputedly held by Li Xun, the compiler of the *Materia Medica of Overseas Drugs*, see Wolters, *Indonesian Commerce*, 92. Specifically, the *Materia Aromatica* was cited to verify that Li Xun did not fabricate the relevant passage in the *Treatise on the Guang Region*. In fact, it appears Hong Chu copied the passage of the *Treatise on the Guang Region* as it was cited by the *Materia Medica of Overseas Drugs*; see my comments to Milky Aromatic at HC#13.

[1021] For more on the omission of second and third-hand sources, see Zheng et al., *Dictionary of the Ben Cao Gang Mu*, 16.

There are other issues worthy of note. For one, Hong Chu devised entries around a selected headword that typically ended with the suffix "aromatic" (*xiang*). Because of this editorial decision uncommon nomenclature was, at times, elevated to an entry headword, displacing more common terminology. For example, the very generic Scented Aromatic (*fang xiang* 芳香; HC#30) was used to orient the discussion around wild angelica, when in fact this scented root plant was far more commonly known as *baizhi* 白芷 in classical Chinese sources.

Furthermore, by sorting entries according to a single headword, Hong Chu was also sometimes forced to cite passages under the same entry that described very different *flora*. A clear example of this can be found in the entry for Yu Gold Aromatic (*yujin xiang* 鬱金香; HC#7). In elaborating upon this aromatic material, Hong Chu draws upon works that variously describe native Chinese wild turmeric, imported saffron, and an unknown flowering plant – all of which circulated under the name of Yu Gold.[1022] In other cases, passages will sometimes give conflicting information about a headword, all without explanatory comments by Hong Chu. This approach is not unique to the *Materia Aromatica*, however, as medieval Chinese encyclopedia employed the same methods (as did Daoshi and his catalogue of flowers and aromatics), whereby all relevant textual quotations were organized around the chosen taxon and not around the specific content and descriptions of the individual passages. Consequently, the first chapter of Hong Chu's catalogue cannot be treated as a simple dictionary of terminology, but merely as a collection of passages centering on a particular word or phrase. Understanding these limitations of Hong Chu's

[1022] See Yu Gold Aromatic at HC#7 and my comments to that entry.

"Aromatic Products" chapter are critical to any scholar investigating medieval Chinese scent culture.

Turning to the remaining divisions of the *Materia Aromatica*, in the second chapter, "Strange Aromatics," we find that almost all of the thirty-eight entries were pulled from medieval tales of the strange literature and religious scripture. Among the works contributing the most individual items are the fourth century *Uncollected Records* (*Shiyi ji* 拾遺記) and the ninth century *Miscellaneous Compilation from Duyang* (*Duyang zabian* 杜陽雜編), which provided seven and five entries, respectively. Additional items were also extracted from Buddhist and Daoist scriptures, comprising seven and six entries, respectively.[1023] The third division on the "Affairs of Aromatics" contains forty-four entries in its current state. The sources are diverse and include tales of the strange, official dynastic histories, and other administrative documents. It also preserves Fan Ye's preface to his lost blending manual [HC#84] and Ding Wei's essay, "Traditions of Heavenly Aromatics" [HC#119]. The title of this latter work is based upon ideas that appear in the *Lotus Sutra*, a scripture that envisions the heavens above as a repository for the most wondrous smells.

> The Western Sage [i.e., the Buddha] says: "In great or small worlds, above and below, within and beyond, there are all kinds of fragrances."[1024] He also says, "The thousands of tens-of-thousands of kinds of blended aromatics, whether incense, pellets, powders, or pastes, or the fragrances of flowers, fruits, or trees, these are heavenly blends of aromatics."[1025]
> 西方聖人曰：大小世界，上下內外，種種諸香。又曰：千萬種和香，若香，若丸，若末，若塗，以至華香，果香，樹香，天和合之香。

[1023] Buddhist sources are explicitly cited for Kaśmīri Incense [HC#68], *turuṣka* [HC#76], *tagara* [HC#77], Great Elephant Treasure Incense [HC#78], Ox-Head Sandalwood [HC#79], *karpūra* [HC#80], and *Campaka* Flower Fragrance [HC#81]; Daoist sources are explicitly cited for Nine Blend Incense [HC#66], Flying Scent Incense [HC#72], Fivefold Aromatic [HC#74], and Thousand Blend Incense [HC#75], Pentachromatic Scented Smoke [HC#105], and Incense Beads [HC#106].
[1024] A minor rephrasing of Kumarajīva's translation of the *Lotus Sutra*; see original passage at T262.48b18–19.
[1025] A minor rephrasing of Kumarajīva's *Lotus Sutra*; see T262.48b19–23. I have followed the Chinese version of Ding Wei's treatise as it is preserved in Chen Jing's catalogue, see SKQS:844.333a-b.

The third chapter also contains three poems (shi 詩), two censer inscriptions, and a final entry listed as ancient poetry (*gu shi* 古詩), which is sometimes identified as a rhapsody (*fu* 賦) in modern sources [HC#124].[1026] This is actually a blend of eight stanzas taken from different works dating from the end of the Eastern Han to the middle of the sixth century. Notably, all of the individual works can be found in the sixth century anthology, *New Songs from the Jade Terrace* (*Yutai xinyong* 玉臺新詠). The final chapter is comprised of nineteen blending recipes and three sets of instructions for age-cellaring finished blends, fumigating garments, and making charcoal. While six of the recipes are generically titled "Recipe for Blended Incense" (*yaxiang fa* 牙香法), others tell us how they were intended to be used or where they originated. Four are associated with imperial courts or member of the state administration and one is attributed to the Buddhist Huadu Temple in Chang'an [HC#128]. Another is designated as a fragrant moist incense paste used for offering to the Buddha [HC#131]. Two are intended to produce the fine powder used in incense seals [HC#138, 139], and one is for fumigating garments [HC#142]. Overall, this last chapter provides eminently practical instructions on how to prepare raw materials and turn them into refined and stimulating olfactory products.

5. Biography of Hong Chu: Early Years

Despite Hong Chu's fame among modern connoisseurs of East Asian incense and perfumery, he enjoyed no such renown in life. For most of his career Hong Chu was a low-to-middle

[1026] See e.g. Liu, *Songdai Xiangpu*, 220.

ranking official and poet of relatively minor influence who merited no biography in the imperial history of the Song. Many of the details of Hong Chu's early life can only be stitched together from his correspondence with his famous uncle, Huang Tingjian, while his twilight years were marred by a court scandal that led to his banishment to the barren island of Shamen. Like many men of his generation working in the state administration, their lives were in flux with the various political intrigues of the Northern Song court, especially during the tumultuous reign of Emperor Huizong 徽宗 (r. 1101–1125) which brought an end to the Chinese rule of Kaifeng in the north. Thus, while Hong Chu is mostly often treated as a minor figure in the illustrious circle of Huang Tingjian, he lived during an especially vibrant period and his life follows many of the cultural and political ebbs and flows occurring on a much larger stage. As we will see, the emerging Song culture of smell and aromatics played only a background role in Hong Chu's life, at least as portrayed in the scattered records that remain available to us. Moreover, it still remains unknown when Hong Chu composed his *Materia Aromatica*, although some informed guesses can be postulated. Nevertheless, this excurses opens a window into Hong Chu's life as a rank-and-file official who had literary inclinations and, ultimately, a rather unexpected impact on East Asian olfactory culture.

In the political upheaval after the collapse of the Tang, Hong Chu's paternal family moved from Danyang to Jianchang 建昌, in present-day Jiangxi.[1027] Members of his family held minor roles in the Tang and Song administrations, while his father, Hong Minshi 洪民師 (d.1070), held a judiciary post with the military in Shizhou 石州 in present-day Shanxi. At

[1027] We know this through a brief biographical account written as part of an epitaph by Hong Jueshun 洪覺順 (1160–1204) discovered in 1987. The discovery of this epitaph resolved several issues of conflicting information and other points of confusion regarding Hong Chu's early life, see Chen Boquan, "Cong 'Song Hong shi mu ji' tan shiren Hong Chu," *Wenwu* 11 (1987): 78–80.

an undetermined date, Hong Minshi married the younger sister of the official Huang Tingjian, who would later become a celebrated poet and artist as the protégé of Su Shi 蘇軾 (1037–1101). The mothers of Hong Mingshi and Huang Tingjian were sisters and members of the prominent Li 李 family from Jiangxi. Hong Minshi had four sons, Hong Peng 洪朋 (1065–1104), Hong Chu 洪芻, Hong Yan 洪炎 (1067–1133), and Hong Yu 洪羽 (b. ca. 1070), before he and his wife died at a very young age in 1070, consequently placing the young boys' care and tutelage under their paternal grandmother. This tragedy allowed Huang Tingjian to foster a very close relationship with his four nephews and emerge as a significant influence in their lives and political careers.[1028]

Through surviving letters and essays we can see that Huang Tingjian cared greatly for his sister's sons and acted in many regards as an adoptive father by offering personal advice and helping them nurture relationships with people in positions of power as they embarked upon their careers later in life. Upon reaching adulthood, Huang Tingjian provided each boy with their courtesy name (*zi* 子). Hong Chu was given the name Jufu 駒父, or "colt-father," which was inspired in part by the ancient Chinese idea of legendary horse that could travel one thousand *li* in a single day. Metaphorically, the idea also came to connote an exceptionally talented person.[1029]

The earliest known official position held by Hong Chu was as the Supervisor of Alcohol in Huangzhou 黃州 in present-day Hubei. He had held this middling rank post since at least 1089. This post was in charge of preparing the alcohol used in official ceremonies

[1028] Information summarized from Chen, "Song Hong shi mu ji"; Liu, "Hong Chu ji qi Xiangpu," 64–67; Liu, *Songdai Xiangpu*, 186–87.
[1029] The inspiration for each of the four brother's names is explained in Huan Tingjian's "Preface to My Four Nephews' Courtesy Names of the Hong Clan" (*Hong shi sisheng zi zu* 洪氏四甥字序); see relevant citation for Hong Chu's name in Liu, "Hong Chu ji qi Xiangpu," 67; Liu, *Songdai Xiangpu*, 187.

and providing the necessary libations to members of the court and other distinguished guests.[1030] It was at this time that Hong Chu also established his own studio, which he named the Jade Shadow Studio (*biyin zhai* 璧陰齋). His uncle, who was already firmly establishing himself as a prominent artist and calligrapher through his interactions with Su Shi and his circle in Bianjing 汴京, present-day Kaifeng, was called upon to prepare a suitable inscription. Huang Tingjian's pride for his nephew's accomplishments is palpable in the preface he composed:

> My nephew, Hong Chu, [courtesy name] Jufu, is appointed as Supervisor of Alcohol in Huang[zhou]. He is diligent in his office and does not lead an idle life.[1031] Furthermore, he is able to cherish his leisure time and use it to study in private. He named the place he resides Jade Shadow Studio.[1032]
> 甥洪芻駒父，仕爲黃之酒正，勤其官，不素食矣。又能愛其餘日，以私於學。名其所居曰璧陰齋。

As part of the educated elite, Hong Chu was tangibly participating in the culture of the literati by establishing a studio, a space that according to his uncle was to be used in his leisure time to study and be free from potential distraction. On the surface, it is here that Hong Chu would have been expected to read and write, but the deeper goal was to cultivate the qualities of an adept government official who was both erudite and culturally refined. The name of the studio is a subtle allusion to this lofty goal. A passage in the *Master of Huainan* contrasts the value of jade to that of the passage of time measured by the movement of a shadow: "Sages do not value a foot of jade as much as they esteem an inch's movement of the sundial's

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[1030] Hucker, *Dictionary of Official Titles*, 175 (#1292).
[1031] To "not [eat] simple food," or "to not be vegetarian" (*bu sushi* 不素食), refers to the idea of eating inexpensive food because one is not employed or industrious.
[1032] From Huang Tingjian's "Inscription and Preface for Hong Jufu's Jade Shadow Studio" (*Hong Jufu Biyin zhai ming bing xu* 洪駒父璧陰齋銘並序), see citation in Liu, "Hong Chu ji qi Xiangpu," 67; Liu, *Songdai Xiangpu*, 188.

shadow. Time is difficult to gain but easy to lose."[1033] The name of Hong Chu's studio underscores the preciousness of time for the sage and forthright endeavor to use that time wisely.

We know nothing else of the Jade Shadow Studio nor specifically how Hong Chu spent his time there, although it is clear that he was developing his literary craft and would receive favorable comparison to the famed Tang poet Du Fu 杜甫 (712–770) in a few years' time.[1034] It is not unreasonable to assume that part of his cultural training as an aspiring literati was to burn incense in his private study. In her otherwise thorough examination of the various avenues of influence that led to Hong Chu's composition of the *Materia Aromatica*, Liu Jingmin overlooks the potential importance of this period.[1035] Discussion of incense and aromatics do not appear in the surviving epistles between Huang Tingjian and his nephew, but the *yuanyou* 元祐 era (1086–1093) proved to be significant time in the life of Huang Tingjian and his poetic ruminations on incense. During this period he composed no less than eighteen poems on the topic, with sixteen of them written in 1086, the year he first met Su Shi in person after both served periods of political exile.[1036]

Such poems offer insight into the values of Northern Song literati culture and the objects that were used and displayed in private studio spaces. For example, a series of ten poems by Huang Tingjian, examined and analyzed by Stuart Sargent, were written as a response to a gift of incense by one Jia Tianyi 賈天錫 (fl. 1086). This new sub-genre of

[1033] Major et al., *Huainanzi*, 62.
[1034] Liu, *Songdai Xiangpu*, 188. The sterling praise was offered by Wang Zhifang 王直方 (1069–1109), a fellow poet associated with the Jiangxi School of poetry, see also Liu, "Hong Chu ji qi Xiangpu," 78.
[1035] Cf. Liu, "Hong Chu ji qi Xiangpu."
[1036] The eighteen poems are collected and discussed in Shang, "Xiang, chan, shi." For more on the banishment of Su Shi and Huang Tingjian for their politically charged writings, see Ronald Egan, *Word, Image, and Deed in the Life of Su Shi* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1994): 27–53.

poems composed on the occasion of receiving gifts provides clear insight into the kinds of material objects that were circulated among the educated elite as well as the meanings being attributed to them. According to Sargent, in 1086, Huang Tingjian also composed poems on tea, wine, brushes, and inkstones – all items that were typically at the center of expressing one's refinement in both the poetic and visual arts.[1037] For a young poet like Hong Chu, burning of incense in his studio would have been one of the many possible ways to cultivate and express his scholarly elegance (*ya*).

Furthermore, it is in the fifth offering of the aforementioned ten poems that Huang Tingjian proclaims as having an incense infatuation (*xiang pi*).[1038] There is a connotation of the pathological to the word *pi* 癖, which carries both the meanings of habitual favoritism and deep craving. It is also used in Chinese medical literature as a type of physical illness.[1039] Consequently, there is ample reason to believe Huan Tingjian had a direct influence on Hong Chu's interest in aromatics which manifested most evidently in his compilation of the *Materia Aromatica*.

According to further correspondence with his uncle, we know Hong Chu was reappointed as an administrative supervisor in 1090, but was able to remain Huangzhou for the position.[1040] It was during this time that his uncle lavished praise upon him for his great strides in writing, but more importantly also encouraged him to prepare for the imperial

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[1037] Sargent, "Incense of Awareness," 60.
[1038] See citation in Shang, "Xiang, chan, shi," 77. Sargent translated this phrase as "a craving for incense," see Sargent, "Incense of Awareness," 63.
[1039] Specifically, "painful lumps emerging time to time in both flanks," see Zhang and Unschuld, *Dictionary of the Ben Cao Gang Mu*, 371.
[1040] Liu, "Hong Chu ji qi Xiangpu," 68. The full title of Hong Chu's post in Huangzhou was the *zhi lushi canjun* 知錄事參軍, which might be rendered as the "manager of recording activities for the military." I follow the translation suggested by Hucker who indicates this was a position most commonly associated with the administrative staff of prefectural units and less frequently with military units, see Hucker, *Dictionary of Official Titles*, 323 (#3860). The date and location of this post are due to Liu's careful analysis of the content of Huang Tingjian's correspondence.

examinations so he could broaden his studies and hone his talents. Specifically, Huang Tingjian recommended that his nephew seek out Pan Dalin 潘大臨 (fl. 1090), courtesy name Binlao 邠老, an accomplished poet who was lecturing in Huangzhou. Huang Tingjian lauds Pan Dalin for his natural abilities and deep interest in the Way, claiming that Hong Chu could significantly benefit from their interactions.[1041] To further encourage his nephew to these ends, Huang Tingjian draws upon the metaphor of "carving and polishing" (*zhuomo* 琢磨) to describe the potential mutual relationship between the two men.[1042] The phrase itself derives from *Master Xun* which states that "learning and culture are to men what carving and polishing are to jade."[1043] The implication is that the young Hong Chu could develop into distinguished scholar through continuous study and questioning, but only if he associates himself with the right intellectual and moral company.

By the following year, Hong Chu had accepted a new post, still in Huangzhou, as a judicial administrative assistant.[1044] In a letter that acknowledges the new title, Huang Tingjian again praises his nephew's writing as elegant, but pleads with him to take on grander ambitions for self-cultivation and public service. For the first time we also hear about a more specific criticism as he chastises Hong Chu for his "inclinations towards poetry and wine while abandoning the imperial [i.e., public] affairs."[1045] Huang Tingjian admits that this might be a minor issue, but contends that it will still require concerted effort to overcome.

[1041] Liu, "Hong Chu ji qi Xiangpu," 68–69. This information is derived from three different letters, one entitled "Presentation to my Nephew Hong Jufu" (*Yu Hong sheng Jufu* 與洪甥駒父) while the other two are the first and third letters in a series entitled "Presenting Hong Jufu a Letter" (*Yu Hong Jufu shu* 與洪駒父書).
[1042] See the third letter entitled "Presenting Hong Jufu a Letter" cited in Liu, "Hong Chu ji qi Xiangpu," 69.
[1043] Knoblock, *Xunzi*, Vol. 3, 227–28 (with minor stylistic changes).
[1044] Hong Chu's title was *tuiguan* 推官, a low-ranking judge who was on the staff of various regional authorities, see Hucker, *Dictionary of Official Titles*, 549 (#7399).
[1045] 頗以詩酒廢王事。Cited in Liu, "Hong Chu ji qi Xiangpu," 69. This phrase is found in the fourth in a series of letters to his nephew entitled "Presenting Hong Jufu a Letter."

The struggles of abstention in the bacchanalian culture of the Song elite was something Huang Tingjian knew well. He composed a lyric on the on the social pressures and mockery he faced when he attempted, and ultimately failed, to refrain from alcohol at a banquet.[1046] The criticism levelled at Hong Chu was likely born out of a real concern for his nephew developing bad habits before he even had the chance to begin a career and formally join the ranks of the literati as a commissioned state official.

While Hong Chu kept his position as judicial administrative assistant until at least 1093, it appears he was able to meet with Pan Dalian and, ultimately, pass his imperial examinations in 1094, the same year as his younger brother Hong Yan.[1047] Hong Chu's first official post was in Jinzhou, in present-day Shanxi, as the overseer of instructors of the prefectural school.[1048] Although Huang Tingjian initially expressed pride in his nephew's accomplishments, claiming that the famous will clamor to compose inscriptions for the school, within three years he was again admonishing Hong Chu to put greater effort into learning self-respect and to drink less alcohol.[1049]

[1046] See Edwin Van Bibber-Orr, "Alcoholism and Song Literati," in *Behaving Badly in Early and Medieval China*, ed. N. Harry Rothschild and Leslie V. Wallace (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2017), esp. 140–41.

[1047] Liu, "Hong Chu ji qi Xiangpu," 65–66. Hong Chu's youngest brother, Hong Yu, passed the civil exam in 1097, while his older brother, Hong Peng, failed it twice. Hong Peng was still awarded the title of "one who illuminates the classics" (*mingjing* 明經), thus making him eligible for appointments to the state administration.

[1048] The full title of Hong Chu's post was the *zhu Jinzhou zhouxue jiaoshou* 主晉州州學教授, see citation in Liu, "Hong Chu ji qi Xiangpu," 70–71; Liu, *Songdai Xiangpu*, 189. I follow Hucker who claims the prefix *zhu* 主 suggests a role of monitoring or overseeing, see Hucker, *Dictionary of Official Titles*, 179 (#1354).

[1049] The initial praise is offered in "Inscription and Preface for Prefectural School Study Hall of Jinzhou" (*Jinzhou zhouxue zhaitang ming bing zu* 晉州州學齋堂銘并序), while the admonishment is found in "Reply to Hong Jufu's Letter and Three Poems" (*Da Hong Jufu shu sanshou* 答洪駒父書三首), see Liu, "Hong Chu ji qi Xiangpu," 70–71; Liu, *Songdai Xiangpu*, 189 for citations.

6. Biography of Hong Chu: Exile and the Investigations on Mount Lu

We do not have any surviving records to give us insight into Hong Chu's personal career aspirations, nor to what may appear as a problem with drinking, but historical records reveal that the next few years would prove extraordinarily difficult for Hong Chu. The principal reason was due to Hong Chu's alleged affiliation with disfavored factions at the imperial court. During the early reign of Huizong, there was a political purge of the so-called "Yuanyou faction" (*yuanyou dang* 元祐黨), court officials who held important posts during the *yuanyou* era who opposed, and eventually overturned, the reformist (*xindang* 新黨, "new faction") measures initiated under the rule of Emperor Shenzong (r. 1068–85). Under Huizong, members of the reform movement returned to power and any anti-reformists (*jiudang* 舊黨, "old faction") left in office were persecuted and expelled from their posts. Hundreds of lesser officials were also charged with disseminating seditious literature and demoted or banished.[1050]

Hong Chu was caught squarely within these court politics. In the ninth month of the first year of *chongning* 崇寧 (1102), it was decreed that all officials who had offered anti-reformist remonstrance memorials to the court were to be classified according to seven ethical categories, ranging from righteous (*zheng* 正) to wicked (*xie* 邪), with numerous intermediate subdivisions. Of the nearly 600 official who were investigated, less than ten

[1050] This synopsis, and the discussion of the continued political situation under Huizong below, is informed by Ari Daniel Levine, "Factional Discourse in the Early Huizong Reign, 1100–1104," in *Emperor Huizong and Late Northern Song China: The Politics of Culture and the Culture of Politics*, ed. Patricia Buckley Ebrey and Maggie Bickford (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2006), 131–70. I use the now standard English terminology, reformists and anti-reformists, to describe the two political factions, see comments in Levine, 132n.2.

percent were considered ethically upright, while the rest, ranging from major political figures to mid-level functionaries, were deemed as espousing unethical political slander. Hong Chu was investigated and classified as "lesser in wickedness" (*xie xia* 邪下) and as a consequence was demoted in rank later that year to the Directorate of Alcohol Taxation in Tingzhou, in present-day southern Fuzhou, on the tropical – and malarial – fringes of the empire.[1051]

In the same month in 1102, a stele was erected within the palace precincts that named all of the reputed members of the anti-reformists. This included Su Shi, who had already passed away the previous year after three years in exile on Hainan, and Huang Tingjian, who was then banished to Yizhou, in present-day Guangxi. In 1104, two years after the initial blacklist registry, Hong Chu's name was inscribed along with his uncle's name as members of the seditious Yuanyou faction on steles that were now erected across the empire. This infamous list of 309 officials, many of who later imperial historians claim were innocent of the charges against them, were censured and banished from the capital. The following year, in 1105, Huang Tingjian died in exile in Yizhou.[1052]

As quickly as this wholesale expulsion of political opponents had occurred, it was overturned in 1106 by Huizong who issued an empire-wide amnesty to all accused of harboring anti-reformist views. While such a reprieve was surely welcomed by those subjected to such harsh punishments, the court intrigued also hastened the deaths of older statesmen such as Huang Tingjian. As for Hong Chu, his classification as being ethically

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[1051] This information has been culled from the *Biographies of Yuanyou Faction Members* (*Yuanyou dangren zhuan* 元祐黨人傳), compiled by Lu Xinyuan 陸心源 (1834–1894), see citations in Liu, "Hong Chu ji qi Xiangpu," 71; Shang, "Xiang houpu," 4. Hong Chu's title was *lin Tingzhou jiushui* 監汀州酒稅, which according to Hucker was a position among the prefecture level agencies that oversaw a specific economic industry, see Hucker, *Dictionary of Official Titles*, 145 (#786). There is no extant record specifying the content of Hong Chu's criticism of state policies.

[1052] Shang, "Xiang houpu," 4.

"wicked" in his remonstrance to the court still kept him barred from entering the capital for the next twenty years. This would also mean that he would not be appointed to any influential positions in the imperial court during this period. Over the next decade, absent the personal correspondence with his uncle, we know very little about the life or career of Hong Chu. The one fact that we do know is that in 1107 he was given the prestige title of Gentleman of Manifest Virtue (*xuande lang* 宣德郎), but this offers no indication of his titular office (*guan* 官) or official duties within the state administration.[1053]

A surviving excerpt from one of Hong Chu's works, the *Record of Presenting and Installing the Jade Tablets* (*Fengan yuce ji* 奉安玉冊記), hereafter *Record of the Jade Tablets*, gives a brief glimpse into his activities a decade later. In the passage, Hong Chu describes the enshrinement of ceremonial jade tablets in the year 1116 that bear the names of past emperors.[1054] Carved from the finest jade and stitched together with gold thread, these objects represented the divine investiture of the emperor and according to Hong Chu were placed inside a specially built hall where they could be venerated. In the following year, Hong Chu adds, he personally visited the hall to make an offering of incense (*feng xianghuo* 奉香火). Revealingly, Hong Chu also refers to himself in this short passage as "Minister Chu, a shrine officer" (*cili chen Chu* 祠吏臣芻). Is it difficult to know what to make of such

[1053] Liu, "Hong Chu ji qi Xiangpu," 71. On the title of Gentleman of Manifest Virtue, see Hucker, *Dictionary of Official Titles*, 251 (#2680). For an overview of prestige titles (*san guan* 散官), which were also known in the Song as salary offices (*qilu guan* 奇祿官) since they determined an official's stipend and allowances, see Hucker, *Dictionary of Official Titles*, 48–49.

[1054] QSW135:131–132, cf. DZ1286:614b-15a; see also the partial citations in Liu, "Hong Chu ji qi Xiangpu," 71. The proper date should be the sixteenth year of Huizong's installment as emperor, i.e. 1116. Thus, any citation to the fifth year of *zhenghe* should be changed to the sixth year of *zhenghe*, see e.g. DZ1286:6.14b.

a generic title, but it possibly indicates he served as a minister in the Bureau of Sacrifices (*cibu* 祠部).[1055]

There is further evidence suggesting that Hong Chu was stationed close to his childhood home in Jiangxi. Liu has uncovered two textual passages that attest to Hong Chu's presence in this coastal region during this period. One preserves a portion of a letter where he is addressed as Hong Chu of Yuzhang 豫章, the ancient name for the Jiangxi region. The second passage records that Hong Chu composed a work on the Six Dynasties poet Tao Yuanming 陶淵明 (365–427) in commemoration of the construction of his shrine in Jiangxi at the beginning of the *xuanhe* 宣和 era (1119–1125).[1056]

We can now also be more specific concerning Hong Chu's living circumstances and duties during this reign era; he was appointed to the Taiping Xingguo Palace (*Taiping xingguo gong* 太平興國宮) on Mount Lu (*Lu shan* 廬山), a major center of state sponsored religious activity during the Song. While the Ming-era *Yongle Encyclopedia* (*Yongle dadian 永樂大典)* copies an excerpt from the *Record of the Jade Tablets*, a longer passage is preserved in the Daoist canon in a work entitled the *Verified Facts of the Perfected Lord Investigator of Taiping Xingguo Palace on Mount Lu* (*Lushan taipin xingguo gong caifang zhanjun shishi* 廬山太平興國宮採訪真君事實; DZ1286).[1057] This text is a compilation of assorted documents pertaining to the tutelary deity of Mount Lu, commonly known in the late medieval period as the Emissary of Investigation from the Nine Heavens (*jiutian caifang*

[1055] For the Bureau of Sacrifices, see Hucker, *Dictionary of Official Titles*, 558 (#7566).
[1056] Liu, "Hong Chu ji qi Xiangpu," 72.
[1057] DZ1286:6.14a–17a.

shizhe 九天採訪使者), often shortened to the Emissary of Mount Lu.[1058] This version of the *Record of the Jade Tablets* is placed in a section of documents reserved for stele inscriptions and other textual records. And unlike the version in the *Yongle Encyclopedia*, this version, originally composed as an inscription, is signed and dated. The carving of the inscription was finished on the tenth day of the eleventh month in the first year of *chonghe* 重和, which is equivalent to 1118. The text ascribes authorship to Hong Chu who is identified as holding a string of ministerial titles: "Composed by the Minister Hong Chu, the Gentlemen for Closing Court, the Superintendent of the Taiping Xingguo Palace, and who has been Granted the Purple [Robes with] Fish Bag."[1059] The first and last titles, the Gentleman for Closing Court and he who has been Granted the Purple Robes with Fish Bag, denoted Hong Chu's status in the state administration, with the former functioning as a prestige title and the latter describing his ceremonial court attire, comprised of a dark purple robes with a small pouch attached to the belt-sash, that was bestowed by the emperor as a special honor.

We can best infer Hong Chu's duties through his role as the Superintendent of the Taiping Xingguo Palace, an imperially constructed temple from the Tang that was dedicated to the spirit Emissary of Mount Lu.[1060] The position of a state supervisor of a temple was seen

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[1058] For a synopsis of these documents, see Schipper and Verellen, *The Taoist Canon*, 877–78. For an analysis on the medieval origins of the cult around the Envoy of Mount Lu, see Florian C. Reiter, "The 'Investigation Commissioner of the Nine Heavens' and the Beginning of His Cult in Northern Chiang-Hsi in 731 A.D.," *Oriens* 31 (1988): 266–89. The preface to the text was composed by Ye Yiwen 葉義問 in 1154 who presumably first collated the documents, but several works postdate this event suggesting its final form was not achieved until the late Yuan or Ming, see Schipper and Verellen, *The Taoist Canon*, 878 and Reiter, "Investigation Commissioner," 270n.25.

[1059] 朝散郎提點太平興國宮賜緋魚袋臣洪芻譔。DZ1286:6.17a.

[1060] Constructed in 731, the first name of this shrine was the Hall for the Envoy of the Nine Heavens (*Jiutian shizhe zhi dian* 九天 使者之殿). It was renamed under the Southern Tang in 938 to the Mansion for Penetrating the Primordial Origin (*Tongyuan fu* 通元府)[or Mansion for Penetrating the Mystery (*Tongxuan fu* 通玄府), see T2095:1027b01], before be renamed in the second year of the *taiping xingguo* era (977) as the Taiping Xingguo Temple (太平興國觀). In 1124, the suffix "temple" (*guan* 觀) was officially changed to "palace" (*gong* 宮), see DZ1286:1.6a-b and 2.7a-b. Notably, Hong Chu was already referring to the site as a palace in 1118. For an examination of the Tang history of this religious site, see Reiter, "Investigation Commissioner."

as an appointment to a sinecure, usually sought by senior officials as respite from a long career or occasionally by officials suffering from health problems limiting their service. It remains unknown what specific conditions led to Hong Chu's appointment at Mount Lu. It is worth noting such positions were not taken by temple priests and we can be sure that Hong Chu was not ordained into an ecclesiastical order. For example, in the above dated inscription, Hong Chu is clearly identified as a state representative while seven other named individuals are identified as Daoist priests (*daoshi* 道士) who also assisted in the preparation and installment of the inscription.[1061] Hong Chu's main responsibility as temple superintendent would have been to act as an imperial surrogate during state sanctioned ritual services.[1062]

While his role as a temple superintendent was nominal, the rituals Hong Chu oversaw were politically significant. Arguably, one of the more important events of his tenure was the aforementioned installment of the inscribed jade tablets. Elsewhere in the *Verified Facts of the Perfected Lord Investigator of Taiping Xingguo Temple on Mount Lu* we find a short script for such a ceremonial rite entitled the "Text for Commencing the *Jiao*-Offering at the Presentation and Installment of the Jade Tablets" (*Fengan yuce jiao kaiqi wen* 奉安玉冊醮開啓文). Such an offering ritual likely would have been held in conjunction with the sacrificial rituals performed at the capital where the tablets were likely physically enshrined. We do not know the date of this text, but it would certainly reflect the purpose of the ritual as Hong Chu would have known it. Thus, we find that after extolling the virtues of Mount Lu and its resident spirits, the script ends with this revealing benediction:

[1061] DZ1286:6.17a and Reiter, "Investigation Commissioner," 277.
[1062] For brief comments on the role of temple superintendents, see Hucker, *Dictionary of Official Titles*, 51–52, 558 (#7564).

> We prostrate and hope the utmost spirits will manifest and come to closely inspect [our affairs] to bring about the appropriate response. May [the emperor] have boundless longevity of ten-thousand years and may the emperor's grand political stratagems [find success] far and wide; may there be no calamity for the three periods of time and may the people and [the ten-thousand] things forever be abundant and peaceful.[1063]
> 伏愿至神昭格，洞鉴宜符。万寿无疆，恢帝图之广大，三时不害，永民物之阜康。

The Daoist *jiao*-offering 醮 ritual performed on this occasion was used to secure the protection and benefit of the emperor and his empire. For the Daoist priests under Hong Chu's supervision, this would have meant petitioning the Emissary of Mount Lu, a divine figure that was closely associated with the imperial family since the Tang, and asking for the welfare of Emperor Huizong and the success of his policies.[1064]

Another of Hong Chu's responsibilities was the investigation of local manifestations of omens as well as the history of the local cult dedicated to the spirit Emissary. From the very first year of Huizong's reign in 1101, the emperor expressed interest in determining whether spirits honored by the imperial court had responded favorably to prayers and consequently wished to make a full and detailed record of them.[1065] Expressly motivated by these imperial interests, Hong Chu's *Record of the Jade Tablets* also recounts the establishment of the temple on Mount Lu and the miracles that occurred in concert with its construction. In telling this story, Hong Chu first summarizes the *Records Documenting the Strange* (*Luyi ji* 錄異記) by the Tang Daoist Du Guangting 杜光庭 (850–933) which represented the most widely circulating medieval account of the temple's origins:

> In the nineteenth year of *kaiyuan* of the Tang [731], Emperor Ming dreamed of a spirit-man with vermilion garments and a golden cap who descended riding upon chariot and said, "I am the Emissary of Investigation from the Nine Heavens, you must house me on the northwest

[1063] DZ1286:2.6b.
[1064] For Huizong's support of Daoism during the first two decades of his reign, see Patricia Buckley Ebrey, *Emperor Huizong* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2014), esp. 131–53.
[1065] Ebrey, 153–157.

> corner of Mount Lu." The next day he again descended into the courtyard and [the Emperor] ordered Wu Daozi[1066] to draw him. He dispatched attendants to make offerings to the Emissary and a True Picture was installed in a shrine on the shady [northern] side of the mountain.[1067]
> 唐開元十九年，明皇帝夢神人朱衣金冠，乘車而下，曰我九天鍊訪使者，當館我於廬山西北隅。明日又降於庭，命吳道子寫之，遣內供奉持使者，真圖建立祠焉淤山之陰。

According to this account, the Emissary of Mount Lu appeared first and identified himself in the dream of Emperor Ming, otherwise known as Emperor Xuanzong 玄宗 (r. 713–756), and appeared again the following day in the palace courtyard for all of the attendants to see. This public manifestation allowed the spirit's picture to be drawn which was then enshrined in the newly constructed temple on the northern side of Mount Lu. Following this passage, Hong Chu comments that a wide range of sources, some of which fall under the genre of tales of the strange, attest to the occurrence of auspicious omens during the construction of the shrine hall.[1068] Hong Chu then offers his skeptical analysis of the situation, writing the following:

> Therefore, the world claims the name of the Emissary as [the name of] the shrine of Mount Lu and that all of this has its origins in the Tang with the appearance of omens under Emperor Ming. I, Minister Chu, have examined this and it is not so.[1069]
> 故世謂使者之號，廬山之祠，皆權輿於有唐，發祥於明帝也。臣芻考之不然。

Hong Chu's disagreement with traditional lore is not with the reputed spiritual efficacy of the Emissary of Mount Lu, but in his origins with Emperor Ming's dream. After voicing this critique Hong Chu then draws upon prominent Daoist scriptures, such as the *Diagram of the*

[1066] A famous painter of the Tang in the seventh and eight centuries.
[1067] QSW135:132; cf. DZ1286:15b. This is condensation of the story told in a stele from 732, see DZ1286:6.2b–3a； the story was later retold with additional details, see DZ1286:3b-4a, trans. Reiter, "Investigation Commissioner," 278–79. Also compare with the relevant passage in the *Records Documenting the Strange* preserved in the Daoist canon, DZ591.1.2a–3b, partially trans. Reiter, "Investigation Commissioner," 285–86.
[1068] Hong Chu cites four sources: a temple stele inscription from 732 composed by Li Pin 李玭 (for this text, see DZ1286:6.1a–5b), Pan Guan's 潘觀 *Records Examining the Auspicious*, also dated to 732 (for a synopsis, see DZ1286:1.6b and T2095:1027b22–c02), Zhang Jingshu's 張景述 *Extended Records of Xunyang*, and Chen Shunyu's 陳舜俞 eleventh century *Records of Mount Lu* (see T2095).
[1069] QSW135:132; cf. DZ1286:16b.

True From of the Five Marchmounts (*Wuyue zhenxing tu* 五嶽真形圖), to establish a much longer history of divine interactions on the mountain, ultimately tracing the reason for Mount Lu's numinous power to the Yellow Emperor and his tours of inspection to famous mountains. Hong Chu concludes that "if we carefully examine the traditions and records, the spirit Emissary is either the High Perfected of Dezhen [i.e., Mount Lu] or the Councilor of Zhurong [i.e., Mount Heng]."[1070] Following his assessment of the true identity of the spirit Emissary, Hong Chu condemns an approach to the religious history Mount Lu which only relies on the sayings and folklore of the region:

> The world was confused by the vulgarity and superficiality of steles that accord with the accounts of the tales of the strange. This does not add depth to an investigation because it loses the affairs of truth. Therefore, I have combined the roots and branches of the issue in order to dispel any future confusion.
> 世惑於俚俗膚淺之碑，齊諧志怪之說，弗加深考，以失事實，故併論其本末，以祛來者之惑焉。[1071]

This historiographical approach does not necessarily negate the significance of the tales of the strange, it simply treats them as incomplete documentary records. We do not find a critique of the truthfulness of the miraculous events, but a critique of the lack of depth these narratives represent in the pursuit of discerning the most elemental origins of the phenomena. Hong Chu's analysis, which was recorded for posterity and publicly displayed at the Taiping Xingguo Palace, brought together scriptural records to tell the larger history of the tutelary spirit of Mount Lu.

[1070] 詳考傳記，使者之神，蓋德鎮之高真，祝融之夾輔。QSW135:132; cf. DZ1286:16a. Unfortunately, Hong Chu does not explain how he came to this conclusion regarding the true identities of the spirit Envoy. Reiter notes that Dezhen stands for Mount Lu and that Zhurong is the highest peak of Mount Heng in Hunan, see Reiter, "Investigation Commissioner," 277n.56, 277n.57.
[1071] QSW135:132–133; cf. DZ1286:16b–17a.

7. Biography of Hong Chu: Return to the Capital and Final Exile

After Hong Chu left his position as the Superintendent of the Taiping Xingguo Palace he was assigned to be the Controller-general of Xinzhou for military affairs, working as an overseer of the regional Prefect who could independently submit memorials to the court regarding prefectural concerns.[1072] The post allowed Hong Chu to remain in Jiangxi and he continued to write about the region, penning the *Records on Roaming the Cliffs and Caverns of Xinzhou* (*You Xinzhou yandong ji* 遊信州巖洞記) and the *Records of Shijing* (*Shijing ji* 石井記) during this time. Both of these works were saved after his death through the efforts his brother Hong Yan.[1073]

In 1126 Hong Chu would finally return to the capital in Kaifeng to take an official imperial post. Already in his sixties, this would not represent a triumphant return to the capital as much as an entrance into a political world on the edge of dynastic overthrow.[1074] The Song had recently suffered a series of unexpected and devastating losses to the Jurchen Jin 金 dynasty to the north, and during the winter of 1125 Huizong abdicated the throne to his son, who would be given the posthumous name of Emperor Qinzong 欽宗 (r. 1126–1127), in the hopes that the invading forces would withdraw their armies. This was not the case and the Jin pressed forward with their exorbitant demands of gold and silver and threats of slaughter. In this time of extreme duress, and partly due to a purge of ministers loyal to Huizong, Qinzong rescinded the ban on officials who had been deemed "wicked" twenty

[1072] The full title of Hong Chu's post was *Xinzhou tongpan junzhou shi* 信州通判軍州事, see citation in Liu, "Hong Chu ji qi Xiangpu," 72; Liu, *Songdai Xiangpu*, 190. For more on this post, see Hucker, *Dictionary of Official Titles*, 555 (#7497).
[1073] Liu, "Hong Chu ji qi Xiangpu," 72, 81.
[1074] This synopsis of the political situation at the end of the Northern Song is informed by Ebrey, *Emperor Huizong*, esp. pp. 449–474.

years earlier.[1075] With the decree of exile lifted in early autumn 1126, Hong Chu was granted a post as one of the Grand Masters of Remonstrance of the Chancellery.[1076] Under the Remonstrance Bureau, Hong Chu was now a member of a prestigious autonomous agency that was charged with critiquing policy decisions – but his tenure would not last long.

By the fall of 1126, the Jin forces had crossed deep into Song territory and were within striking distance of the capital at Kaifeng. With residents fleeing southward, the life at court was thrown into chaos as officials debated the proper course of action: appeasement or war. Hong Chu was immediately thrown into this charged political environment. In early winter, the question of territorial indemnifications was raised and Hong Chu voted, with the minority, to retain the territories of Taiyuan, Hejian, and Zhongshan.[1077] The majority argued that ceding the three territories would be the better course of action to curtail conflict and consequently Emperor Qinzong sent envoys to strike a deal with the Jin generals. The offer proved to be too late as the Jin army had already disembarked and crossed the Yellow River in preparation for war.

In a siege the lasted about a month, the Jin forces took the outer walls of Kaifeng and immediately imposed harsh demands for gold, silver, silk, and satin. The next we hear of Hong Chu is during one of the initiatives to ferret out any remaining hidden reserves of precious metals to meet the Jin demands. In an ignominious charge, Hong Chu was accused of absconding to Fanyan Mansion (*fanyan zhai* 蕃衍宅), a private residence built for Huizong's sons and their wives and concubines, to find comfort in drinking and reveling with

[1075] SongSQW:50.1011; see also Shang, "Xiang houpu," 5.
[1076] The full title of Hong Chu's post was *zuo jianyi dafu* 左諫議大夫, see citation in Liu, "Hong Chu ji qi Xiangpu," 73; Liu, *Songdai Xiangpu*, 190. For more on this post, see Hucker, *Dictionary of Official Titles*, 148 (#831).
[1077] SSQW:1014; also Liu, "Hong Chu ji qi Xiangpu," 73–74.

the harem. In particular, he was charged with consorting with Cao Sanma 曹三馬 (d.u.), the favorite concubine of Huizong's sixth son, Zhao Qi 趙杞 (1104–1138).[1078] In addition to this, Hong Chu was charged with concealing gold for himself, another devastating charge given that officials were being stripped of their ranks and made to wear wooden collars if they did not comply with the Jin army's demands for treasure.

It is difficult to know the precise timing of these events, but Hong Chu was not charged with these crimes until after the Jin army had departed Kaifeng, taking both Huizong and Qinzong as their captives. By the fifth month of 1127, Huizong's sole remaining son who was not taken as a prisoner was installed as the emperor, known to history as Gaozong 高宗 (r. 1127–1129). He subsequently reestablished the Song Dynasty from its new capital in the south, deposing and eventually executing the puppet emperor the Jurchen's had installed only a few weeks prior. Chu Hong had apparently also agreed to serve in the court of the puppet regime, an act that would further come to tarnish his name among the members of the chancellery under Gaozong.[1079]

In the sixth month of 1127 we know that Hong Chu was ousted from his position as Grand Master of Remonstrance and imprisoned.[1080] Charged with the crimes of theft and consorting with women of the palace, officials called for his execution. Two months later a verdict was passed sparring Hong Chu from execution, but instead proclaimed his banishment to Shamen Island (*Shamen dao* 沙門島), a remote garrisoned encampment

[1078] Liu, "Hong Chu ji qi Xiangpu," 74–75; Shang, "Xiang houpu," 3–5.
[1079] See SSQW:1057; and see brief comments in Liu, "Hong Chu ji qi Xiangpu," 74. Hong Chu was noted among those characterized as "traitorous ministers" (*panchen* 叛臣) for his apparent support of the Jin imposed political body.
[1080] SongS:446; also see Liu, "Hong Chu ji qi Xiangpu," 74.

located off the northern coast of present-day Shandong.[1081] Exile to Shamen Island was considered the worst possible punishment for those pardoned of capital offenses. Starvation and violent death at the hands of guards was commonplace on Shamen. There are no records of Hong Chu's final demise, but we know due to the recorded lamentations of his brother, Hong Yan, that he was already dead by the year 1132.[1082] Given the tales of torture and starvation that surround Shamen Island, it seems more likely that Hong Chu died not long after he arrived, but had he survived until 1132 his final years would have been extraordinarily difficult and deprived of all of the luxuries he enjoyed as an official.

The tragic misfortune of Hong Chu losing both of his parents while still a young child allowed him to foster a closer relationship with his uncle, but it seems the political disfavor shown to Huang Tingjian by the reformist faction at court also derailed many of his political ambitions. It is difficult to know if the remonstrances of Huang Tingjian regarding Hong Chu's drinking were based on poor performances in his early posts, but the charges filed against Hong Chu at the end of his life seem to form a pattern of a lifetime of careless excess. Given what we know of the bacchanalian culture of the Song, it may be that Hong Chu reflected more of the norm than of an exception during this period. Regardless of his personal proclivities, his early poetic writing found him some small acclaim among his close circle of confidants, which is notable given that circle included figures like Huang Tingjian and Su Shi, two outstanding figures in the world of Song poetry.[1083]

[1081] SongS:447–48; also see Liu, "Hong Chu ji qi Xiangpu," 74. The island is one among several others that are part of the Penglai 蓬萊 district of Shandong, an area made famous by the ancient imperial cult of immortality.
[1082] These sentiments are recorded in Hong Yan's poem, "Remembrance of Jufu" (*Huai Jufu* 懷駒父), see Liu, "Hong Chu ji qi Xiangpu," 78.
[1083] Some of the praise received by Hong Chu is discussed in Liu, "Hong Chu ji qi Xiangpu," 78–79.

8. Biography of the Materia Aromatica: Period of Compilation

According to Liu Jingmin, the most likely period for Hong Chu to have compiled the *Materia Aromatica* was during the *xuanhe* era, between 1119 and 1125. This roughly corresponds with his post as the Superintendent of the Taiping Xingguo Palace and the completion of other known literary projects during his time in Jiangxi, his childhood home. This is also circumstantially supported by the fact that one of the earliest references to the *Materia Aromatica* is by a book collector from Jiangxi in 1152, suggesting the catalogue was circulating in the region of where it was composed a little less than three decades after its completion.[1084]

Shang Haifeng has recently brought evidence to light that the *Materia Aromatica* could have been compiled, at least in part, during the infamous *chongning* era, specifically in 1104. Based on a postscript attributed to Huang Tingjian for a blending recipe known as "Summoning the Soul Plum Blossom" (*fanhun mei* 返魂梅), the famed poet and incense enthusiast comments that "Hong Jufu has collected ancient and modern incense recipes, how could I ever be said to surpass this?"[1085] At the very least, this passage shows that Hong Chu had already started to collect recipes for blending incense and perfumes; it does not, however, speak to a finished literary product. It also reveals that Huang Tingjian thought highly of what Hong Chu had produced thus far, which from what we can tell was a collection of ancient and modern blending instructions. Shang speculates that Hong Chu's catalogue was restricted from circulating after he was accused of espousing political slander,

[1084] See Liu, "Hong Chu ji qi Xiangpu," 95 and discussion below.
[1085] 洪駒父集古今香方，自謂無以過此。As quoted in Shang, "Xiang houpu," 8.

a charge that would significantly hinder his career for another two decades. While this is plausible, it is also possible Hong Chu continued to compile the *Materia Aromatica* throughout his life, with his time on Mount Lu and around Jiangxi seemingly providing the necessary time, and scenic vistas, to complete such a labor that was possibly twenty years in the making.

9. Biography of the Materia Aromatica: Textual Transmission and Variant Editions

The first modern critical edition of the *Materia Aromatica* was published in 2015, but recent scholarship on the textual transmission of Hong Chu's catalogue has already rendered it need of revision.[1086] The past two decades has seen significant strides in the scholarship on the *Materia Aromatica* and many of the unanswered questions regarding its origin and the filiations between multiple editions (and differing xylographic prints) issued through the Qing have finally begun to be resolved.

The issues of concern were far from inconsequential. One of the more daunting tasks involved explaining the discrepancies in length of various editions as well as the total number of individual entries for the various aromatics, blending recipes, and literary citations. For example, in examining old bibliographies and comparing extant print editions, we find the *Materia Aromatica* circulated in either one or two *juan*, but the bibliographic register in the *History of the Song* (*Song shi* 宋史) claims it may have been as large as five *juan* at one

[1086] I learned too late of Shen Chang's collated edition (*dianjiao ben* 點校本), which is still considered the best of the *Materia Aromatica* editions available, see Shen Chang, *Xiang Pu Xinzuan Xiang Pu* (Hong Kong: Chengzhan lou, 2015). According to the publisher's description, this work takes the Ming-era *Baichuan xuehai* edition as its base and compares it to later *Materia Aromatica* editions published up through the Qing. Notably, it also incorporates several omitted passage that are preserved in other works. Nevertheless, Shang Haifeng has recently noted some qualifications regarding this modern edition, see Shang, "Xiang houpu," 15–16.

point.[1087] Equally perplexing was the fact that the shortest extant edition contains only thirty-six individual entries while the largest has four times as many, totaling 147 entries. Moreover, not only is there an imperfect correspondence between preserved entries, the phrasing and content of the same entries across editions can also vary, sometimes significantly.[1088] Finally, in addition to these questions of textual filiation, there were also pressing questions regarding basic information, such as the title of the original work and even the correct attribution of authorship.

Many of these thorny issues have only very recently been settled. In 2006, Liu Jingmin confirmed Hong Chu as the author, a point that has been in dispute since not long after his work started to circulate.[1089] We see this, for example, in the *Tales of the Suburbs* (*Shuofu* 說郛) collectanea of Tao Zongyi 陶宗儀 (1329–1410), hereafter *Shuofu*, which lists the author of the *Materia Aromatica* as an unknown person of the Tang. The anachronistic nature of this ascription was first clarified in the 1970s by Chang Bide who points to citations of figures alive during the Five Dynasties and Ten Kingdoms period, including one blending recipe attributed to Li Yu 李煜 (937–978), the final ruler of the Southern Tang state.[1090] Different concerns of authorship were noted when the *Materia Aromatica* was incorporated in the monumental publishing project of the Qing, the *Siku quanshu*. The editorial abstract

[1087] SongS:205.5206. A five *juan* version is much larger than any of the xylographic print editions we have today and outside of this record there is no other evidence the *Materia Aromatica* circulated in five *juan*. Some consequently consider this ascription in error, see Liu, "Hong Chu ji qi Xiangpu." On the other hand, Shang Haifeng has suggested that a five *juan* manuscript may have corresponded to each of the original five divisions of Hong Chu's work, see Shang, "Xiang houpu," 13–14.
[1088] In most cases the changes in wording are minor, but the one *juan Shuofu* edition (discussed below) routinely abridges entries and extracts the names of the works from which Hong Chu cites, see Liu, "Hong Chu ji qi Xiangpu," 92–95; Liu, *Songdai Xiangpu*, 196.
[1089] Liu, "Hong Chu ji qi Xiangpu."
[1090] See overview in Liu, "Hong Chu ji qi Xiangpu," 61–62. Notably, a modern print edition of the *Shuofu* published in 1927 inserted Hong Chu's name as the author, but offered no reason behind the revision, see Liu, "Hong Chu ji qi Xiangpu," 61.

printed with the work outlines some of the discrepancies with the received text and how it was described in the past. The pertinent comments, believed to have been compiled by chief editor of the project, Ji Yun 紀昀 (1724–1805), are as follows:

> Chao Gongwu's (c. 1105–1180) *Treatise on Books Read*[1091] says, "Hong's catalogue collects ancient and modern incense [blending] methods, including Zheng Kangcheng's Han Palace Incense[1092], Xiaozong's Incense from the *History of the South*[1093], Ornament Incense from the *Declarations of the*

[1091] The complete title of this work is the *Treatise on the Books Read in my Prefectural Study* (*Junzhai dushu zhi* 郡齋讀書志) and represents the catalogue of Chao Gongwu's private book collection of over 1400 works, see Endymion Wilkinson, *Chinese History: A New Manual* (Cambridge: Harvard University Asia Center, 2013), 943.

[1092] For more on this incense blend and its post-Han origins, see footnote 917.

[1093] An incense blend associated with the famed Chinese musician Zong Bing 宗炳 (375–443), who was also known as Taizong 太宗 (Supreme Ancestor), a name normally reserved for emperors. According to medieval lore, Zong Bing's musician companion, Sun Maoshen 孫茂深, who was known by the name Xiaozong 小宗 (Minor Ancestor), crafted this incense blend for him. This story is preserved in the *Newly Compiled Materia Aromatica* under the entry Minor Ancestor, see SKQS:844.301b.

Perfected[1094], Lady Qi's Chariot Urging Incense[1095], and Tang Yuan Banqian's Incense[1096]. That which is recorded here is very extensive and thus it can be used like the *Comprehensive Statutes* for sacrificing to heaven.[1097] Only Water Sinking Aromatic [i.e., aloeswood] is omitted…" This edition [in *Siku quanshu*] has an entry for Water Sinking Aromatic and does not record the entries for Zheng Kangcheng nor any of the rest. The *juan* count recorded in the *Comprehensive Examination*[1098] for

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[1094] In the context of the *Declarations of the Perfected*, we find a pair of goddesses who are mysteriously accompanied by a fragrant blend of five aromatics that resemble the "scent of burning the Fragrant Ornament" 燒香嬰氣。DZ1016:1.12a; cf. Thomas E. Smith, *Declarations of the Perfected, Part One: Setting Scripts and Images into Motion* (St. Petersburg: Three Pines Press, 2013), 59 ("infant-incense"). An interlinear comment by Tao Hongjing corrects the ordering of the phrase, "Fragrant Ornament is Ornament Incense; it is the export of foreign countries," 香嬰者，嬰香也，出外国。DZ1016:1.12a–b. There is a complexity in terminology here that needs to be unpacked. First, *ying* 嬰, now commonly mis-interpreted as "infant," should be read as *ying*$_1$ 纓, "tassel, sash, necklace." This latter term is encountered in the "Family Standards" (*neize* 内則) chapter of the *Record of Rites*, where both men and women are said to wear *ying*$_1$, which Zheng Xuan generically identifies as a type of jewelry or ornament (*shi* 飾), see LJZY:27.3165–3166. Additionally, Zheng Xuan notes that *ying*$_1$ is alternatively written as *ying* (infant). This reading is reinforced by *Explaining Graphs and Analyzing Characters* which glosses *ying* (infant) as a "necklace [lit. neck ornament]," see SWJZ:2.327. Second, due to the ambiguity of *ying*$_1$ in the "Family Standards" chapter, it seems to point to different types of ornamentation for men and women, the commentarial traditional suggests a different meaning for *ying* in a later passage concerning the proper dress for children: a scenting sachet, see LJZY:27.3166. Thus, *xiang ying* 香嬰, as it appears in the base text of the *Declarations of the Perfected*, should refer to the "fragrant ornament" worn by children as described in the *Record of Rites*, i.e., a scenting sachet. Tao Hongjing corrects this to a type of incense he believes is exported from foreign countries, *ying xiang* 嬰香, or "ornament incense," which makes better sense in the context of the passage since it was described as being burned. Notably, Ornament Incense reappears in a preserved passage from the *Esoteric Biography of Emperor Wu of the Han*, a text that was modeled in part on the *Declarations of the Perfected*, see e.g. Kristofer Schipper, *L'Empereur Wou Des Han Dans La Légende Taoiste: Han Wou-Ti Nei-Tchouan* (Paris: École française d'Extrême-Orient, 1965), 54–57. The relevant passage relates that the Queen Mother of the West burned Ornament Incense along with other types of unknown aromatics. This passage is not found in the received *Esoteric Biography of Emperor Wu of the Han*, but can be found in the *Newly Compiled Materia Aromatica*, see SKQS:844.301b (this attribution in the *Newly Compiled Materia Aromatica* may be spurious, it is not discussed in either Schipper, *L'Empereur Wou* or Smith, "Ritual"). While Tao Hongjing understood Ornament Incense as an import (I have found no other evidence to support this claim), the Song perfuming tradition understands it as a five (or six) ingredient blend, comprised of aloeswood, cloves, onycha, camphor, musk, and sometimes sandalwood. This recipe is preserved in the *Newly Compiled Materia Aromatica* under the entry Ornament Incense, see SKQS:844.276b9–16. As noted by Thomas Smith, there is a small calligraphic piece held by Taibei's National Palace Museum copied in the hand of Huang Tingjian which describes the process for making this blend (minus the sandalwood), see Smith, *Declarations*, 59n.156. Consequently, it is not surprising we would find this blend associated with Hong Chu's catalogue.

[1095] Lady Li (224–194 BC) was a consort of Emperor Gaozu 高祖 (r. 206–202 BCE), founder of the Han. I can find nothing else on this blend other than its name, see SKQS:844.492b.

[1096] Shang notes that while Yuan Banqian (621–714) is found in the *Old Book of the Tang* (*Jiu Tang shu* 舊唐書), he has no clear association with incense or aromatics, see Shang, "Xiang houpu," 21. I have found no other information about this incense blend.

[1097] The *Comprehensive Statues* (*Tongdian* 通典) was a Tang era history of government administration, see Wilkinson, *Chinese History*, 646. Chao Gongwu was comparing the comprehensiveness of this work to comprehensiveness of the *Aromatica*.

[1098] The complete title of this work is the *Comprehensive Examination of Literature* (*Wenxian tongkao* 文獻通考) by the Yuan historian Ma Duanlin 馬端臨 (1254–c. 1324), see Wilkinson, *Chinese History*, 943. For the citation of the *Comprehensive Examination of Literature* noting the *Materia Aromatica* as a single *juan*, see Liu, "Hong Chu ji qi Xiangpu," 82.

> [Hong] Chu's catalogue is also a single *juan*.[1099] It appears this is not the work of [Hong] Chu. Shen Li's catalogue has not circulated for a long time and the *Explicated Library Catalogue*[1100] has the Hou clan's *Materia Aromatica of the Daylily Hall* in two *juan* without knowing the era or author.[1101] Perhaps it is this work?
> 晁公武《讀書志》稱芻譜集古今香法，有鄭康成漢宮香，南史小宗香，真誥嬰香，戚夫人迫駕香，唐員半千香，所記甚該博，然《通典》載歷代祀天用水沈香獨遺之。云云。此本有水沈香一條，而所稱鄭康成諸條乃俱不載，卷數比《通考》所載芻譜亦多一卷，似非芻作。沈立譜久無傳本，《書錄解題》有侯氏《萱堂香譜》二卷，不知何代人，或即此書耶？[1102]

Ji Yun suggests the two *juan* work reprinted in the *Siku quanshu* under the title of *Materia Aromatica* is in fact the two *juan* edition of the *Materia Aromatica of the Daylily Hall* (*Xuantang xiangpu* 萱堂香譜). Liu has shown that such a claim is impossible to verify since the *Materia Aromatica of the Daylily Hall* has been lost since the Song and there are insufficient extracts in which to make well-informed comparisons with the surviving text. Moreover, nothing is known about the Hou 侯 family or the individual who is claimed to have compiled the work.[1103] The tone of Ji Yun's assertion is speculative, which appears reasonable given that he likely had no better information to work with than we do today.

In contrast, Liu has preferred to acknowledge Hong Chu as the author of the *Materia Aromatica*, the same stance taken by Chao Gongwu 晁公武 (c. 1105–1180), the magistrate and book collector who was cited by Ji Yun in the passage above. Chao Gongwu remains the earliest to cite the title of the *Materia Aromatic* and name the author as Hong Chu, doing so

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[1099] My translation remains tentative, I am unsure of how to treat the *duo* 多, "often," in this passage. It might convey the meaning that there are other reference sources in addition to the *Comprehensive Examination* [*of Literature*] which claim the *Aromatica* was a single *juan*, of which is an accurate claim.
[1100] The complete title of this work is the *Explicated Library Catalogue of the Upright Studio* (*Zhizhai shulu jieti* 直齋書錄解題) by Chen Zhensun 陳振孫 (c. 1183–1262), see Wilkinson, *Chinese History*, 943.
[1101] This does not match the information provided in the received *Explicated Library Catalogue* [*of the Upright Studio*], which claims that the *Materia Aromatica of the Daylily Hall* was a single *juan*, see citation in Liu, "Hong Chu ji qi Xiangpu," 60. The *Comprehensive Examination of Literature*, on the other hand, notes that the *Materia Aromatica of the Daylily Hall* circulated in both one and two *juan* (albeit under slightly different names), see citation in Liu, "Hong Chu ji qi Xiangpu," 63. Curiously, Liu does not point out this error and it may reflect her different reading of this passage.
[1102] SKQS:844.217b-218a.
[1103] Liu, "Hong Chu ji qi Xiangpu," 62–63.

in 1151, less than fifty years after its initial completion. The following year, in 1152, the *Collected Rice Grains of the Supreme Granary* (*Taicang timi ji* 太倉稊米集*)* by Zhou Zizhi 周紫芝 (1082–1155) also cites the *Materia Aromatica* as the work of Hong Chu, presumably after personally viewing a copy.[1104] Then in 1273, Zuo Gui 左圭 (d.u.) reprints the *Materia Aromatica* in his highly influential *Baichuan xuehai* 百川學海 collectanea, also attributing it to Hong Chu. In spite of the reservations by some premodern scholars, the attribution of a catalogue to Hong Chu has fairly strong support, including two citations that appear just a few decades after the work's presumed completion. To this was can add the comments above by Huang Tingjian nothing that his nephew had started to collect both new and old blending recipes, thus establishing Hong Chu's interest in an endeavor to compile a catalogue on aromatics.

At the same time, Chao Gongwu's description of the text he personally read as including various famous incense blends, such as the recipe for Zheng Kangcheng's Han Palace Incense, as well as *excluding* an entry for "Water Sinking Aromatic," or aloeswood, does not match the contents of the commonly accepted *Materia Aromatica* editions attributed to Hong Chu. Liu accepts this as the stronger critique of Ji Yun, but offers no explicit apologia. More recently, Shang Haifeng has proposed that numerous hand copied manuscripts were likely in circulation before xylographic prints editions of the *Aromatica* became more common. Consequently, Shang argues this accounts for the disparate contents

[1104] For these citations, see Liu, "Hong Chu ji qi Xiangpu," 81–82; Liu, *Songdai Xiangpu*, 186, 194; Shang, "Xiang houpu," 6.

of Hong Chu's work attested by Chao Gongwu and in the various editions we find circulating today.[1105]

Shang's proposal dovetails into a much larger claim about the *Materia Aromatica* and the history of Song perfuming arts. According to Shang's analysis, the original title of Hong Chu's work was, in fact, the *Addendum to the Materia Aromatic* (*Xiang houpu* 香後譜).[1106] Thus, Hong Chu originally conceived his catalogue as an expansion of Shen Li's *Materia Aromatica*. As a consequence of revealing the original title, one of the early Song catalogues on aromatics which had previously been viewed as an independent text and attributed to the exiled official and Daoist sympathizer, Zeng Zao 曾慥 (d. 1155), would now be entirely folded into the work of Hong Chu. Zeng Zao is best known as the publisher of the *Categorized Tales* (*Leishuo* 類說), hereafter *Leishuo*, a collection of just over 250 abridged works that he finished compiling in 1136. This florilegium collects a portion of Shen Li's *Materia Aromatica*, including fifteen different entries on aromatics, aromatic blends, and other materials that have been helpful in the modern reconstruction of the text.[1107] The work also incorporates thirty-four other entries under the title of the *Addendum to the Materia Aromatic*, for which previous scholarship had assumed was the compilation of Zeng Zao himself. The logic ran that due to Zeng Zao's access to such a large body of literature, it would have been relatively easy for him to compile a work on perfuming. This attribution was also based on the brief epilogue to the text:

[1105] Shang, "Xiang houpu," 14. Shang also suggests that specific entries may have been omitted for political reasons, see Shang, 24.
[1106] Shang, "Xiang houpu," 6–8 and examples cited therein.
[1107] According to Liu's reconstruction, these account for entries 6, 41, and 44 through 56, see Liu, *Songdai Xiangpu*, 469–76.

> I have recently examined the *Materia Aromatica* of Shen Li and regret that it is not comprehensive. I have thought to expand and rectify it, thus I have composed an addendum to [Shen Li's] catalogue, divided into five sections.
> 余頃見沈立之香譜，惜其不完，思廣而正之，因作後譜，拆為五部。[1108]

Since Zeng Zao does not cite an author for the *Addendum to the Materia Aromatic*, it has been assumed the personal pronoun "I" (*yu* 余) in the above passage to referred to Zeng Zao himself.[1109] Shang, on the other hand, has shown that two individual sources, the *Abridged Account of Apocrypha* (*Weilue* 緯略) by Gao Sisun 高似孫 (1158–1231) and the *Treatise of Wuxing* (*Wuxing zhi* 吳興志) by Tan Yue 談鑰 (d.u.), completed in 1201, both cite entries from the *Addendum to the Materia Aromatica*, but attribute the work to Hong Chu. Shang further shows that each entry cited by the two works, River Musk (*shui she* 水麝) and Patterned Stone Aromatic (*wenshi xiang* 文石香), respectively, are also attested by the late Song *Newly Revised Materia Aromatica* (*Xinzuan xiangpu* 新纂香譜) as deriving from the collection of "Mr. Hong" (*Hong shi* 洪氏).[1110] Notably, neither item has been retained in the commonly accepted received *Materia Aromatic* editions, but this does not necessarily disprove Shang's claims as much as it underscores the fractured nature of Hong Chu's work as it circulated in different recensions. To this evidence we can also add the preface to the *Addendum to the Materia Aromatica* preserved by Zeng Zao. While the above epilogue had not been copied over into later aromatics catalogues, the preface has also been preserved in

[1108] As cited in Liu, 200–01; Shang, "Xiang houpu," 7. For a facsimile of this passage from an edition of the *Leishuo* in Taiwan, see Shang, 32 (illustration 4-2).
[1109] See, e.g. Liu, *Songdai Xiangpu*, 200.
[1110] Shang, "Xiang houpu," 6–8.

the *Newly Revised Materia Aromatica* as well as the seventeenth century *Cart of Aromatics* (*Xiang sheng* 香乘[1111]) – both of which attribute it to Hong Chu.[1112]

The strongest refutation to this evidence has been that of the thirty-six items recorded in the *Addendum to the Materia Aromatica*, as many as thirty do not correspond to the surviving *Materia Aromatica* editions.[1113] Additionally, the epilogue above also refers to a text that is divided into five sections, one more division than the received *Materia Aromatica*. Again, Shang has demonstrated that the original manuscript likely comprised a fifth category, writings on aromatics (*xiang wen* 香文), that would have constituted various poems, inscriptions, and short essays.[1114] He further argues, based on the comments of Zhou Zizhi, that Hong Chu likely set out to create a work that was of considerable size, certainly larger than the longest edition of the *Materia Aromatica* now circulating with 147 items. As a consequence, it would not be surprising to find scattered passages that are currently not attested in the received versions.[1115] Taking all of the above evidence in consideration, Shang believes the *Addendum to the Materia Aromatica*, along with its preface and epilogue, should be attributed to Hong Chu, not Zeng Zao.

Overall, I find Shang's arguments compelling. And while they tie together several loose ends regarding the history of Hon Chu's catalogue, they also engender new questions

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[1111] *Sheng* 乘 (not to be read as *cheng*) was a term in use during the Warring States that referred to a book of history. While I prefer to read *sheng* more literally as "cart" or "carriage," one could justifiably render the title of this work as the *History of Aromatics*.
[1112] See Shang, "Xiang houpu," 33 (illustration 5); Liu, *Songdai Xiangpu*, 202 (also see SKQS:844.580a), respectively.
[1113] Shang, "Xiang houpu," 10. I have not been able to confirm Shang's count of thirty-six items. Liu purportedly counts thirty-four items, but then individually lists only thirty-two items, see Liu, *Songdai Xiangpu*, 202–03. Moreover, when Shang examines the new items to be added to the *Materia Aromatica*, he only lists fourteen entries (in addition to the epilogue) as deriving from the *Leishuo* collectanea, see Shang, "Xiang houpu," 16–19.
[1114] Shang, 11–13.
[1115] Shang, 13–14.

worth acknowledging. To the best of our knowledge thus far, here is what we know about the *Materia Aromatica* based mainly on the research of Liu and Shang, with a few additional observations.

- By 1104, based on the comments of Huang Tingjian, Hong Chu had already amassed a collection of perfume and incense blending recipes. After an unknown period of time (perhaps immediately, perhaps in two decades), Hong Chu started to circulate a five-chapter text under the title of *Addendum to the Materia Aromatica* (*Xiang houpu*). Based on the work's epilogue, we know that Hong Chu was motivated by a copy of Shen Li's *Materia Aromatica* (*Xiang pu*) and set out to "expand and rectify it" with his own new compilation. This would prove to be an important step in the development of a genre dedicated to aromatics and which acknowledged and built directly upon textual predecessors.

- By 1136, a manuscript of the *Addendum to the Materia Aromatica* came into the possession of Zeng Zao who incorporated it, along with its preface and epilogue, into his *Leishuo* collectanea. For reasons that remain unclear, he did not attribute the work to Hong Chu. Given that Zeng Zao was rather careful to provide authorial information for the majority of his collected works, we can surmise that his copy of the *Addendum to the Materia Aromatica* no longer contained Hong Chu's name. In addition, because the *Leishuo* is a collection of textual excerpts, we can surmise that Hong Chu's anonymized manuscript was larger than the thirty-six items copied by Zeng Zao.[1116]

[1116] Liu examines an entry for the phrase "the third rank eats incense" (*sanban chi xiang* 三班吃香), attributed to the historian and essayist Ouyang Xiu 歐陽脩 (1007–1072), as an example of how Zeng Zao abridged his

- Less than two decades later, both Chao Gongwu and Zhou Zizhi had seen copies of the work by Hong Chu, whom they cite by name. In both cases, however, the title appears to have been shortened to the *Materia Aromatica* (*Xiang pu*).[1117] While Zhou Zizhi complements the comprehensiveness of the work, claiming that it is missing "one or two items," Chao Gongwu offers a brief synopsis of the one *juan* manuscript in his private collection, listing five different incense blends while also commenting that there was no entry for aloeswood.[1118] Notably, there is no clear overlap between the contents recorded by Zeng Zao and the synopsis offered by Chao Gongwu several years later. In addition to the fact that Zeng Zao only selected excerpts from his sources, following the argument of Shang, this discrepancy is best understood as an effect of manuscript culture, where the circulation of different recensions was commonplace.

- At the end of the twelfth century the book collector You Mao records his possession of a copy of Mr. Hong's *Materia Aromatica* in his *Library Catalogue of the Suichu Hall*.[1119] It is around this same period that Gao Sisun and Tan Yue make reference to an *Addendum to the Materia Aromatica* by Hong Chu, showing that the work was still circulating under two different titles. While the two items these texts cite, River Musk and Patterned Stone Aromatic, are found in the Zeng Zao's *Leishuo*, because

texts, see Liu, *Songdai Xiangpu*, 203–04. It should be noted, however, that Liu considered Zeng Zao as the author of the *Addendum to the Materia Aromatica* and thus it is possible the abridgement Ouyang Xiu's passage was first done by Hong Chu.

[1117] Liu, "Hong Chu ji qi Xiangpu," 81–82.

[1118] For Zhou Zizhi's comments, see Liu, "Hong Chu ji qi Xiangpu," 81–82.

[1119] Liu, 82.

Gao Sisun and Tan Yue explicitly name Hong Chu as the author it is likely they had access to a different manuscript, or at least one that still retained Hong Chu's name. It is worth noting that there is another witness to an anonymous one *juan Materia Aromatica* by the book collector Chen Zhensun 陳振孫 (c. 1183–1262) found in his *Explicated Library Catalogue of the Upright Studio* (*Zhizhai shulu jieti* 直齋書錄解題).[1120] Unfortunately, Chen Zhensun does not provide a description of the manuscript in his private collection, thus we have no firm knowledge on its relationship to the other copies of Hong Chu's work. This does further attest to the fact, however, that anonymized manuscripts were in circulation at this time.

- In 1273, one of the more pivotal events in the textual history of the *Materia Aromatica* occurred when Zuo Gui selected a two *juan* version for inclusion in his *Baichuan xuehai* collectanea. This recension containing 147 entries is now integral to the modern conception of Hong Chu's work. While Zuo Gui credits Hong Chu as the author, the *Shuofu* collectanea of Tao Zongyi, issued sometime at the end of the Yuan or early Ming, reprints a shorter one *juan Materia Aromatica* attributed to an anonymous Tang author. The one *juan* version contains approximately eighty less items, but there are still two unique entries that are not found in the longer version of Zuo Gui.[1121] Among the entries deleted from the one *juan* edition are all references to aromatics derived directly from Buddhist sources as well as citations to poetry or

[1120] Liu, 82.
[1121] Liu offers slightly different estimates of seventy-nine less items (for a total of 68 individual entries) or exactly eighty less items, see Liu, "Hong Chu ji qi Xiangpu," 94; Liu, *Songdai Xiangpu*, 197, respectively. Shang claims there are eighty-two less items (for a total of 65), see Shang, Shang, "Xiang houpu," 10. Both agree that only two items are unique to the two *juan Materia Aromatica*.

inscriptions relevant to scent.[1122] While Liu Jingmin sees this as a conscious abridgement of the *Materia Aromatica*, the presence of two unique entries still suggests Tao Zongyi consulted a different manuscript version than Zuo Gui more than a century earlier, although they overlap in content considerably. With the introduction of xylographic reprints there appears to have been a levelling off of variant editions of the *Materia Aromatica* in circulation.

Overall, this historical synopsis shows that while the *Baichuan* and *Baichuan*-based editions of the *Materia Aromatica* are the largest, they do not constitute a complete work as was once thought. With the inclusion of entries drawn from the *Shuofu* and *Leishuo* editions, in addition to a handful of preserved passages extracted from other published works, Shang has been able to increase the entries of the *Baichuan* edition by forth-five, yielding a new total of 192 entries.[1123] While this is a substantial addition to Hong Chu's work, Shang still believes a much larger manuscript was originally in circulation.

Liu's initial ground-breaking research collected and compared thirteen different xylographic editions, while Shen Chang significantly expanded upon Liu Jingmin's conclusions, identifying eighteen different editions and carefully identifying their filiations. A full stemmatic analysis of Hong Chu's *Materia Aromatica* incorporating the new research of Shang remains a desiderium.

[1122] Liu, "Hong Chu ji qi Xiangpu," 94; Liu, *Songdai Xiangpu*, 196.
[1123] These entries are printed in Shang, "Xiang houpu," 16–22.

10. Conclusion

The Northern Song was a period of significant economic prosperity, social change, and at the end, violent political upheaval. Yet these were the broader contexts in which Hong Chu composed his *Materia Aromatica*, a work that would outlast many of its rough contemporaries and come to be established as a seminal work among the connoisseurs of East Asian perfumery.

All of the Song works which fell under the "registers and catalogues" (*pulu*) subgenre of materia aromatica can only be understood in the larger historical picture of Chinese olfactory culture. The fact that only certain types of fragrant substances were selected for inclusion is based on a larger discourse around the concept of *xiang* which slowly shifted its meaning from the fragrant aromas of state sacrifice to the aromatic substances that adorned people, temples, and the imperial palace. One aspect of *xiang* that most often accompanied its aesthetic pleasures was its therapeutic applications. Thus, not only were aromatics treated like drugs in certain contexts, it appears early medieval perfuming manuals were conceived along the lines of medicinal formularies, a tightly interwoven relationship that continued through the end of the Song. This relationship was also found in early encyclopedia where drugs, aromatics, and herbs were listed collectively. The Buddhist monk Daoshi appears to have conceived the category of aromatics in a novel way, concealing a virtual materia aromatica within his *Forest of Pearls in the Garden of the Dharma* that placed a much larger focus on imported aromatics as well as anomalous aromatics and strange smells culled from various tales of the strange. This particular framing of *xiang* would, inadvertently or not, be mirrored in the widely read and cited imperial encyclopedia of the Song, and ultimately adopted by Hong Chu for his catalogue.

Hong Chu himself may have been a failed official, ultimately banished for his carefree interactions with the imperial family during the death throes of the Northern Song. Yet Hong Chu was also blessed with the guidance and care of his uncle, Huang Tingjian, a noted poet and artist who professed his own deep interest for aromatics and incense. Although their surviving correspondence does not speak of these passions, we can see they influenced Hong Chu significantly and likely inspired him to start collecting his own blending recipes. Eventually, and probably over the duration of nearly two decades, these recipes, along with stories of strange smells and exotic aromatics, were carefully collected into a work that, many generations later, would come to affirm the scholarly elegance of Hong Chu.

Materia Aromatica 香譜

Hong Chu 洪芻 (1066–c.1127)

A Note On the Base Chinese Edition

The *Siku quanshu* edition of Hong Chu's *Materia Aromatica* forms the base text for the translation below.[1124] This edition preserves, for the most part, the larger *Baichuan* edition from the revised Huacheng 華珵 xylographic print published after 1501. As noted by Shen Chang, there are two Huacheng xylographic editions. A later re-carved edition (*dixiu ben* 递修本) introduced several errors to the text which were carried over into the *Siku quanshu* edition.[1125] Consequently, I have also consulted the initial printed edition (*chuyin ben* 初印本) of the *Baichuan*, a copy of which is held by the Harvard-Yenching Library at Harvard University.[1126] While most of the introduced errors are minor, several corrections are cited in the footnotes.

There are further emendations to the base text. Because the entries in the first three divisions of the *Materia Aromatica* are mainly comprised of passages drawn from older medieval works, in almost all cases I have found referencing the received editions of the primary sources to be insightful, if not necessary, to establish the appropriate interpretive framework. Moreover, in numerous cases the primary source text is no longer extant, but the relevant passages are preserved in secondary or tertiary compendia. Three of the most helpful compilations in this regard have been the seventh century *Forest of Pearls in the Garden of the Dharma*, the tenth century *Imperial Readings of the Taiping Era*, and the sixteenth

[1124] SKQS:844.217a–237b.
[1125] Shen Chang, "Song Hong Chu Xiangpu banben yuanliu kao," *Guji zhengli yanjiuxue kan* 1 (2018): 38–44.: 39, 41.
[1126] Accessible here: https://nrs.harvard.edu/urn-3:FHCL:24996766. The *Materia Aromatica* is found in Volume 18, pp. 1803–1832.

century *Systematic Materia Medica*.[1127] In many situations, I have found the readings from these sources preferable to the *Siku quanshu* edition or the initial *Baichuan* edition of the *Materia Aromatica*. The adopted corrections and variant readings are also cited in the footnotes. It should be underscored this is not an attempt to create a text critical edition of the *Materia Aromatica*, but an attempt to best understand the history of medieval olfactory culture preserved in part through the works that are compiled in the *Materia Aromatica*.

Furthermore, in the process of doing such work, I have realized that almost all of the entries in the first chapter on "Aromatic Products" contain verbatim quotes or rephrased passages from older works that are not properly cited by Hong Chu, at least in the editions of his work preserved by the *Baichuan* and *Siku quanshu* collectanea. Consequently, in addition to numbering entry headwords, I have also subdivided individual entries (using a, b, c, etc.) according to the different sources from which the information likely originated.[1128] The titles of the anonymized source materials are cited in the footnotes to the relevant entry subdivision. These distinctions are critical to establishing the historical contours of Chinese

[1127] There are other resources I have not consulted that may prove valuable for future research. For example, I have reason to believe, based on miscopied transcriptions of foreign terms, that Hong Chu was working from a copy of the *Extensive Record of the Taiping Era* (*Taiping gugnji* 太平廣記), see my comments to *Bīrzai* Aromatic at HC#51 and relevant footnotes therein. Furthermore, I suspect Hong Chu possessed a copy of the *Materia Medica of the Kaibao Era* (*Kaibao bencao* 開寶本草), a work now only preserved in later sources, including the *Verified and Classified Materia Medica* (*Zhenglei bencao* 證類本草), completed in 1098 and subsequently revised in 1108. There may be value in comparing surviving citations of the *Materia Medica of the Kaibao Era*, as well as other lost material medica, between the *Verified and Classified Materia Medica* and the *Systematic Materia Medica*, something I have not done with sufficient rigor.

[1128] This is different than identifying the texts or manuscripts from which Hong Chu was working (see previous footnote). For example, Hong Chu may have possessed a tenth century materia medica text that cites a fifth century gazetteer, but he subsequently only cites the gazetteer in the *Materia Aromatica* entry. While this may seem innocuous, problems arise when information only available in the tenth century materia medica also appears in the entry without proper citation, making it seem as if all of the data derived from the much older gazetteer.

scent culture that are otherwise obscured in the received editions of the *Materia Aromatica*.[1129]

Given the very early stages of research on Hong Chu's catalogue and the significant advancements made in the past fifteen years, the emendations I offer here will surely be expanded and surpassed in the future. As of writing, I am aware of no critical collated edition of this text that incorporates the newly discovered entries proposed by Shang Haifeng.[1130] I eagerly await the fruits of such labor.

Lastly, in addition to the numbering and titling conventions I discuss in the following section, I have also added supplemental commentary for many of the entries. The principal aim is to unpack and contextualize the objects, instruments, and stories that are sometimes only cursorily discussed in the entry itself. Some of the comments are extensive, especially in the first division, and draw upon many other works that do not appear in the entry itself. In those cases I have attempted to outline the medieval history of the aromatic substance in question and highlight the often-ignored complexities and debates surrounding its identity. In the process, I have drawn upon the Chinese Buddhist and Daoist canons to help bridge the current divide between scholars of Chinese religion and scholars of Chinese scent culture.

[1129] The elision of secondary or tertiary source titles became more commonplace in the Song, especially as earlier medieval works were lost and only survived piecemeal in later compendia. For comments on this issue in the *Systematic Materia Medica* of the sixteenth century, see Zheng et al., *Dictionary of the Ben Cao Gang Mu*, 16.

[1130] These entries are printed in Shang, "Xiang houpu," 16–22. The first, and hitherto only, critical collated edition of the *Materia Aromatica* was published in 2015, see Shen, *Xiang Pu*. While this publication compares several editions of the two *juan Materia Aromatica*, it apparently does not compare the individual citations within the *Materia Aromatica* to their parallels in other medieval compendia. The critical apparatus below focuses more on this latter aspect.
Further value would also be found in cross-referencing each of Hong Chu's entries with similar entries found in other materia aromatica, especially the recompiled passages from Shen Li's previous *Materia Aromatica*, see Liu, *Songdai Xiangpu*, 469–80.

On Entry Numbers and Headword Titling

For the sake of expediting cross-referencing, I have numbered all of the entries in Hong Chu's *Materia Aromatica*. This numbering is not part of *Siku quanshu* edition text and, importantly, would prove inconsistent between different received editions of Hong Chu's catalogue. Until a definitive critical Chinese edition of the entire *Materia Aromatica* is published, this will have to suffice. The *Materia Aromatica* entries below are numbered from 1 to 147.[1131]

Entry Numbers and Entry Subdivisions:

When cross-referencing entries in my commentary and footnotes, I place the entry number in square brackets with an "HC" for Hong Chu, for example:

- *Example 1: [HC#9]*

The above "Hong Chu number" refers to entry number nine as listed in the translation of the *Materia Aromatica*. In this case, this refers to the entry for frankincense. In addition, many entries are also subdivided according to the different sources cited by Hong Chu. When it is necessary to cross-reference an individual section of an entry, it will be noted with a letter, for example:

- *Example 2: [HC#7c] or [7c]*

[1131] A far more comprehensive approach to this issue can be seen in the work of Liu Jingmin. Using Chen Jing's *Newly Compiled Materia Aromatica* as a base, a work four times the size of Hing Chu's catalogue, Liu numbers individual entries and compares them to surviving Song materia aromatica, see Liu, *Songdai Xiangpu*, 441–68.

This refers to the third passage (labeled "c") of the seventh entry, which in this case refers to an anonymized quotation describing Yu Gold Aromatic.

Headword Titling

Printed editions of the *Materia Aromatica* appear to be fairly straightforward reading. Headword entries are followed by the titles of texts which provide pertinent information on the item. Various issues immediately arise, however, for the translator of these entries, especially in the first chapter. On one hand, rendering the Chinese name (or basic sense of the name) into a single, universally applicable English term is often an impossibility. I have decided to translate the headword entries twice in many cases, providing a literal translation of the Chinese term followed parenthetically by a common name in English.

- *Example 3: Dragon Brain Aromatic (camphor)*

I have found it preferable to do this for two reasons. First, this practice enables the reader to more directly engage the medieval world of Chinese perfumes and incense that was oftentimes animated by colorful and descriptive nomenclature or arcane terminology. In either case, the boundaries between foreign exotica and mythic esoterica were often blurred. For example, the fictional substance Phoenix Brain Aromatic was modeled on the name for camphor, or Dragon Brain Aromatic, a rare foreign import.

Second, I will also use the literal Chinese name to signify ambiguity when the underlying odorant is unknown or in historical flux. More specifically, based on differing morphological descriptions or discrepancies in phytogeographic origins, we can surmise some names referred to two or more underlying botanical referents. For example, evidence strongly

suggests Parthian Aromatic originally referred to Indian gum guggul before switching to Southeast Asian benzoin sometime around the tenth century. In such cases it is impossible to consistently render the Chinese term into a common botanical name and thus the literal translation acts as a place holder for critical discussion.

Following from this last point, when we have good evidence for a historical change in the aromatic referent, I signal this diachronic shift with a "→" in the headword titling as such:

- *Example 4 (diachronic shift): Parthian Aromatic (gum guggul → benzoin)*

The comments to the entry will discuss the evidence and the historical timeframe (when ascertainable) for this apparent historical shift in underlying referent. In other cases, Chinese nomenclature may simultaneously refer to two or more underlying aromatics. I signal this synchronistic ambiguity with a " / " in the headword titling as such:

- *Example 5 (synchronistic ambiguity): Wood Aromatic (aloeswood / costus root)*

As above, the comments to the entry will discuss the evidence for these variant identifications. In such cases I have also placed a special emphasis on botanical variants described in Buddhist sources. Finally, in some cases, surviving textual evidence is not clear or consistent in describing the underlying referent. In the scenarios where I offer a possible identity, I signal this speculation with a " ? " in the headword titling as such:

- *Example 6 (speculative identity): Aina Aromatic (tree moss / Indian dill?)*

In the case above, tree moss is considered a more secure identity for Aina Aromatic, while Indian dill is a speculative alternative identity.

When dealing with particularly complex issues of identification, I have chosen to highlight the early medieval referent for term. I signal this early medieval focus with a "__" in the headword titling as such:

- *Example 7 (early medieval focus): Suhe Aromatic (<u>storax</u> → rasamala resin / rasamala wood? → storax)*

In the above example, Suhe Aromatic most commonly referred to Mediterranean storax in the early medieval period, which I loosely define as between 100/200 CE and 500/600 CE. The lower bound corresponds roughly to the final editing of the *Classic of Materia Medica of the Divine Husbandman* and the earliest strata of Buddhist translations. The upper bound corresponds roughly to the commentary on *Classic of Materia Medica of the Divine Husbandman* by Tao Hongjing and the period previous to the publication of the *Newly Revised Materia Medica* in 659. The underlined referent in the headword titling is meant only as a general guideline as more complex issues of chronology will be discussed in the comments to the entry.

Overall, I have focused on identifying various floral and faunal referents for the aromatic material in question from the Han (or earlier in some cases) up through the Northern Song, when Hong Chu compiled the *Materia Aromatica*. Consequently, there may be specific issues of identification that emerge during the Southern Song or afterwards that I do not fully address.

On Plant Identification and Scientific Nomenclature

The majority of this study uses common names to identify various kinds of aromatic materials, such as sweet basil, aloeswood, frankincense, and so forth. In the commentary to the translated entries of the *Materia Aromatica*, more focus is placed on identifying modern scientific nomenclature for various *flora* and *fauna*

The adoption of Latinized binomial nomenclature is not intended as an attempt at objectivity – for there are many plants (and a few animals) discussed in these pages whose identity remains uncertain or contentious. This is not only a problem at the species level, but sometimes also in regards to higher rank taxa. Yet, not all plants' identities are equally problematic and even informed speculation on the most puzzling terminology can build a foundation for further inquiry. Scientific nomenclature is offered as one among the many tools at our disposal to better understand the materiality of ancient and medieval Chinese olfactory culture. As noted by James McHugh, the use of binomial nomenclature is just another form of translation, an attempt to "align older terms with more contemporary ones."[1132]

Ultimately, my interest in more precise nomenclature is in regards to historical, social, and cultural analysis, not mere scientific identification. On one hand, if we can establish a material's indigenous phytogeographic domain, that is to say, its native geographic origin, we are in a far better position to ask questions as to its perceived value to people who possessed it. Was a substance an exotic and scarce luxury good to which only the

[1132] James McHugh, "Blattes de Byzance in India: Mollusk Opercula and the History of Perfumery," *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain & Ireland* 23, no. 1 (2013): 58.

elite had access? Who might have harvested it or transported it? How might it have entered China, *via* southern ports or the markets of the northern capitals? Equally, was a substance regionally available, thus making it easier for all classes to obtain? If we can find answers to such questions, we can better assess the beliefs and attitudes people held towards certain aromatic materials.

From a different vantage point, a more precise understanding of a substance can also give us insight into the minutia of how it was used. For example, *Ocimum basilicum* (sweet basil) of the mint family has intensely scented leaves, *Curcuma aromatica* (wild turmeric) has a highly fragrant rhizomatic root, the umbelliferous *Angelica dahurica* (wild angelica) has an aromatic taproot, and the *Aquilaria sinensis* (aloeswood) tree produces an oleoresin infused wood (but only under certain conditions!). Thus, even though our textual references rarely specify which part of a plant's anatomy is used, we can better imagine its materiality (weight, color, size, moisture content) and the processing procedures (drying, crushing, filing, cutting) necessary to turn the raw substance into a usable material. Understanding the materiality of smell is also important for understanding the social significations of smell.

In spite of this analytical utility, there are numerous challenges in identifying the precise botanical or zoological referents of pre-modern Chinese terms.[1133] Some of the more general issues of identification are particularly acute when it comes to aromatics. One concern involves the novel deployment of Chinese terminology for novel imports. This seems to have been approached in a few ways, but three particular methods emerged as most common: creating a neologism for the new substance (this often includes descriptive terminology, such as Sinking in Water Aromatic or Chicken Tongue Aromatic), transcribing

[1133] See the helpful discussion on some of these issues in Harper, *Early*, 100–01.

the foreign name of the aromatic (most commonly seen in Buddhist translations[1134]), or adopting existing Chinese botanical nomenclature, either in whole or in part, and applying it to the new material.[1135] The most obvious concern regarding these methods of creation, transcription, and adoption was the application of different names to the same underlying referent. For example, Chicken Tongue Aromatic and Nail Aromatic both referred to Moluccan cloves, but nevertheless some medieval authors mistakenly believed they were different substances. This is not a concern only for foreign exotica, as native Chinese plants were often given distinctive regional names or arcane aliases, oftentimes resulting in a knotty plethora of potential synonyms.[1136]

The opposite concern of grouping multiple referents under a single name is also a significant source of confusion. One of the worst offenders of this kind was the name Yu Gold, which appears to have referred to native Chinese wild turmeric, imported Indian turmeric, Indian crocus flowers and their dried stigmas (i.e. saffron), and possibly even Indian campaka flowers. Moreover, in some cases, this terminological ambiguity was not just lexical imprecision, but the product of commercial substitution. For example, in the early medieval period, Parthian Aromatic originally referred to Indian gum guggul, but by the tenth century the name was increasingly applied to Sumatran benzoin and Siamese benzoin, a pair of very different products in relation to the initial Indian import. Moreover, a wide range of scented plants cited in classical sources also caused medieval exegetes to grapple with

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[1134] It should not be assumed that by identifying an underlying foreign term we necessarily know its referent in the natural world. Debates over the identity of botanical terminology is as complex and beleaguered elsewhere as it is for China; see, for example, my comments to *turuṣka* at HC#76.

[1135] This is also closely related to what I call "botanical analogues," that is, the use of native plant nomenclature to approximate some aspect or quality of a foreign plant. This can be seen in Buddhist translations, see for example my comments to spikenard at HC#19.

[1136] Regional names for various plants are even discussed in the second century BCE medical manuscripts from Mawangdui, proving this has long been a vexing issue, see Harper, *Early*, 272–73.

their identity, resulting at times in proclamations that several different names referred to the same plant (or different anatomical parts of the same plant), views that were not always shared by all authorities. One last issue, which is of special note for the late medieval period, was the proliferation of names for different commercial grades of the same aromatic material, with aloeswood being arguably the most complex with more than a dozen distinctions, but also closely followed by camphor and frankincense.

Due to these terminological ambiguities, historical shifts, and highly specialized applications of nomenclature, many widely-used modern Chinese botanical and pharmacological reference works are insufficient for describing the historical complexities in which I am most interested.[1137] To offer an example, the *Great Dictionary of Chinese Medicine* (*Zhongyao dacidian* 中藥大辭典), considered one of the most comprehensive modern compilations of Chinese materia medica, has an entry for Yu Gold but identifies it with only four species of *Curcuma*, or turmeric. Moreover, Yu Gold Aromatic, often indicative of Indian saffron in medieval texts, is identified by its modern referent, *Tulipa gesneriana*, which is the cause of numerous mistranslations in modern scholarship regarding the medieval term.

[1137] The early application of scientific nomenclature to Chinese plant names was the product of a handful of nineteenth century scholars who procured plants from contemporary Chinese apothecaries (or from import-export cargo manifests), analyzed the specimens, and compared the results to older illustrations and textual descriptions in materia medica literature. (Contemporary illustrated Japanese materia medica, sometimes prepared with Linnaean binomial nomenclature, were also often consulted.) Starting with a specimen and tracing its history back through published depictions and descriptions tends to mitigate a focus on the oftentimes slippery history of botanical plant terminology. For example, there seems to be a slight bias in identifying historical plants with more temperate northern species, even when medieval works clearly describe the plant as sub-tropical or tropical. This method also places a lot of trust in physicians and drug sellers for knowing the identity of their products. This was a concern already noted in the sixth century when Tao Hongjing complained about the indeterminant identity of many specimens due to the fact that physicians relied on sellers, who relied on drug gatherers, see Harper, *Early*, 100.

In some cases, I have relied on specialty dictionaries for identifying native ancient Chinese aromatics. Among the most useful has been Pan Fujun's specialized work on the *flora* of the *Book of Odes* and the *Songs of Chu*.[1138] For checking the indigeneity and phytogeographical distribution of Chinese plants, I have consulted the comprehensive twenty-five volume *Flora of China* (*Zhongguo zhiwu zhi* 中國植物志).[1139] For plants outside of China, I have used Plants of the World Online, maintained by the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew.[1140] In numerous other cases, I have found it necessary to rely on scholarly publications focusing on individual plants and aromatics to arrive at the best information regarding botanical identification. In a handful of scenarios (and especially in regard to aromatics in Buddhist sources), I propose my own identification and articulate my rationale in the relevant commentary to the *Materia Medica* entry.

Importantly, I have also attempted to use the most up-to-date scientific nomenclature, drawing upon the database kept by World Flora Online.[1141] It conveniently lists whether a name is currently identified as the formally accepted nomenclature or if it has been "erased" from scientific usage and deemed synonymous with another accepted name. This has proven to be particularly relevant as many dictionaries outside of the disciplines of botany and pharmacology (especially Sanskrit and specialized Buddhist dictionaries), as well as older English language resources on Chinese materia medica that remain popular, such as Emile Bretschneider's *Botanicum Sinicum* series, George Arthur Stuart and Frederick Porter Smith's *Chinese Materia Medica*, and Bernard E. Read's *Chinese Medicinal Plants*, all use

[1138] Pan, *Shijing*; Pan, *Chuci*; Pan, *Chuci*, 2nd ed.
[1139] This work is available online: http://www.efloras.org/flora_page.aspx?flora_id=2.
[1140] Found here: https://powo.science.kew.org/.
[1141] Found here: http://www.worldfloraonline.org/. In some cases of discrepancy, I have instead followed the nomenclature in the *Flora of China* or specific studies I cite in the footnotes.

outdated nineteenth century Latin nomenclature. This is not just a matter of using contemporary language, but has also proven crucial in clarifying confusing identifications. In several cases relevant to our study, older taxonomic divisions on the species or genera level have been either expanded or collapsed over the past century. For example, plant names *Balsamodendron mukul, B. roxburghii, B. wightii* have all been assigned a new genus and, moreover, are now collapsed into single species, *Commiphora wightii*, the (now) solitary northern Indian producer of the "false myrrh" gum guggul. In such situations I list the most important synonyms in parenthesis after I cite the accepted scientific terminology; for example: *Commiphora wightii* (syns: *Balsamodendron mukul, B. roxburghii, B. wightii*).

Using the tools and resources cited above, as well as the characteristics of plant morphology and phytogeographic distribution detailed in primary sources (including many that are not cited within Hong Chu's catalogue), I have attempted to identify virtually all of the plants and substances in the *Materia Aromatica*. This includes identifying ambiguities and changes in botanical referents over time. Ultimately, the principle of *caveat lector* needs to be applied, as many attempts at scientific "translation" remain provisional.

Preface[1142]

The [*Book of*] *Documents* states, "Perfect government has a fragrant aroma and luminous virtue is fragrant. If contrary to this, then it is said a stench is smelled above."[1143]

書稱：至治馨香，明德惟馨。反是則曰：腥聞在上。

The [*Zuo*] *Commentary* [states], "By [comparing] a room [filled with the scent] of thoroughwort root and a market of abalone fish, one can distinguish what is wholesome and what is foul."[1144]

[1142] This preface, originally preserved as part of Zeng Zao's twelfth century florilegium entitled the *Leishuo*, is not included in the *Baichuan* nor *Siku quanshu* edition of the *Materia Aromatica*. As a base text, I referenced the preface as it is found in the *Siku quanshu* edition of the *Cart of Aromatics* (*Xiang sheng* 香乘), where it is entitled "Mr. Hong's Preface to the Materia Aromatica" (*Hongshi xiangpu xu* 洪氏香譜序), SKQS:844.580a. The base text has been compared to the *Leishuo* edition as reproduced in Shang, "Xiang houpu," 7. For a facsimile of the passage from the printed *Leishuo*, see Shang, "Xiang houpu," 32 (illustration 4.1).

[1143] This epigraph is a pastiche of two different passages from the *Book of Documents* which I attempt to render composite in the spirit of Hong Chu's presentation. The first half draws from the "Lord Chen" (*jun Chen* 君陳) chapter that states, "Perfect government has a fragrant aroma and influences the spirits. Panicled millet and glutinous millet are not fragrant, it is only luminous virtue that is fragrant." 至治馨香，感于神明。黍稷非馨，明德惟馨爾。SSZY:18.23.503–504. The second half draws from the chapter "Marquis of Lü on Punishments" (*Lü xing* 呂刑) that states, "Shangdi surveyed the people, but there was no fragrance of virtue [coming from them], only a stench emerging from their punishments." 上帝監民，罔有馨香德，刑發聞惟腥。SSZY:19.29.526. Taken together, these statements reveal a particular throughline in the *Book of Documents* where the external sensorial qualities of properly performed ritual sacrifice are treated as secondary to the virtuous character and exemplary conduct of people. Thus, the aromas of sacrifice that were thought to influence and nourish the spiritual realm are re-envisioned as the scents of virtue, or by extension of the analogy, as the vile stench of immorality, which are more efficacious in drawing a response from the spirits. For further discussion on these points, see Sterckx, *Food, Sacrifice, Sagehood*, 94–95, 160–70.

[1144] In contrast to Hong Chu's citation, this epigraph was based primarily on the *School Sayings of Confucius* (*Kongzi jiayu* 孔子家語), a work edited in the third century by Wang Su 王肅 (195–256), see Loewe, *Early Chinese Texts*, 258–62. The full passage is translated and discussed at In Time, One No Longer Smells the Fragrance at HC#83B. A connection to the *Zuo Commentary*, as cited by Hong Chu, can be found through another passage in the *School Sayings of Confucius*. In an earlier chapter it explains that "sweet basil and Chinese bluebeard (*Tripora divaricata* [syn. *Caryopteris divaricata*]) should not be stored in the same container," 熏蕕不同器。KZJY:2.8.45. The meaning of this phrase, now circulating as an idiom in modern Chinese, is built upon an oracular passage preserved in the *Zuo Commentary*: "one part sweet basil and one part Chinese bluebeard; ten years hence the stench of the Chinese bluebeard will linger," 一薰一蕕，十年尚猶有臭。CQZZ:12.3893; cf. trans. Durrant, Li, and Schaberg, *Zuo Tradition*, 269. For further discussion of this passage see my comments to sweet basil at HC#20. In general, both passages from the *School Sayings of Confucius* and the *Zuo Commentary* are rooted in a belief that a person's virtue can be expressed through analogies to fragrance and odor.

傳: 以芝蘭[1145]之室，鮑魚之肆，為善惡之辨。

"Encountering Sorrow" [states]: "Thoroughwort, sweet basil, and wild ginger are gentlemen, while manure, southernwood, and mugwort are lesser people."[1146]

離騷: 以蘭蕙杜蘅為君子，糞壤蕭艾為小人。

The gentleman who bathes and cleanses his body and who perfumes it with the Way of righteousness possess a boundlessness that will be recognized (*wen*). My catalogue on aromatics also has this intention.

君子澡雪其身心[1147]，熏祓[1148]之以道義，有無窮之聞。余[1149]之譜香，亦是意也。

[COMMENTS] Hong Chu's closing comment is a careful play on words regarding the multiple connotations of smell in Chinese culture and the semantic ambiguity of the graph *wen* 聞 in classical literature. On one layer, there is the purely sensual and aesthetic quality of

[1145] Reading 芝蘭 as 蘭芷. Ultimately, I have taken a cue from Gopal Sukhu in reading *lanzhi* 蘭芷 as "thoroughwort root" and not two different plants, see Sukhu, *Shaman*, 88, 219n.9. See also my discussion of this issue in Chapter 5, Section 7.

[1146] This epigraph summarizes the olfactory symbolism seeded throughout "Encountering Sorrow" (*Lisao* 離騷) a poem traditionally attributed to poet-statesman Qu Yuan 屈原 (ca. late 4th–early 3rd cent. BCE) that is preserved in the *Songs of Chu* (*Chuci* 楚辭), see CC:1.3–47. Thoroughwort, sweet basil, and wild ginger are sweet smelling plants that were traditionally worn as bodily adornments and as kind of perfume, but poetically function as emblems of virtue, here noted by Hong Chu as the revered Confucian gentleman. This stands in contrast to manure, southernwood, and mugwort – the latter two being fragrant plants of lesser olfactory quality in the eyes of Qu Yuan – that represent people of inferior virtue or unwholesome conduct. The olfactory symbolism of "Encountering Sorrow" is discussed in detail in Sukhu, *Shaman*, 87–115, esp. 98–101 (as pertaining to the odorants noted by Hong Chu) and Sukhu, *Songs of Chu*, 30–34. It should be noted that while Sukhu frames his analysis as a discussion on "flower symbolism," many of the plants in questions were not valued for their flowers, but for their scented roots, stems, and leaves.

[1147] Read 身心 as 躬, following the *Leishuo* edition, Shang, "Xiang houpu," 7.

[1148] Omit 祓, following the *Leishuo* edition, Shang, "Xiang houpu," 7.

[1149] 予 in *Leishuo* edition, Shang, "Xiang houpu," 7.

smell as reflected in a body cleansed of dirt and grime. Moreover, as the previous three epigraphs elucidate, there is a deeper metaphorical layer to smell that reflects one's inner virtue that can be influenced by the conduct and moral character of those that surround us.[1150] Consequently, the revered Confucian gentleman (*junzi* 君子), an apt subject of discussion for a bureaucratic official such as Hong Chu, must not only wash his body, but must also guard himself against corrupt moral influence by ensuring that he finds companionship with those who equally value the Way of righteousness.

These parallel cultural connotations of cleanliness and virtue provide dual contexts in which to understand the graph *wen*. Consequently, hygiene practices would render a body with a pleasing odor that could be smelled (*wen*) and the cultivation of purifying virtue would create personal renown that could be heard (*wen*) by others. In other words, a person's perfumed body and personal acclaim could be recognized by all. Ultimately, Hong Chu envisions his catalogue on aromatics in the same dual fashion. More than just a practical manual describing aromatics, scenting equipment, and blending recipes – information that would provide sufficient insight into perfuming one's body – the treatise also represents a body of knowledge that is suitable for the gentleman who seeks scholarly elegance (*ya*) and a boundless renown that would be recognized by all.

[1150] In addition to the sources cited in the footnotes above, the use of aromatics to symbolize virtue is noted in Liu, *Songdai Xiangpu*, 17–20. For more on the importance of ritual lustration before ancient sacrifice, see my comments to Clouding the Imperial Palace Aromatic at HC#56.

[I] Aromatic Products 香之品

[Section One: Forty-Three Entries[1151]]

1) Dragon Brain Aromatic (camphor → ngai camphor → common camphor) 龍腦香

[1a] The *Miscellaneous Morsels from Youyang*[1152] states, "It is exported from Persia[1153].

[1151] Individual entries are distinguished according to the table of contents of the Huacheng xylographic edition of the *Baichuan* held by Harvard University.

[1152] The *Miscellaneous Morsels from Youyang* (*Youyang zazu* 酉陽雜俎) is a tales of the strange anthology compiled by Duan Chengshi 段成式 (803–863) in the ninth century. It collects reports and stories on naturalistic items, anomalous activities, and local habits and customs. The name of the text is derived from Mt. Xiaoyou (*Xiaoyou shan* 小酉山), located in present-day Hunan, which was thought to hold a cache of secret writings and lost scriptures. Duan Chengshi believed his compilation was as valuable as this legendary collection and thus named his own work in honor of it. For more on Duan Chengshi's anthology, see Carrie E. Reed, *A Tang Miscellany: An Introduction to Youyang Zazu* (New York: Peter Lang, 2003).

[1153] Bosi 波斯 is a transcription for the Old Persian *pārsī* ("Persian") and was first used to refer to the Sasanian Empire (224–651). After Muslim Arabs conquered the Sasanian Persians in the seventh century, the term Dashi 大食 (Middle Persian: *tāzīk*, or "Arab") started to replace Bosi in Chinese works, yet due to possible confusion between the two ethnic groups, the territories they conquered, and their related histories, Bosi at times may have also referred to the Arabs and the Arabian Peninsula, see Schottenhammer, "Xiangyao," 124. Pertinent to the above quotation, as was long ago noted by Berthold Laufer, camphor was not produced in Sasanian Persia nor was it likely to have been brought to China by Persian ships, Laufer, *Sino-Iranica*, 478–79. Notably, the received edition of the *Miscellaneous Morsels from Youyang* also provides a second location of camphor production in Poli 婆利 which has been cut from Hong Chu's citation, see YYZZ:18.1326 (the modern editors suggest emending Poli to Polü 婆律, see p. 1327n.2.) The identity of the toponym Poli has stirred much debate and medieval Chinese sources often will place it at the eastern end of the Java Sea, see Wolters, *Indonesian Commerce*, 197–99. This has caused some to identify Poli as Bali (which in relation to our immediate interests, does *not* have camphor producing trees), while others identify it as Borneo (which does produce camphor). On the other hand, O.W. Wolters is content to leave Poli stand "at the eastern Javanese fringe of the civilized world of Indonesia," see Wolters, *Indonesian Commerce*, 219. Curiously, the received text of the *Materia Aromatica* contains Bolü 波律, which, if considered a variant of Polü (and not an error for Bosi), is often identified as Barus on the northwestern Sumatra coast, a famed exporter of camphor; see my comments to the Aromatic from Barus at HC#12. Returning to these matters later in his career, Paul Pelliot found the identity of Poli as Bali preferable over Borneo, yet believed the particular citation in the *Miscellaneous Morsels from Youyang* was corrupt and should be emended to Polü, i.e. Barus, see Paul Pelliot, *Notes on Marco Polo, Vol. II* (Paris: Imprimerie Nationale Librairie Adrien-Maisonneuve, 1963), 667. As one can see, there is much room for copyist error with the toponyms Bosi, Bolü, Polü, and Poli, the latter three of which were place names in various parts of Southeast Asia. This is not the end of geographical considerations, however. In the medieval period, Bosi – "Persia" – also seemingly came to designate an unknown polity or people of Southeast Asia, sometimes known as the "Bosi of the Southern Seas," that traded in several kinds of exotica; see the relevant footnote to HC#13a. It remains uncertain if Hong Chu's received text is a corruption of the *Miscellaneous Morsels from Youyang* or a deliberate (and imperfect) attempt at fixing it – in either regard I have chosen to emend the passage back to the original citation in the *Miscellaneous Morsels from Youyang*, leaving us presumably with the enigmatic Bosi "Persians" of maritime Southeast Asia. In contrast, Pelliot, by reference to the base text of *Miscellaneous Morsels from Youyang*, preferred to understand Bosi as referring to Iranian

The tree is eight or nine *zhang* in height and can be six or seven *chi* in circumference. The leaves are ovate with a white back. The tree is either fat or slender.

[1b] [The resin's] appearance resembles white pine[1154] resin and it produces a scent like the Chinese fir[1155] tree. The dried [solidified] resin is called Dragon Brain Aromatic while the clear [viscous] resin is called the Ointment of Barus. Its seeds resemble cardamom pods and its bark has overlapping segments.[1156]

[1c] The *Materia Medica of Overseas Drugs*[1157] states, "Its taste is bitter and pungent. Its [nature] is slightly warm. It is non-toxic. It treats the internal and external [causes] of eye obstructions[1158] and the three worms[1159]. It cures the five kinds of piles[1160], brightens the eyes, settles the mind, and occludes the essence[1161]. There is also Azure Dragon Brain which treats

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Persians who transported some camphor-like product of unknown specificity, see Pelliot, *Marco Polo*, Vol. 2, 667.

[1154] *Pinus armandii* (white pine), Hua, Buell, and Unschuld, *Dictionary of the Ben Cao Gang Mu*, 426 (#1109).

[1155] *Cunninghamia lanceolata*, syn. *Cunninghamia sinensis* (Chinese fir), Hua, Buell, and Unschuld, *Dictionary of the Ben Cao Gang Mu*, 426 (#953).

[1156] Older camphor trees have flakes of bark that curl and slough off, matching the description here of overlapping bark segments. The analogy to cardamom pods may be more than just a size or shape reference, as Schafer notes, poor quality cardamom was camphor flavored, see Schafer, *Golden Peaches*, 185.

[1157] The *Materia Medica of Overseas Drugs* (*Haiyao bencao* 海藥本草) is a lost materia medica compiled by Li Xun 李珣 (855?–930?) in the early tenth century. An ethnic Iranian born in China, Li Xun's compendium was devoted to drugs imported by foreign countries or introduced and cultivated in southern China. For a study on content of this work and the background of its author, see Chen, "Transmission of Foreign Medicine." I have found several of Li Xun's citations of early medieval sources to be uncharacteristically detailed, especially in comparison to other works preserving quotations of the same source. At times, my suspicions have been raised as to the authenticity of Li Xun's quotes (or perhaps, how Li Xun's quotes themselves have been preserved in later sources); I note these suspicions in my commentary and footnotes below. The anachronistic nature of Li Xun's quotations has been raised previously in Laufer, *Sino-Iranica*, 460–61.

[1158] Possibly equivalent to obstructive shade (*zhangyi* 障翳), which impairs vision due to the accumulation of heat *qi*, see Zhang and Unschuld, *Dictionary of the Ben Cao Gang Mu*, 674.

[1159] Also known as the Three Corpses (*sanshi* 三尸), there are pathogenic biospiritual parasites that are believed to bring disease and hasten death. They are often the target of macrobiotic and bio-spiritual therapies promoted by Daoists.

[1160] For differing lists that constitute the five kinds of piles, see Zhang and Unschuld, *Dictionary of the Ben Cao Gang Mu*, 547.

[1161] I am unsure of the reading here. This might refer to restraining the release of semen during wet dreams, see Zhang and Unschuld, *Dictionary of the Ben Cao Gang Mu*, 262.

wind papules[1162]. It is best when added to an ointment and decocted. One cannot daub the eyes [with it]."[1163]

[1d] The best is luminescent and clear like flakes of snow. If exposed for a long time to the wind and sun or if [its appearance] is like wheat bran, it will be of poor quality. It is said that when storing it, mix it with black soybeans, glutinous rice, and rosary peas so that it will not deteriorate.[1164]

[1e] Nowadays, furthermore, there is a difference between fresh and heated [varieties]. That which is called Fresh Dragon Brain is superior and the kind recorded here. The utmost marvelous kind is called Plum Blossom Dragon Brain. The kind exposed to flames that sublimates and solidifies into clumps is called Heated Dragon Brain. Its smell is diminished and weak, therefore cover it over with other items to transfer [its scent].[1165]"

[1a] 酉陽雜俎云：出波律[1166]國，樹高八九丈，可六七尺圍，葉圓而背白。其樹有肥瘦。[1167]

[1162] Itchy skin irritations caused by pathogenic winds, see Zhang and Unschuld, *Dictionary of the Ben Cao Gang Mu*, 172.

[1163] The *Materia Medica of Overseas Drugs* as preserved in the *Systematic Materia Medica* clarifies that dabbing the eyes cause injury to the person, see BCGM:2.1966 [蒼龍腦/主治].

[1164] The received version of the *Newly Revised Materia Medica* claims that poor quality camphor is said to resemble sparrow droppings (*que shi* 雀屎). Additionally, the preservation technique substitutes charcoal (*tan* 炭) for black soybeans, see XXBC:13.338. For later concerns over arresting the volatilization of camphor, see R. A. Donkin, *Dragon's Brain Perfume: An Historical Geography of Camphor* (Leiden: Brill, 1999), 38.

[1165] This last sentence is difficult to interpret. I believe it is discussing how to impart the smell of sublimated camphor to other objects.

[1166] Read 律 as 斯, following YYZZ:18.1326.

[1167] Cf. YYZZ:18.1326; cf. BCGM:2.1965 [龍腦香/集解]. In the received version of the *Miscellaneous Morsels from Youyang*, the passage continues on to explain how some contend the slender trees produce the Ointment of Barus while others claim the oil originates from the fatter ones. It then describes the extraction method where harvesters split open the tree to allow the more viscous camphor to flow out and gather it inside pits dug into the ground. Ultimately, I am skeptical Hong Chu possessed a copy of the *Miscellaneous Morsels from Youyang*, he may have copied this passage from the *Extensive Records of the Taiping Era*; see my comments to *Bīrzai* Aromatic at HC#51 and relevant footnotes therein.

[1b] 形似松[1168]脂，作杉木氣。乾脂謂之龍腦香，清脂謂之波律膏。子似豆蔻，皮有甲錯。[1169]

[1c] 海藥本草云：味苦辛，微溫，無毒。主內外障眼，三蟲，療五痔，明目，鎮心，秘精。又有蒼龍腦，主風疹黈，入膏煎良，不可點眼。[1170]

[1d] 明淨如雪花者善，久經風日，或如麥麩者不佳。云合黑豆，糯米，相思子貯之，不耗。[1171]

[1e] 今復有生熟之異。稱生龍腦，即上之所載是也。其絕妙者。目曰梅花龍腦。有經火飛結成塊者，謂之熟龍腦，氣味差薄焉，蓋易入他物，故也。[1172]

[COMMENTS] Medieval camphor was the solidified oleoresin from the tropical *Dryobalanops aromatica* (syns. *D. sumatrensis*, *D. camphora*) tree indigenous to northern Sumatra, the southern Malay Peninsula, and northern Borneo.[1173] The strongly scented camphor crystals were known to the Chinese as Dragon Brain Aromatic (*longnao xiang* 龍腦香). Not every *D. aromatica* tree contained deposits of camphor within its trunk (some medieval estimates claim only one in ten trees), making the commercially traded good difficult to obtain and motivated the performance of various religious ceremonies before

[1168] Read 松 as 白松, following XXBC:13.338.
[1169] Unattributed, paraphrased quote from the *Newly Revised Materia Medica*; cf. XXBC:13.338–339; cf. BCGM:2.1965 [龍腦香/集解].
[1170] Cf. BCGM:2.1965–1966 [龍腦香/氣味, 主治; 蒼龍腦/主治]; cf. HYBC:3.55–56.76.
[1171] Unattributed, paraphrased quote from the *Newly Revised Materia Medica*; cf. XXBC:13.338–339; cf. BCGM:2.1965 [龍腦香/集解].
[1172] I understand this passage as a personal observation of Hong Chu.
[1173] For a map depicting the classical distribution of this lofty forest-emergent species, see Wheatley, "Geographical Notes," 102. R.A. Donkin reports that camphor exported from Borneo was possibly harvested from *D. lanceolata* given the relative rarity of *D. aromatica* there, see Donkin, Dragon's Brain, 51.

local harvesters commenced their arduous search.[1174] In terms of extraction, a tree containing camphor was typically cut down and split into logs to expedite collection. Oftentimes a viscous oleoresin was collected from the split ends of the logs or was alternatively collected by tapping a standing tree.[1175] This yellowish resin was considered a secondary camphor product and traded under the name Ointment of Barus (*bolü gao* 波律膏)[1b], otherwise known as the Aromatic of Barus [HC#12]. Good quality camphor has a bright, clear, menthol-like aroma that many today might associate with a "medicinal" smell.

As noted in Hong Chu's personal observation above [1e], several grades of camphor were commercially traded in the late medieval period. The comments in the *Materia Aromatica* are the earliest recorded detailed description of such commercial classifications.[1176] Hong Chu's entry distinguishes between five different types of camphor. At first, there is a broad tripartite distinction between natural camphor crystals, known chemically as a kind of stearoptene, that were traded as "crude" or "fresh" (*sheng* 生) camphor, a viscous oleoresin known as the Ointment of Barus noted above, and a camphor product created through the old alchemical technique of sublimation (*fei* 飛), called "refined" or "heated" (*shu* 熟) camphor. Secondary distinctions were then made by contemporary

[1174] Ludwik Sternbach, "Camphor in India," *Vishveshvaranand Indological Journal* 54, no. 1/2 (1974): 425–26; Donkin, *Dragon's Brain*, 178–83.
[1175] The extraction process is described in Yamada, *Tōa kōryō shi kenkyū*, 39–40, 55–57; Donkin, *Dragon's Brain*, 40–44. For early twentieth century photographs of camphor harvesting, see Donkin, *Dragon's Brain*, 175, 179.
[1176] Derek Heng claims the *Materia Aromatica* contains the "first detailed description of the different types of resinous camphor," see Derek Heng, "Southeast Asian Primary Products and Their Impact on Chinese Material Culture in the Tenth to Seventeenth Centuries," in *Imperial China and Its Southern Neighbours*, ed. Victor H. Mair and Liam C. Kelley (Singapore: ISEAS Publishing, 2015), 218; this is repeated in Derek Heng, "Premodern Island-Southeast-Asian History in the Digital Age: Opportunities and Challenges through Chinese Textual Database Research," *Bijdragen Tot de Taal-, Land- En Volkenkunde* 175, no. 1 (2019): 40. There are earlier records that list different grades of camphor, but none offer clear descriptions of the materials; see, for example, the discussion of camphor tribute from Borneo in 977 below (and relevant footnotes).

merchants: if the camphor crystals were intact in the shape of a flower the product was called Plum Blossom Dragon Brain (*meihua longnao* 梅花龍腦), but if the crystals were small and mixed with bits of wood (possibly detritus from the harvesting process) the product was called Azure Dragon Brain (*cang longnao* 蒼龍腦)[1c].[1177]

Due to their rarity, colorless camphor crystals remained the most prized camphor product throughout the late medieval period, but more easily attainable substitutes were eventually discovered. These included sublimated and distilled camphor varieties from the shrub-like *Blumea balsamifera*, now commonly known as ngai camphor [HC#18], as well as common camphor extracted from a different family of East Asian tree, the *Cinnamomum camphora*. This latter type emerged as the principal camphor commodity in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries and should not be conflated with medieval camphor harvested from the *D. aromatica* (we will return to common camphor below).[1178]

Throughout the following discussion I will continue to refer to the crystalline camphor flakes of the *D. aromatica* simply as camphor, but secondary scholarship will sometimes refer to this substance as Borneo camphor (the name which gave rise to its main

[1177] For further discussion of camphor types and grades, often based upon appearance, purity, or processing methods, see Yamada, *Tōa kōryō shi kenkyū*, 55–59; Paul Pelliot, *Marco Polo,* Vol. 2, 668–70; Heng, "Chinese Material Culture," 219; Roderich Ptak, "Camphor in East and Southeast Asian Trade, c. 1500. A Synthesis of Portuguese and Asian Sources," in *Vasco Da Gama and the Linking of Europe and Asia*, ed. Anthony Disney and Emily Booth (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 145–46. Some of the designations noted in the *Materia Aromatica* appear in earlier Song tributary records, for example, Azure Dragon Brain (cited in the *Materia Medica of Overseas Drugs*) arrived in 966 (see also following footnote), Fresh Dragon Brain (noted by Hong Chu) arrived in 986, and Heated Dragon Brain (noted by Hong Chu) arrived in 1011, see Lin, *Songdai xiangyao*, 170, 174, 179, respectively. There have been attempts at coordinating medieval Chinese and Arabic nomenclature for different grades of camphor with varying levels of agreement between them; see Yamada, *Tōa kōryō shi kenkyū*, 57 and Gerolamo Emilio Gerini, *Researches on Ptolemy's Geography of Eastern Asia: Further India and Indo-Malay Archipelago* (London: Royal Geographical Society, 1909), 441–43n.1; see also passing comments in Donkin, *Dragon's Brain*, 115–20; Pelliot, *Marco Polo,* Vol. 2, 670.

[1178] Donkin, *Dragon's Brain*, 37–38; Heng, "Chinese Material Culture," 216–17. Chinese camphor started to outpace Indonesian camphor as early as the fifteenth century with the rise of Portuguese maritime trade, see Ptak, "Camphor," 151.

chemical terpene derivative, borneol). To avoid confusion regarding the historical origins of camphor – the medieval Chinese knew it chiefly as a product of Sumatra and the southern Malay Peninsula – I will refrain from calling it Borneo camphor.[1179] The rulers of Borneo had minimal contact with China up through the seventh century and the island's first recorded tribute delegation bestowing camphor was only sent at the end of the tenth century, in 977.[1180]

Imported camphor appears to have been introduced into China around the middle of the first millennia, roughly the same time it entered India where it came to be known as *karpūra*. This was one name among many others that were related to camphor's perceived cooling properties and association with the moon.[1181] The term *karpūra* is attested in Chinese sources due to the pilgrim monk Xuanzang 玄奘 (602–664) who mentioned a camphor producing *karpūra* tree in his description of southern India [HC#80]. In general, and in spite of some claims based on poor or incomplete evidence, camphor appeared relatively late in the trans-regional maritime commerce of Southeast Asia. This point is supported by the fact

[1179] Secondary scholarship will also sometimes call it Barus camphor, for the port of Barus on Sumatra. While, this is more appropriate for our concerns, classical Chinese texts generally reserved "Barus" for denoting camphor oil, i.e. Ointment of Barus.

[1180] SongS:489.14094. Five different types of camphor were sent at this time: a single *katī* of "camphor in great flakes" (*dapian longnao* 大片龍腦), eight *katī* of a "secondary grade" (*di er deng* 第二等), eleven *katī* of a "tertiary grade" (*di san deng* 第三等), twenty *katī* of "rice-grain camphor" (*mi longnao* 米龍腦), and twenty *katī* of Azure Dragon Brain. In addition, five boards of camphor wood were also sent. For further discussion on this embassy and others arriving from Borneo, see Wolters, *Indonesian Commerce*, 175–76; Ptak, "Camphor," 145; cf. Donkin, *Dragon's Brain*, 211; cf. Heng, "Chinese Material Culture," 217; cf. Liu, *Songdai Xiangpu*, 130 (all erroneously noting only three kinds of camphor tribute from Borneo). In the thirteenth century, Borneo was known to produce four different kinds of camphor, see Hirth and Rockhill, *Chau Ju-Kua*, 156. Even after good relations were established and despite the relatively short distance, the Chinese did not typically import camphor directly from Borneo, but relied upon Malayan middlemen, see Ptak, "Camphor," 155. The Chinese aversion to navigating Bornean waters is likely due to the numerous shoals and reefs the populate the South China Sea, see Haw, "The Maritime Routes Between China and the Indian Ocean," 66.

[1181] Wolters, *Indonesian Commerce*, 68–69, 282n.29; James McHugh, "From Precious to Polluting: Tracing the History of Camphor in Hinduism," *Material Religion* 10, no. 1 (2014): 30–53. On the various Indic names for camphor, numbering over sixty, see Sternbach, "Camphor in India," 427–31.

of camphor's absence in both classical Greek and Roman sources, appearing only in the medical treatises of the Byzantine Greeks.[1182]

The prevailing belief is that camphor first appeared in China during the sixth and seventh centuries, largely as the result of state-level tribute exchanges.[1183] Yet, due to the unlikely discovery of early trade correspondence near Dunhuang by Aural Stein in the early twentieth century, we can push the entrance of camphor into China two centuries earlier through the enterprising efforts of Central Asian merchants. These documents are known to scholars as the *Sogdian Ancient Letters* and of the five letters well preserved (several others are fragmentary), three were written by Sogdian merchants to their trading partners, revealing insights into their commercial ventures around the Tarim Basin. On the basis of historical events explained in Letter II, the entire lot of letters have been dated to the early part of the fourth century, just after the sack of Luoyang in 311. Specifically to our concerns, we find the term for camphor (Sogdian *kprwh*) in the fragments of Letter VI. The arrangement of the letter fragments remains uncertain, but the relevant passage seems to speak to purchasing camphor at Loulan, per the written instructions of a family member residing further east at Dunhuang.[1184] The other documents discuss several commercial goods, including musk [HC#2], pepper, gold, and woolen cloth, thus we can provisionally conclude camphor was one of the commodities passing through northwestern China in Sogdian hands.[1185] We can

[1182] For early Western citations to camphor, see Wolters, *Indonesian Commerce*, 148–50; Donkin, *Dragon's Brain*, 105–08. The claim that Dioscorides knew of camphor in the first century appears to have been incorrectly asserted by Ibn Serapion in the twelfth century, see Donkin, *Dragon's Brain*, 91, 105.
[1183] Heng, "Chinese Material Culture," 37–38.
[1184] This passage is reconstructed and translated in Prods Oktor Skjærvø, "Sogdian Notes," *Acta Orientalia* 37 (1976): 113–14. The author of the letter, Farnxunt, was "clearly the head of the family at Dunhuang," see de la Vaissière, *Sogdian Traders*, 55–56; see also the map of the Tarim Basin with Sogdian place names in de la Vaissière, 59.
[1185] For a discussion on the letters, their dating, and their importance to understanding fourth century Sogdian trade networks, see de la Vaissière, *Sogdian Traders*, 43–70.

glean little else about the use of this oleoresin, but camphor's presence in the *Sogdian Ancient Letters* points to an active supra-regional trade network moving camphor across Southeast Asia by the fourth century. This camphor more than likely originated in Sumatra (or possibly, the southern Malay Peninsula) and travelled across the Bay of Bengal aboard the ships of Sumatran Malays or South Indians, before moving into the hands of Sogdian trading firms who transported the goods into northwestern China.[1186]

Outside of the *Sogdian Ancient Letters*, camphor does not appear in official imperial Chinese sources until the *Book of Liang* (*Liangshu* 梁書), a dynastic history of the Liang dynasty (502–557) completed in 635. In this work, camphor is noted as a product of the kingdom of Langkasuka (Langyaxiu 狼牙脩), on the eastern coast of the Malay Peninsula in the vicinity of present-day Patani, along with Sinking Aromatic (aloeswood [HC#3]), and Jian Aromatic (lesser-grade aloeswood [HC#22]).[1187] The term used to denote camphor in this source is not Dragon Brain Aromatic, however, but the Aromatic from Barus (*polü xiang* 婆律香), suggesting it referred to the camphoraceous oil. There is some question as to whether the early Daoist pharmacologist Tao Hongjing 陶弘景 (456–536) knew of camphor, but if we are to trust the passages attributed to him, he knew only the Aromatic from Barus,

[1186] This speculative trans-India passage is supported by Étienne de la Vaissière, but one could also argue the transshipment of camphor directly into the ports of northern Vietnam and southern China where we have evidence of Sogdian activity by the third century, see Frantz Grenet, "Les marchands sogdiens dans les mers du Sud à l'époque préislamique," *Cahiers d'Asie centrale*, Cahiers d'Asie centrale, 1/2 (1996): 73 and brief comments in Eugen Ciurtin, "Notice sur le camphre en Inde. Review Article on Donkin 1999," *Bulletin d'études Indiennes* 22/23 (2005–2004): 556–57. If the fragments of Letter VI are reconstructed properly, the fact that a family in Dunhuang was seeking to purchase camphor in the markets of Luolan further west suggest the products entered from the west over the Pamirs.

[1187] LS:54.48.795, trans. Paul Wheatley, "Langkasuka," *T'oung Pao*, Second Series, 44, no. 4/5 (1956): 390–91. Wheatley's translation, however, does not distinguish between the two grades of aloeswood, see Wheatley, 390, 409. The proper reading is given in Yamada, *Tōa kōryō shi kenkyū*, 47, see also 185–86.

the same viscous oleoresin as cited in the *Book of Liang*.[1188] Notably, Aetius of Amida (ca. 500–ca. 575), a younger contemporary of Tao Hongjing, was the first among the Byzantine Greeks to mention camphor (Latin *caphura*), but he was also keenly aware of its rarity, prescribing it only "if an abundance is available."[1189]

Crystalline Dragon Brain Aromatic is noted in the Chinese imperial history of the Sui dynasty (581–618), where soon after ascending the throne Emperor Yang 煬 (r. 604–618) sent a diplomatic envoy to a different kingdom on the Malay Peninsula, known as Chitu 赤土, near present-day Kelantan. According to the *Book of Sui* (*Suishu* 隋書), we are told the Chinese delegation was bathed in gifts of perfumes, scented oils, and fragrant flowers, and furthermore was given locally sourced camphor as tribute.[1190] Gifts of camphor from polities

[1188] As explained by Yamada Kentarō, a passage in the now lost *Materia Medica of Overseas Drugs* as preserved in the early twelfth century *daguan* 大觀 edition of the *Verified and Classified Materia Medica* (*Zhenglei bencao* 證類本草) claims the following: "I submit that Tao Hongjing stated, 'It [i.e. camphor] grows in the Lü country of the Western Seas. It is the resin of the trees of Polü [Barus]. It has the appearance of liquidambar,'" 謹按陶弘景云：生西海律國，是波律樹中脂也，如白膠香狀。HYBC:3.55–56.76; Yamada, *Tōa kōryō shi kenkyū*, 44. Yamada expresses hesitancy in this ascription, noting that the compilers of the medical text also assert that camphor was only first incorporated into the Tang edition materia medica, well after Tao Hongjing's death. The received edition of the Tang-era *Newly Revised Materia Medica* also describes the camphor entry as "newly appended," suggesting the substance was unknown previously, see XXBC:13.339. Furthermore, the *Materia Medica of Overseas Drugs* is clearly corrupt, as both Lü 律 and Polü 波律 should be emended to Bolü, i.e. Barus; see also relevant comments to footnotes at HC#1a. Lastly, according to Yamada, the additional details about how camphor is to be use medicinally (not outlined here) is so thorough that it also raises suspicion of such an early date. In contrast to Yamada, O.W. Wolters accepts the veracity of the *Materia Medica of Overseas Drugs* claims without qualification, see O.W. Wolters, "The 'Po-Ssŭ Pine Trees,'" *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 23, no. 2 (1960): 338; Wolters, *Indonesian Commerce*, 89, 122, 289n.14, 302n.81. Ultimately, this discussion is further obscured by the fact that the *Newly Revised Materia Medica* attributes knowledge of camphor to Tao Hongjing, but the information is wholly different from what the *Materia Medica of Overseas Drugs* ascribes. The former source attributes the following simple statement to Tao Hongjing, where it is mixed in with numerous other comments about foreign aromatics: "Foreign countries use the Aromatic from Barus to brighten the eyes," 外國用婆律香明目。XXBC:12.314. I cautiously accept the passage preserved in the *Newly Revised Materia Medica* as genuine to Tao Hongjing, but, following Yamada, reject as hearsay the comments in the *Materia Medica of Overseas Drugs*.

[1189] Wolters, *Indonesian Commerce*, 149, 312n.76; Sternbach, "Camphor in India," 436; Yamada, *Tōa kōryō shi kenkyū*, 42; Pelliot, *Marco Polo*, Vol. 2, 664.

[1190] SuiS:1834–1835, trans. Paul Wheatley, "Ch'ih-t'u," *Journal of the Malayan Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society* 30, no. 1 (1957): 125–26. For the identity of Chitu as Kelantan, see Wheatley, 133; for more on this little-known polity, see Wolters, *Indonesian Commerce*, 173–74, 321n.18. The Chinese delegation returned, after stopping in the rich ports of northern Vietnam, in the year 610, see Wang, "Nanhai Trade," 66n.22.

in Southeast Asia slowly increased in number during the Tang (618–907), but more frequent tributes, as well as a greater variety of camphor products, arrived during the Song (960–1279).[1191] Regardless of this increase in volume, the total amount of camphor goods sent with diplomatic delegations were generally insignificant in relation to the gifts of more popular aromatics, such as aloeswood or frankincense [HC#9].[1192]

Scholars who have examined the history of camphor in China often overlook early references in the Chinese Buddhist canon.[1193] Notably, the most conspicuous Chinese name for camphor, Dragon Brain Aromatic, does not first appear in the *Book of Sui*, but within translated Chinese Buddhist scriptures.[1194] For example, we find Dragon Brain Aromatic listed among several kinds of incense in the *Miscellaneous Collection of Dhāraṇī* (*Tuoluoni zaji* 陀羅尼雜集; T1336), an early esoteric work compiled in the first half of the sixth century.[1195] Dragon Brain Aromatic also appears in the *Saṃghāṭa Sutra* (*Sengqiezha jing* 僧

[1191] See list in Hans Bielenstein, *Diplomacy and Trade in the Chinese World, 589-1276* (Leiden: Brill, 2005), 89.
[1192] For discussion on the ebb and flow of camphor tributes to the Chinese emperor, see Wolters, *Indonesian Commerce*, 233; Donkin, *Dragon's Brain*, 214–17; Ptak, "Camphor," 150–51; Heng, "Chinese Material Culture," 216–22; Derek Heng, "Digital Age," 29–57. A tabulation of the tribute delegations under the Southern Song who gifted aromatics can be found in Lin, *Songdai xiangyao*, 168–193. Schafer's comment that camphor was "the most prized aromatic substance," is unfounded, Schafer, *Vermilion Bird*, 197. No more than two dozen catties of camphor were ever offered as tribute by a single delegation; this stands in striking contrast to both frankincense and aloeswood where upwards of one thousand catties was offered on several occasions, see Hans Bielenstein, *Diplomacy and* Trade, 87–90.
[1193] For example, Paul Pelliot concluded that he could not find a reference to Dragon Brain before the seventh century, yet there are several in the Buddhist canon, see Pelliot, *Marco Polo*, Vol. 2, 669. The more recent digital search by Derek Heng for camphor in classical Chinese sources also omits the Buddhist canon, see Heng, "Digital Age."
[1194] There might be an even earlier reference to camphor using different terminology in the Chinese Buddhist canon where it is used as an ingredient for making colored and scented water for the Buddha bathing ritual. The earliest translation of the ritual, possibly dating from the fifth century, describes the creation of white colored water with *qiulong* 丘隆, Middle Chinese **kʰjəu-ljuŋ*, possibly a corrupt transcription for *karpūra* or another underlying term, see T696:798b17. Notably, the other two medieval translations of this ritual both include camphor as an ingredient, supporting this tentative identification for *qiulong*; see T697:799b06 and T698:800b18.
[1195] T1336:608a22; for more on the composite nature of this work, see Shinohara, *Spells, Images, and Mandalas*.

伽吒經; T423), a text attributed to the Indian Buddhist immigrant *Upaśūnya who reputedly completed the translation in 538, but which is often assigned to the latter half of the sixth century.[1196] Specifically, camphor is listed along with sandalwood [HC#4] and other aromatics as fine and wondrous perfumes for adorning the body.[1197] In both of these cases, the use of an evocative Chinese name such as Dragon Brain Aromatic, as opposed to transcribing the underlying Indic term, suggests the name was readily understandable to Chinese audiences by the early-to-mid sixth century. For example, in the same passage that contains camphor, the *Miscellaneous Collection of Dhāraṇī* transcribes *tagara* (*duojialiu* 多伽留; valerian root? [HC#76]) and the unknown aromatic *polijia* 婆利伽 (Middle Chinese **bwâ-li-ga*[1198]), yet translates aloeswood, sandalwood, and frankincense using Chinese nomenclature that had been in circulation for well over a century. A Sanskrit version of the *Saṃghāṭī Sutra*, based on the texts recovered in 1931 from a *stūpa* in Gilgit and dated to no later than the middle of the seventh century, contains the standard *karpūra*.[1199] If this was the same term translated by Upaśūnya, there is no clear semantic connection to the Chinese neologism based on the auspicious dragon. As it stands now, the origin of this Chinese term for camphor remains obscure; it may simply be related to the visual appearance of clustered camphor crystals embellished through analogy to the draconic anatomy.[1200]

[1196] For the reputed date of the completion of this text, see the *Great Tang Record of Buddhist Works* (*Da Tang neidian lu* 大唐內典錄), T2149:270a19; for further discussion on the dating of this text and the Chinese translation, see Oskar von Hinüber, *The Saṃghāṭasūtra: A Popular Devotional Buddhist Sanskrit Text-Editio Maior* (Tokyo: The International Research Institute for Advanced Buddhology Soka University, 2021).
[1197] T423:973c01. The perfume is described as being used by a man who had lived a life of great luxury.
[1198] This term may be related to *bolijia* 波利迦, Middle Chinese **bwâ-li-ka*, at T2128:592b05.
[1199] See von Hinüber, *The Saṃghāṭasūtra*, 106 (line 108), 106n.2002 (the Gilgit edition is manuscript "D").
[1200] As noted by the Tang editors of the *Newly Revised Materia Medica*, camphor was believed to resemble a dragon's brain, see XXBC:13.339. Naming natural resources after the anatomy of powerful animals was not uncommon. As Paul Pelliot notes, amber was given the name Tiger Soul (*hupo* 虎魄), and agate the name Horse Brain (manao 瑪瑙), see Pelliot, *Marco Polo*, Vol. 2, 669. Furthermore, the correlation between luxury imports from maritime Southeast Asia and the fantastic was noted by Edward Schafer who comments that

In comparison to other exotic aromatics, camphor appears relatively late in Chinese medieval sources and evidence suggests it may not have been widely available even after it was known through scriptural translations. For example, no camphor of any kind is listed among the Buddhist monk Daoshi's 道世 (d. 683) catalogue aromatics found in his *Forest of Pearls in the Garden of the Dharma* (*Fayuan zhulin* 法苑珠林; T2122), completed in 668.[1201] Elsewhere in this encyclopedic work, however, Daoshi comments that camphor resembles icy snow (*bingxue* 氷雪), an apt analogue for camphor crystals, suggesting he was aware of such a substance.[1202] On the other hand, it appears Daoshi did not have direct knowledge of camphor's properties or appearance since his language is borrowed from his close contemporary Daoxuan 道宣 (596–667), which was in turn was based on the earlier description offered by Xuanzang in 646.[1203]

The first Chinese materia medica to incorporate camphor was the mid-seventh century *Newly Revised Materia Medica* (*Xinxiu bencao* 新修本草) compiled during the Tang, hence the commonplace citation throughout Hong Chu's *Materia Aromatica* as the "Tang" *Materia Medica*.[1204] It is not evident from Hong Chu's entry, but two anonymized passages were taken from the *Newly Revised Materia Medica* [1b, 1d], consequently providing us a direct look at the earliest surviving elaborative descriptions of camphor in China. Notably, this work also compares the crystalline aromatic to snowflakes (*xuehua* 雪花). We might presume these descriptions, which also provide directions on proper storage,

"strange and precious substances brought from overseas were easily relegated in imagination to the dragons who rules the seas," Schafer, *Golden Peaches*, 166.

[1201] For a listing of the aromatics described by Daoshi, see Table 6.2.

[1202] T2122:505b11. Daoshi is summarizing aspects of Xuanzang's pilgrimage.

[1203] T2088:967a10 and T2087:932a12, respectively. For Xuanzang's remarks, see HC#80.

[1204] XXBC:13.338–39.

were not cribbed from Xuanzang, but made after the examination of camphor crystals such as those delivered as tribute in 642 from the kingdom of Udyāna (Wuchang 烏萇) located in the Swat River valley.[1205]

A few decades later, among the translation corpus of Yijing 義淨 (635–713), we find camphor listed as an ingredient for scented water used during the bathing the Buddha ceremony, yet it is left off the much longer list of thirty-two aromatics for the balneotherapy revealed by the goddess Sarasvatī in the *Sutra of Golden Light* (*Suvarṇa-prabhāsottama Sutra*; C. *Jinguang mingjing* 金光明經; T665).[1206] Curiously, however, we find the Ointment of Barus listed among the prescribed ingredients.[1207] Moreover, elsewhere in the same translation, camphor is listed along with gum guggul [HC#6], sandalwood, storax [HC#5], *tagara*, and frankincense as part of an incense blend burned as a rite for protecting the body.[1208] Outside of scriptural translations, Yijing also notes camphor in his record of travel to India *via* the maritime route. In comparing different types medicinal plants available in China and "the West" (India and surrounding regions), Yijing notes the availability of Dragon Brain from the Southern Seas, claiming that it is one of the few medicines that should be collected and known to the Chinese.[1209] This hints camphor may not have yet been widely available in China at this time. Eventually, Dragon Brain Aromatic became an

[1205] Édouard Chavannes, *Documents sur les Tou-kiue (Turcs) occidentaux* (Paris: Librairie d'Amerique et d'Orient, 1903), 126; see also Schafer, *Golden Peaches*, 167.
[1206] For the list of aromatics in the bathing the Buddha ceremony as translated by Yijing, see T698:800b16–18, trans. Boucher, "Bathing the Buddha," 67. For Yijing's list of ingredients in the balneotherapy revealed by Sarasvatī, see T665:435a01–17.
[1207] See my comments to camphor oil at HC#12.
[1208] T665:430c17–19.
[1209] As discussed in his *Record of Buddhist Practices Sent Home from the Southern Sea* (*Nanhai jigui neifa zhuan* 南海寄歸內法傳; T2125), see T2125:223c14–17. Claims that Yijing was describing camphor oil are inaccurate, see e.g. Donkin, *Dragon's Brain*, 211–12. Equally, speculation that Yijing was referring to common camphor are unfounded.

integral component for East Asian Buddhist esoteric rites as one of the Five Aromatics (*wuxiang* 五香), but the history of the development of these five aromatics remains unstudied.[1210]

Camphor was not particularly popular among medieval Daoists, although it was known to have some medicinal value, especially for treatment of the eyes.[1211] In a rare citation, the *Various Accounts of the Essential Elements of the Three Caverns* (*Sandong shuji zashuo* 三洞樞機雜說; DZ839) preserves a passage from the now lost *Materia Aromatica of Divine Immortals* (*Shenxian xiangpu* 神仙香譜), claiming that only crude (i.e., crystalline) camphor was allowed to be used, as the aroma of heated (sublimated) camphor was considered inferior.[1212] The *Various Accounts of the Essential Elements of the Three Caverns* is sometimes treated as a product of the Tang, but the appearance of sublimated camphor suggests the text was likely redacted up through the Song.[1213] Overall, in spite of the fact that camphor may have been introduced to the Chinese frontiers as early as the fourth century, the

[1210] Camphor is listed with aloeswood, sandalwood, cloves, and saffron, see for example, the eighth century *Protocol Manual for Achieving the Yoga and Contemplative Wisdom of the King of the Wondrous Lotus Sutra* (*Chengjiu miaofa lianhua jing wang yuqie guanzhi yigui* 成就妙法蓮華經王瑜伽觀智儀軌), T1000:595a18–19.

[1211] See, for example, the use of camphor for treating cataracts in the *Emergency Prescriptions to Keep up your Sleeve*, DZ1306:6.2b, 4b–5a, 5b; see also comments in Schafer, *Golden Peaches*, 167; Heng, "Digital Age," 39–40.

[1212] DZ839:11b.

[1213] Kristofer Schipper dates the *Various Accounts of the Essential Elements of the Three Caverns* to no later than the Tang, see Schipper and Verellen, *The Taoist Canon*, 355. It is almost certain, however, that the *Materia Aromatica of Divine Immortals* postdates the Tang. For one, the text refers to Heated Dragon Brain which is first noted as a foreign tribute in 1011, thus pointing to a compilation date no earlier than the eleventh century; see my comments to Aina Aromatic at HC#18. Secondly, the title is clearly modeled on the materia aromatica genre and thus must postdate, at a minimum, the *Materia Aromatica* of Shen Li, again pointing to a date no earlier than the eleventh century. Taken together, the evidence suggests the *Materia Aromatica of Divine Immortals* was compiled no earlier than the late eleventh century, but I would further suggest it even postdates Hong Chu's *Materia Aromatica* of the early twelfth century. Consequently, it would seem the *Various Accounts of the Essential Elements of the Three Caverns* was edited up though the early twelfth century.

circulation of this aromatic may have been rather limited through the Tang, especially when contrasted with its more widely attested uses in the following centuries.[1214]

Historically, camphor needs to be distinguished from common camphor (*zhangnao* 樟腦) extracted from the *Cinnamomum camphora* tree native to southern and eastern China, northern Vietnam, Taiwan, and Japan. This camphoraceous substance could be distilled using wood chips typically cut from the branches, bole, and buttress roots of the tree. When the distillate was cooled it produced a scented yellowish oil and a small amount of white camphor grains that could be further refined through additional sublimation.[1215] In spite of camphorwood's ancient use as a building material, clues pointing to the manufacturing of common camphor do not appear in Chinese records until the mid-to-late eleventh century.

Until recently, it was believed the first description of native camphor extraction was found in the *Classified Essentials of Materia Medica* (*Bencao pinhui jingyao* 本草品彙精要) from 1503. It provides unusually detailed directions and is worth quoting at length:

> Now, when manufacturing common camphor, first lay bricks to build a furnace and place several iron pots on top. Cut the tree into very large pieces, removing the branches and bark. Using an eagle-beaked channeling axe, chop [the logs] into coarse chips and place five *jin* of wood into each pot, immersing [the chips] in approximately three fingers of water. Cover [the pots] using porcelain basins and seal the seams with wet cloth to prohibit the venting of steam. Using weak and strong flames heat each [vessel] and after two double-hours stop and wait for them to cool. The camphor will volatilize and condensate on the bottom of the [overturned] basins. Brush with a feather and place [the collected camphor] inside a porcelain vessel and re-seal it. This is called crude camphor.[1216]
> 凡造樟腦，先砌上竈一座，上置鐵鍋數口，伐其木極大者，截剝去枝皮，以鷹嘴槽斧，砍斫粗塊，每鍋下木五斤入，水浸過三指許，以瓷盆覆之，濕布密塞，縫處勿令氣泄，各用文武火熬，兩時方止候冷，其腦升凝於盆底。以翎掃裝瓷器內仍封之，謂之青腦。

[1214] See discussion of this point in Heng, "Digital Age," 40.
[1215] Donkin, *Dragon's Brain*, 42–43; Yamada, *Tōa kōryō shi kenkyū*, 64–65 and the sources cited therein.
[1216] As cited in Yamada, *Tōa kōryō shi kenkyū*, 64. The remainder of the passage describes further refinement through sublimation, thus I translate *qing* 青 above as "crude." A different extraction and refinement method is described in the *Systematic Materia Medica*, see BCGM:2.1968–1969 [樟腦/集解].

This passage describes a method of camphor extraction through water distillation. After fragmenting the wood of the *C. camphora* into chips and sealing them inside heated vessels with water, the camphor vaporizes and condenses on the overturned porcelain basins which function as lids and collection plates. The subsequent section describes how the crude camphor is further refined through sublimation. The *Classified Essentials of Materia Medica* also provides three polychromatic illustrations of this process. The first depicts a man using a beak-like axe to chip the hewn logs of the camphor tree into fragments; the second shows the weighing of camphor chips that are to be placed inside pots atop the furnace; the last depicts the distillation and refinement of the final camphor product using porcelain bowls.[1217] This series of images contrast with the depiction of camphor collecting from the *D. aromatica*. This show a man brushing (scooping?) white crystals off a piece of wood, hewn from the tree in the background, into a large collection basket.[1218] Eventually, more complex distillation techniques were devised for the *C. camphora* in the coming centuries and, outside of synthetic camphor production, this tree emerged as the primary source for the modern camphor trade.

[1217] These illustrations are depicted in Donkin, *Dragon's Brain*, 221–23. The images are also available as part of the online digital collection of the Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin found here: https://digital.staatsbibliothek-berlin.de/werkansicht?PPN=PPN3346157326&PHYSID=PHYS_2362&view=overview-toc&DMDID=DMDLOG_0031; https://digital.staatsbibliothek-berlin.de/werkansicht?PPN=PPN3346157326&PHYSID=PHYS_2363&view=overview-toc&DMDID=DMDLOG_0031; https://digital.staatsbibliothek-berlin.de/werkansicht?PPN=PPN3346157326&PHYSID=PHYS_2364&view=overview-toc&DMDID=DMDLOG_0031. The images are found in Vol. 17, pp. 2362, 2363, 2364.

[1218] Illustration is reproduced in Ming Chen, "Fanciful Images from Abroad: Picturing the Other in *Bencao Pinhui Jingyao* 本草品彙精要," in *Imagining Chinese Medicine*, ed. Vivienne Lo and Penelope Barrett (Leiden: Brill, 2018), 306. The image is also available as part of the online digital collection of the Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin found here: https://digital.staatsbibliothek-berlin.de/werkansicht?PPN=PPN3346157326&PHYSID=PHYS_2347&view=overview-toc&DMDID=DMDLOG_0031. The image is found in Vol. 17, p. 2347.

Attested in Chinese documents since the Warring States, the Chinese camphor tree (*zhang* 樟), also known as camphor laurel, was at first harvested as a source of wood known for its resistance to insects and fungal infections.[1219] It is difficult to know when the Chinese started extracting camphor from the native *C. camphora*, but Marco Polo (1254–1324) was the first foreign observer to note its production in the late thirteenth century.[1220] Chinese sources provide earlier evidence. For example, the early thirteenth century *Treatise on the Barbarians* (*Zhufan zhi* 諸蕃志) cites common camphor (*zhangnao*) as one of the products exported to Śrīvijaya (Sanfoji 三佛齊), with its capital at present-day Palembang, in exchange for exotic wares.[1221] Moreover, by examining the documents in the *Collection of Institutional Matters of the Song* (*Song huiyao* 宋會要), Yamada Kentarō has shown that Chaozhou 潮州, in present-day Guangdong, was producing camphor by 1133 and that by a decade later both Shaozhou 韶州, in Guangdong, and Zhangzhou 漳州, in present-day Fujian, had also joined in production.[1222]

Recently, Liu Jingmin has gone to great efforts in restoring the lost *Materia Aromatica* of Shen Li 沈立 (1007–1078) and has consequently found a brief description of common camphor processing:

[1219] Donkin, *Dragon's Brain*, 61–64, 73.
[1220] Donkin, *Dragon's Brain*, 60; see also Yamada, *Tōa kōryō shi kenkyū*, 64; Pelliot, *Marco Polo*, Vol. 2, 670.
[1221] Yamada, *Tōa kōryō shi kenkyū*, 64. The long-standard English translation of the *Treatise on the Barbarians* hides the importance of this import by simply rendering it as "camphor," see Hirth and Rockhill, *Chau Ju-Kua*, 61. Common camphor was also reportedly exchanged for south Indian goods on Śrīvijaya, see Hirth and Rockhill, 88 (appropriately citing it as *zhangnao*).
[1222] Yamada, *Tōa kōryō shi kenkyū*, 64.The names "Chao[zhou] camphor" (*chaonao* 潮腦) and "Shao[zhou] camphor" (*shaonao* 韶腦) persisted in northern China into the modern period, see Gerini, *Researches on Ptolemy's Geography*, 441n.1; G.A. Stuart and F. Porter Smith, *Chinese Materia Medica* (Shanghai: Presbyterian Mission Press, 1911), 88; Pelliot, *Marco Polo*, Vol. 2, 670. There is an earlier reference to Shao camphor, see footnote below.

> Take one *liang* of common camphor [chips?] and seal it inside two vessels using wet paper and paste for the seams. Apply weak and strong flames to heat them. After half a double-hour take [the vessels] off and cool them, then [the camphor] is ready to use.[1223]
> 樟腦一兩，兩盞合之，以濕紙糊縫。文武火熁，半時取起冷用之。

Shen Li, writing in the mid-to-late eleventh century, does not specify if the original material is chipped camphorwood or already extracted camphor crystals, thus this passage could describe a process of initial extraction or further refinement. In either regard, a sublimation method is outlined above that aligns with other Chinese accounts of camphor processing in the eleventh and twelfth centuries, suggesting sublimation was used prior to the adoption of distillation for camphor extraction.[1224] Moreover, some of the language used by Shen Li mirrors that of the *Classified Essentials of Materia Medica* discussed above, lending strength to the claim that Shen Li was indeed discussing *C. camphora*.

Earlier notices for the manufacturing of common camphor require us to look outside of Chinese records. In general, these sources should be considered carefully and treated with caution. For example, the ninth century Arab physician Ibn Māsawayh (ca. 776–857) cites camphor as one of his five principle perfuming materials, noting that it can be refined through sublimation while also (separately) expressing awareness of camphorwood in China. But we need not assume these comments prove camphor was extracted from the *C. camphora* tree at this time.[1225] In the translation of the relevant passage by Martin Levey, Ibn Māsawayh discusses the harvesting of camphor crystals, derived from a piece of wood that arrived in the port of Basra, which are compared to white salt. This must refer to the famed

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[1223] SKQS:844.263b14–15; see also Liu, *Songdai Xiangpu*, 469. One of the blending recipes recorded by Shen Li also contained Shao camphor, i.e. common camphor from Shaozhou, thus predating the evidence provided by Yamada above by perhaps a century, see SKQS:844.287a12; see also Liu, *Songdai Xiangpu*, 474.
[1224] See my comments to ngai camphor at HC#18.
[1225] Such as presumed in Donkin, *Dragon's Brain*, 64, 73 (Donkin elsewhere seems to contradict his thesis, see p. 56). This is found in Ibn Māsawayh's *Treatise on the Properties of Simple Aromatics* (*Kitāb jawāhir al-ṭīb al-mufrada)*.

crystal-encrusted timber from the *D. aromatica* tree.[1226] It appears that Ibn Māsawayh then presumes this material to be the same camphorwood "used in the fine arts" of China which he heard smells of camphor.[1227] It is true that *C. camphora* naturally emits a strong scent of camphor, but Ibn Māsawayh never comments on camphor extraction through sublimation or distillation and, moreover, only speculates that the aromatic may come "from its wood."[1228]

The roughly contemporaneous *Miscellaneous Morsels from Youyang* (*Youyang zazu* 酉陽雜俎) by Duan Chengshi 段成式 (803–863) highlights the use of camphor trees (*zhang mu* 樟木) for constructing the famed dragon-boats of the coastal south, underscoring its continued utility for Chinese craftsmen in the ninth century.[1229] Native camphor extraction is never discussed, however, and the only camphor aromatic mentioned by Duan Chengshi is from the foreign *D. aromatica* [1a]. We should think that if a suitable camphor substitute was found in native Chinese trees, and moreover, that production was so great so as to come to the attention of Ibn Māsawayh, it would have been recorded by Duan Chengshi or some other Chinese commentator of the period, but this is not the case. Nevertheless, it is sometimes

[1226] It is sometimes noted that camphor crystals can solidify in the wood of the *C. camphora* tree, see e.g. Donkin, *Dragon's Brain*, 42; Schottenhammer, "Xiangyao," 133. It would appear that this is a rare phenomenon, however, since no ancient or medieval Chinese sources attest to this.
[1227] Martin Levey, "Ibn Māsawaih and His Treatise on Simple Aromatic Substances: Studies in the History of Arabic Pharmacology I," *Journal of the History of Medicine and Allied Sciences* 16, no. 4 (1961): 402. Levey identifies the camphor in this passage as "*Cinnamomum camphora* and others," Levey, 402n.53.
[1228] Levey, "Ibn Māsawaih," 402. I am thankful to Caleb McCarthy for working through the original passage in Arabic and providing an insightful discussion on Levey's translation. The term *muṣ"ad*, "to sublimate," is only used in the context of camphor refinement, not extraction, and is not connected to the subsequent discussion of Chinese camphorwood. Levey himself notes that Ibn Māsawayh only describes commercial products that are "in a dried or concentrated state ready to be worked on by the physician-pharmacist," Levey, 397. Pelliot notes that Ibn Sinā (980–1037) knew of Chinese camphor, but again this may simply refer to the camphor tree or camphorwood, not extracted camphor, see Pelliot, *Marco Polo*, Vol. 2, 670.
[1229] YYZZ:18.1289; see also Schottenhammer, "Xiangyao," 132–33.

claimed that the Chinese started extracting native camphor before the ninth century or during the Tang, but I am not aware of evidence supporting these speculative positions.[1230]

Until other evidence comes to light, it appears the Chinese did not make use of the native *C. camphora* trees for manufacturing camphor until the mid-to-late eleventh century. This timeframe roughly coincides with the compilation of the *Materia Aromatica* where, as noted earlier, a sublimated type of "heated" camphor is listed. There is strong reason to believe, however, this referred to the processing of *D. aromatica* or, possibly, *B. balsamifera*, not *C. camphora*.[1231] As we will see in the discussion of ngai camphor below [HC#18], camphor sublimation techniques seem to have first been adopted in Southeast Asia, at least according to extant documents. Consequently, Chinese manufacturers of common camphor may have first learned about camphor sublimation (or distillation) from foreign trading partners and subsequently applied the extraction techniques to indigenous camphor trees.[1232]

Two final issues are worthy of note regarding modern speculation of early trade in camphor. First, in 1941, Han Wai Toon 韓懷準 suggested the *Records of the Grand Historian* (*Shiji* 史記), completed in the first century BCE, contained a reference to camphor as a product traded in Panyu 番禺, a strategic commercial port on the Pearl River Delta.

[1230] The claim that camphor extraction occurred in China before the ninth century originates with I. H. Burkill, see e.g. Donkin, *Dragon's Brain*, 73n.14, 218n.52; Schottenhammer, "Xiangyao," 133n.117. According to Donkin, Burkhill provides no reason or evidence for his claim. That belief that camphor extraction was known during the Tang originates with Edward Schafer's claim that Chen Zangqi prescribed "native camphor" for cholera in the eighth century, Schafer, *Vermilion Bird*, 133, 292n.105; see also Donkin, *Dragon's Brain*, 218. Chen Zangqi prescribes foreign "Bosi" camphor for a variety of illnesses, but makes no mention of a native Chinese camphor, see BCGM:2.1968 [婆律香膏/附錄]; for more on the peculiar camphor terminology used by Chen Zangqi, see Pelliot, *Marco Polo*, Vol. 2, 668.

[1231] Additional camphor can be extracted from the wood chips of the *D. aromatica* and some other *Dryobalanops* species, see Ptak, "Camphor," 142–43.

[1232] Based on different line of reasoning, Derek Heng comes to the same conclusion, see Heng, "Chinese Material Culture," 221. Although his time frame may differ, Donkin also speculates the foreign distillation of camphor stimulated the Chinese practice, see Donkin, *Dragon's Brain*, 71 (cf. p. 169 where Donkin claims Chinese distillation occurred first).

Among a list of goods traded in that region is *guobu* 果布, which Han treats as a transcription of *kāpur*, the Malay term for camphor. This seems highly unlikely, even though some scholars treat this as firm evidence for a southern trade in this aromatic during the Western Han.[1233] Our suspicion should be raised by the fact that camphor does not reappear in Chinese records under any name for many centuries afterwards, in spite of the fact that other goods exchanged in the markets of Panyu, such as pearls, kingfisher feathers, rhinoceros horn, and tortoise shell, are well attested in early medieval sources. Furthermore, roughly contemporaneous glosses on the term *guobu* provide a different and arguably more natural reading. The commentary by Wei Zhao 韋昭 (204–273) reads *guobu* as two distinct items: fruit, which Wei Zhao claims refers to longan (*longyan* 龍眼), and cloth, which he claims refers to hemp cloth (*gebu* 葛布).[1234]

Lastly, there have been reports on a discovery a white camphor-like powder in a Western Han tomb in the Chinese far south, not far from the port of Panyu. In the late 1970s, two large pit graves were discovered at the site of Luobowan 羅泊灣 in Guangxi, both of which rivaled the famous tomb of the king of Nanyue in terms of opulence and quantity of recovered artifacts. Luobowan Tomb No. 1 is thought to have belonged to a local official with ties to the Nanyue court, while Tomb No. 2 is thought to belong to his wife. In Tomb No. 2, a *dou*-shaped censer was recovered in the western compartment that contained two rounded clumps of white powder.[1235] There is speculation that this archaeobotanical

[1233] See e.g., Guangzhou shi wenwu guanli weiyuanhui, *Guangzhou Han mu*, Vol. 1, 478; Sun, "*Handai wuzhi wenhua*, 413; Wang, Ma, and Li, "Zhongguo gudai xiangliao," 66. Han's hypothesis is noted in passing in Ptak, "Camphor," 159n.5; Shi Yuntao, "Sichou zhi lu yu Han dai xiangliao de shuru," *Zhongyuan wenhua yanjiu* 2 (2014): 63; Milburn, "Aromas," 448n.32.
[1234] SJ:3268–3269.
[1235] Lan Riyong and Tan Yisheng, "Guangxi Gui xian Luobowan er hao Han mu," *Kaogu* 4 (1982): 361 (censer #M2:47).

discovery is camphor.[1236] Some, on the other hand, claim it to merely be the burned remnants of different materials, such as aloeswood.[1237] I am unaware of any scientific analysis performed on this material similar to that of the frankincense-like resin found in the tomb of the king of Nanyue.[1238] If future scientific analysis proves the Luobowan substance to be the oleoresin of the *D. aromatica*, this would radically reform our understanding concerning the timeline of camphor harvesting in Southeast Asia and its trade with coastal China. It should be forewarned, however, the results of scientific analysis are not irrefutable, as we might point to the presumed discovery of Chinese common camphor from a second century BCE Egyptian mummy as an example. The lab analysists, who performed a thin-layer chromatography (TLC) test – now seen as fallible for highly aged samples – were apparently unaware that the techniques needed to extract such camphor from the tree were yet to be discovered for another millennium. As it stands, it is unlikely any supra-regional Asian camphor product made its way to Egypt before the common era.[1239]

[1236] Guoli gugong bowuyuan, *Xiangju tulu*, 35.
[1237] Shi, "Sichou zhi lu," 63.
[1238] See my comments to frankincense at HC#9.
[1239] The body of the Egyptian mummy was carbon dated to around 170 BCE, making make it roughly contemporaneous to Luobowan Tomb No. 2. If the recovered sample was truly a "camphor" product, it would necessarily be the oleogum of *D. aromatica* – but this is also unlikely; see the discussion on these matters in Waruno Mahdi, "Some Austronesian Maverick Protoforms with Culture-Historical Implications: I," *Oceanic Linguistics* 33, no. 1 (June 1994): 190–91; Tom Hoogervorst, "Southeast Asia in the Ancient Indian Ocean World" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Oxford, 2012), 185–86. Waruno Mahdi speculates that the chemical compound borneol (as found in the camphor aromatic of the *D. aromatica*) oxidized into the chemical compound camphor (as found in the camphor aromatic of the *C. camphora*), thus leading to the error in identification. This leads Mahdi to conclude that "the detection of [the chemical compound] camphor in the mummy must be seen as an unambiguous indication that camphor of Baros (borneol) was already being transported to Egypt in the early second century B.C.," Mahdi, "Some Austronesian Maverick Protoforms," 191. This certitude unfortunately overlooks the fact that the chemical camphor is a component in essential oils extracted from a wide variety of aromatic plants, including the East African camphorwood tree, *Ocotea usambarensis*, and East African camphor basil, *Ocimum kilimandscharicum*. Critically, Margaret Serpico has noted the thin-layer chromatography (TLC) method used for the test remains problematic for analyzing aged samples and further suggests a regional plant, such as the East African camphorwood tree or rosemary, as a more likely source for the trace camphor compounds, see Margaret Serpico, "Resins, Amber, and Bitumen," in *Ancient Egyptian Materials and Technology*, ed. Paul T. Nicholson and Ian Shaw (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 467. This would not be the only time such errors in the scientific analysis of mummies have been reported. It was once thought ancient Egypt engaged in transatlantic trade because mummies were

2) Musk 麝香

[2a] The *Tang Materia Medica*[1240] states, "[The musk deer] lives by the river valleys of Zhongtai[1241], and both Yongzhou[1242] and Yizhou[1243] have them."[1244]

found to have traces of nicotine and cocaine. Further analysis revealed the amounts were at such low levels they should be considered negligible or attainable through a local diet. For example, celery was the likely source of trace nicotine; see discussion in Stephen G. Haw, "Cinnamon, Cassia, and Ancient Trade," *Journal of Ancient History and Archaeology* 4, no. 1 (2017): 7 and sources cited therein.

[1240] The *Tang Materia Medica* is the abbreviated name for the *Newly Revised Materia Medica* (*Xinxiu bencao* 新修本草), a materia medica compiled by Su Jing 蘇敬 (fl. 656–660) (changed to Su Gong 蘇恭 during the Northern Song due to a naming taboo) and published in 659, see Zheng et al., *Dictionary of the Ben Cao Gang Mu*, 14, 438. This was the first government sponsored materia medica in China and constitutes a systematic compendium of Chinese pharmacological knowledge up to the seventh century, see Carla Suzan Nappi, *The Monkey and the Inkpot: Natural History and Its Transformations in Early Modern China* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2009), 29. Fragments of the *Newly Revised Materia Medica* were found among the manuscript cache at Dunhuang, including S.4534 (preserving portions of *juan* 17, 18, and 19), P.3714 (portion of *juan* 10), P.3822 (portion of *juan* 8), and S.9434 (portion of *juan* 17).

[1241] The identity of Zhongtai 中臺 has long been a source of confusion, see e.g., Emil Vasilievitch Bretschneider, *Botanican Sinicum: Notes on Chinese Botany from Native and Western Sources, Part III. Botanical Investigations into the Materia Medica of the Ancient Chinese* (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trübner & Co., Ld., 1895), 557. This location is noted twice in Tao Hongjing's comments to the *Classic of Materia Medica of the Divine Husband*, once when describing musk and once when describing storax [HC#5]. No geographical descriptions are provided other than that the region has river valleys. The Buddhist monk Daoshi preserves a slightly different reading where the musk deer lives in the mountains of Zhongtai (*zhongtai shan* 中臺山), see T2122:573a17. It has recently been suggested that Zhongtai refers to Mount Wutai (*wutai shan* 五台山), see Hua, Buell, and Unschuld, *Dictionary of the Ben Cao Gang Mu*, 381. If we consider Mount Wutai, located in the northern part of Shanxi Province, as part of the medieval range of the musk deer, it pushes this species further northeast than Tao Hongjing otherwise suggests. He claims that both Yongzhou and Yizhou are the native habitats for musk deer, both regions centered roughly around the southern part of Gansu Province. More problematic is the ascription of Mt. Wutai as the origin of storax, a resin that was closely connected in the Chinese imagination to the Western Regions since the first century. Consequently, the location of Zhongtai remains unresolved.

[1242] An ancient administrative district that covered parts of present-day Shaanxi, southern Ningxia, southern Gansu, and a part of Qinghai, see Hua, Buell, and Unschuld, *Dictionary of the Ben Cao Gang Mu*, 356.

[1243] An ancient administrative district that covered parts of present-day Sichuan, Yunnan, Guizhou, southern Gansu, and southern Shaanxi, see Hua, Buell, and Unschuld, *Dictionary of the Ben Cao Gang Mu*, 349–350.

[1244] The received edition of the *Newly Revised Materia Medica* clarifies that the musk deer live in mountainous regions, see XXBC:15.363.

[2b] Tao the Recluse[1245] states, "Its appearance resembles that of the water deer.[1246] It frequently eats cypress needles and snakes. Some say that in the fifth month when one obtains it [i.e., the musk pod], there are usually snake skin and bones [inside it]. It is a treatment for warding off evil [*qi*][1247], extirpating ghostly spirits[1248], malignity strike[1249], wind poison[1250], and for healing wounds[1251]. Oftentimes, a single pod of the genuine aromatic is divided and mixed [to make] three or four [other] pods, while the blood and membranes are scraped and used with other items [to wrap them]. For the most part, these also contain semen[1252] and are roughly made. If one cuts the skin and finds fur enclosed, this is superior.[1253] In the summer [the musk deer] eats many snakes and insects until the winter when its aromatic [pod] is filled. Upon entering into spring, [the deer] develops a sharp pain

[1245] Tao the Recluse (*Tao yinju* 陶隱居) is an appellation for the Daoist polymath Tao Hongjing 陶弘景 (456–536). The search for longevity drugs motivated Tao Hongjing to gather information on herbs, minerals, and other natural products in order to supplement the *Classic of Materia Medica of the Divine Husbandman* (*Shennong bencao jing* 神農本草經)(see HC#5a). One of the works Tao Hongjing consulted was the *Supplementary Records of Famous Physicians* (*Mingyi bielu* 名醫別錄), a valuable source for medical information gathered in the third to fourth centuries. These two texts, along with some of Tao Hongjing's personal observations, were incorporated into a single work that circulated as the *Collected Annotations on the Classic of Materia Medica of the Divine Husbandman* (*Shennong bencao jing jizhu* 神農本草集注). So as to preserve the integrity of both works, the original materia medica was written in vermilion ink while Tao Hongjing's annotations were written in black, see Zheng et al., *Dictionary of the Ben Cao Gang Mu*, 330–31.
[1246] This likely refer to a species of *Hydropotes*, which has a superficial resemblance to the musk deer.
[1247] A general etiological agent, see Zhang and Unschuld, *Dictionary of the Ben Cao Gang Mu*, 572.
[1248] A demonic illness, Zhang and Unschuld, 199–200.
[1249] A disease caused by malign *qi* or the exhaustion of *yin* and *yang qi*, see Zhang and Unschuld, 682.
[1250] A poison resulting in a pathogenic evil *qi*, see Zhang and Unschuld, 160–61.
[1251] Curiously, musk is not cited as a treatment for wounds by Tao Hongjing in the received *Newly Revised Materia Medica* nor the sixteenth century *Systematic Materia Medica*. Nevertheless, we do find a procedure for healing wounds with musk in a Tibetan manuscript from Dunhuang: "If the bleeding does not stop, break up musk [and] put it inside a bowl of water. If [the patient] drinks a bit at a time, it will get better," see Anna Akasoy and Ronit Yoeli-Tlalim, "Along The Musk Routes: Exchanges Between Tibet and The Islamic World," *Asian Medicine* 3 (2007): 231.
[1252] This claim is found in the received *Newly Revised Materia Medica*, but not in the *Systematic Materia Medica*. The latter source instead notes that, "former writers say that it is made from sperm and urine coagulating, but this is certainly not so," BCGM:2.2867 [麝/集解], trans. Anya H. King, *Scent from the Garden of Paradise: Musk and the Medieval Islamic World* (Leiden: Brill, 2017), 88. This appears to be a rejection of an older idea about the creation of true musk pods, not about adulteration.
[1253] The reading for these last two sentences is conjectural and is based in part on the parallel passage in the *Newly Revised Materia Medica*, see XXBC:15.364. My understanding has also been assisted by the translation of the relevant passage from the *Systematic Materia Medica* in King, *Garden of Paradise*, 87–88.

and by kicking and biting himself [the pod] is removed. People have found them.[1254] This aromatic is absolutely superb. By wearing musk [on a belt-sash] one will not only be fragrant, but also ward off malignities. By taking a single pod of the genuine aromatic and placing it on your head or inside a pillow, it will ward off nightmares, corpse attachment-illness[1255], and ghost *qi*[1256]."

[2c] Nowadays, sometimes the pod of the river musk deer is circulated, this aromatic is especially pleasing.

[2a] 唐本草云：生中臺川谷，及雍州，益州皆有之。[1257]

[2b] 陶隱居云：形似麞，常食柏葉及噉蛇。或於五月得者，往往有蛇皮骨。主辟邪，殺鬼精，中惡，風毒，療傷，多以一子真香，分糅作三，四子，刮取血膜，雜以餘物。大都亦有精麅，破皮毛共在裹中者為勝。或有夏食蛇蟲多，至寒香滿，入春患急痛，自以腳剔出，人有得之者。此香絕勝。帶麝，非但香，辟惡，以香真者一子，著腦間枕之，辟惡夢及屍疰鬼氣。[1258]

[2c] 今或傳有水麝臍，其香尤美。[1259]

[COMMENTS] Musk is an intensely aromatic dark granular substance obtained from the preputial gland of the male musk deer, a common name for several species in the *Moschus*

[1254] This process of obtaining musk is also noted in Medieval Arabic sources, see Akasoy and Yoeli-Tlalim, "Musk Routes," 225, 226.

[1255] For a discussion on development of attachment-illnesses (*zhu* 疰) as medical terminology, see Zhang and Unschuld, *Dictionary of the Ben Cao Gang Mu*, 22–25. Corpse attachment-illness is equivalent to ghost attachment-illness, see Zhang and Unschuld, 202–03, 461.

[1256] An imbalance in *yin* and *yang qi* due to demonic ghosts, see Zhang and Unschuld, 201.

[1257] Cf. XXBC:15.363; cf. T2122:573a16–17; cf. BCGM:2.2867 [麝/集解].

[1258] Cf. XXBC:15.364; cf. BCGM:2.2867 [麝/集解, 主治]. This passage is a blend of information taken from the *Classic of Materia Medica of the Divine Husbandman* and the comments of Tao Hongjing.

[1259] I understand this passage as a personal observation of Hong Chu.

genus. Musk deer are found in the mountainous and forested regions of China, especially in the northeast around Siberia and Korea, but also towards the southwest into the Tibetan plateau, as well as further south into Vietnam and Myanmar, and even in parts near the southeastern coast of China. Typically, a male deer would have been killed and its scent gland, called a musk pod in modern commerce, would have been removed from a fold of skin on the abdomen near the genitals. The pods are then dried, turning the interior paste into a granular material called musk grains.[1260]

Musk is not found among the second century BCE medical manuscripts recovered from Mawangdui, but it is regularly encountered in medieval prescriptions, formularies, and materia medica starting with the *Classic of Materia Medica of the Divine Husbandman* (*Shennong bencao jing* 神農本草經), which was edited up through the Eastern Han, but which was based on much older medical knowledge.[1261] Musk was among the approximately two dozen medicines that the herbalist and alchemist Ge Hong 葛洪 (283–343) claimed to have constantly on hand.[1262] For example, Ge Hong prescribed the use of musk pellets (*shexiang wan* 麝香丸) in the mountains to repel snakes, explicitly noting their effectiveness due to the musk deer's habit of eating snakes.[1263] This also is noted in the extended comments of Tao Hongjing which were not quoted by Hong Chu above [2b]. Specifically, Tao Hongjing claims that because musk deer eat snakes, musk can be used as an antidote to snake venom.[1264] In reality, however, musk deer are herbivores and their glands are not part of the

[1260] For an overview of the *Moschus* species that produce musk and discussion of relevant terminology, see King, *Garden of Paradise*, 11–19.
[1261] For early reference to muck in China, see King, *Garden of Paradise*, 86–87.
[1262] See the list of approximately two dozen drugs under the heading of "Mr. Ge's Drugs to Always have Ready" (*Ge shi changbei yao* 葛氏常備藥) in the *Emergency Prescriptions to Keep up your Sleeve*, DZ1306:8.8b.
[1263] DZ1185:17.10a, trans. Ware, *Alchemy*, 291.
[1264] XXBC:15.364.

digestive tract. Thus a musk pod would not contain bones or skin, but such lore continued to be popular in China and bolstered the apotropaic claims made by proponents of the aromatic drug. Notably, the smoke from burning musk was also envisioned to drive away demons, as well as in some cases, humans, in spite of the fact of musk's widespread use in medieval perfuming blends.[1265]

There was an extensive trade in musk throughout the medieval period in China. By the third century, if not earlier, directions circulated on how one could imitate musk by taking the scent gland of another animal, reported as the "white clam fox" (*baigeli* 白蛤貍), sprinkling it with alcohol, and then leaving it to dry in the shade.[1266] A desire to produce false musk clearly attests to value of true musk during this period. Moreover, letters written by Sogdian merchants recovered by Aural Stein near Dunhuang attest to a trade in musk through central Asia by the early fourth century, hinting there may have been a thriving market in northwestern China.[1267] Equally, the Tibetan musk deer species living in the Himalayas drove a trade in musk along what has been termed the Musk Routes in the Middle East.[1268] It was from these routes that musk was likely introduced into India between the fourth and sixth centuries, where it became known as *muṣka* (or *kastūrī*), from which the English term musk derives.[1269]

In addition to onycha, musk is one of only two substances that derive from animals in the *Materia Aromatica*. Animal-derived aromatics were a cause of concern for some

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[1265] King, *Garden of Paradise*, 89.
[1266] TPYL:8.983.874. See also citation in Liu, *Songdai Xiangpu*, 22–23. This story is attributed to the ambiguously titled *Treatise on Strange Things*, which might refer to a work by the first century author Yang Fu, or either of the third century authors Zhu Ying or Wan Zhen; for more on the confusion of these works see my comments to HC#42 and the relevant footnote at HC#38a.
[1267] King, *Garden of Paradise*, 112–14. For more on these letters, see my comments to camphor at HC#1.
[1268] Akasoy and Yoeli-Tlalim, "Musk Routes," 217–40.
[1269] King, *Garden of Paradise*, 93.

medieval Buddhist and Daoists who sought to protect the life of animals. For example, the *Sutra of Wondrous Attainments* (*Suxidi jieluo jing* 蘇悉地羯羅經 [*Susiddhikāra Sutra*]; T893), a Buddhist tantric text translated in the early eighth century, explicitly bars the use of musk when blending incense, citing its dependence upon a sentient being.[1270] Regardless of such ethically derived motivations, musk is regularly encountered in Buddhist works as an ingredient for scented pastes, incense, and aromatic baths. For example, we find musk in the Tang-era *Extensive Collection of Dhāraṇīs of the Great Buddha Uṣṇīṣa* (*Da foding guangju tuoluoni jing* 大佛頂廣聚陀羅尼經; T946), where it included among a twelve ingredient incense blend to be burned during an esoteric rite.[1271] Musk is also listed as part of an incense blend preserved in the *Materia Aromatica*, reported as being taken from the Huadu Temple in Chang'an [HC#128]. If we turn to Daoist sources, the *Various Accounts of the Essential Elements of the Three Caverns* cites a now lost *Materia Aromatica of Divine Immortals* as asserting that musk is to be "particularly avoided."[1272]

In total, musk is featured as an ingredient in more than half of the recipes copied by Hong Chu in the final division of the *Materia Aromatica*, but due to its exorbitant cost and its relative olfactory pungency, musk is used sparingly. Yamada Kentarō has approximated that musk typically comprised no more than two to three percent of the total mixtures.[1273]

[1270] T893:609c06–07, trans. Rolf W. Giebel, ed., *Two Esoteric Sutras: The Adamantine Pinnacle Sutra, The Susiddhikara Sutra* (Berkeley: Numata Center for Buddhist Translation and Research, 2001): 162–63. Such instructions barring musk are found elsewhere in Buddhist scriptures, such as the *Sutra on the Reality Assembly of the Attained Realm of the Buddhas* (*Zhufo jing jie shezhenshi jing* 諸佛境界攝眞實經; T868), see T868:281a25.

[1271] T946:173a26.

[1272] 尤為所忌。DZ839:11b. For more information on the *Materia Aromatica of Divine Immortals*, which likely dates no earlier than the early twelfth century, see my commentary to camphor at HC#1 and relevant footnotes.

[1273] Yamada, "Chin sunawachi kaori," 5; Yamada, *Tōa kōryō shi kenkyū*, 174–76. Yamada calculates that both onycha and musk constitute, on average, 4.67 percent of the mixtures he examined.

3) Sinking in Water Aromatic (aloeswood) 沈水香[1274]

[3a] The annotations[1275] to the *Tang Materia Medica* states, "Exported from two countries, India[1276] and Chanyu[1277], this is the same tree as Dark Cassia [HC#14], Chicken Bone [HC#15], and Jian Aromatic [HC#22]. Its leaves resemble the orange tree which throughout winter do not wither. In summer it blooms flowers that are white, round, and delicate. In the fall it bears fruit like the betel palm with a purple color resembling mulberries. Its taste is pungent. It cures poison swelling caused by wind and sweat[1278] and drives away malign *qi*. The bark is dark greenish in color and the tree resembles the zelkova[1279]."

[3b] This [aromatic] is heavy and solid, black in color, and sinks in water. Nowadays, furthermore, there is fresh yellowish kind that sinks in water called Waxy Sinking [Aromatic][1280]. There is also a kind that does not sink [in water] called Freshly-Produced [Aromatic][1281].

[1274] The unrevised *Baichuan* edition regularly uses the orthographic variant *chen* 沉 throughout the *Materia Aromatica*; I will not signal this variation again.

[1275] The interlinear comments of the Tang materia medica editors were printed in smaller graphs and began with the phrase, "I cautiously submit" (*ji nan* 謹案). This was signaled in later materia medica editions by the phrase, "Tang edition annotations" (*Tangben zhu* 唐本注), see Zheng et al., *Dictionary of the Ben Cao Gang Mu*, 464.

[1276] This citation is in error. The received *Newly Revised Materia Medica* cites India and Chanyu as the origin of frankincense [HC#9d]; nothing is said about the origin of aloeswood, see XXBC:13.313–314. Nevertheless, the *Newly Revised Materia Medica* as preserved in the *Systematic Materia Medica* states that aloeswood was "exported from India and various countries," 出天竺諸國。BCGM:2.1937 [沉香/集解].

[1277] See previous footnote. For further information on Chanyu see HC#9d.

[1278] Swelling caused when the wind causes bodily sweat to get trapped under the skin, see Zhang and Unschuld, *Dictionary of the Ben Cao Gang Mu*, 136, 168.

[1279] *Zelkova schneideriana* (Schneider's zelkova), Hua, Buell, and Unschuld, *Dictionary of the Ben Cao Gang Mu*, 410 (#576).

[1280] Also called Yellow Waxy Sinking [Aromatic] (*huanla chen*[*xiang*] 黃蠟沈[香]), this aloeswood was named for its pliable wax-like texture when chewed and was considered extremely rare, see BCGM:2.1937 [沉香/集解]. This is considered a subtype of Sinking Aromatic, the top tier of aloeswoods products.

[1281] See my comments to *Jian* Aromatic at HC#22.

[3c] Furthermore the "Settling Disputes" [section] of the *Supplement* [*to the Materia Medica*][1282] states, "The tree is similar to Chinese mahogany[1283], but one can always check it in water to know [if it is aloeswood]."

[3d] For more [on the grades of aloeswood] see the *Traditions of Heavenly Aromatics* in the second fascicle [HC#119].

[3a] 唐本草注云：出天竺，單于二國，與青桂，雞骨，馓香同是一樹。葉似橘，經冬不彫，夏生花，白而圓細，秋結實如檳榔，色紫似莧，而味辛，療風水毒腫，去惡氣。樹皮青色，木似櫸柳。[1284]

[3b] 重實黑色沈水者是。今復有生黃而沈水者，謂之蠟沈。又其不沈者，謂之生結。[1285]

[3c] 又拾遺解紛云：其樹如椿，常以水試，乃知。[1286]

[3d] 餘見下卷天香傳中。

[COMMENTS] Aloeswood, also commonly known as agarwood, eaglewood, and gharuwood, refers to the oleoresin saturated heartwood harvested from several species of the

[1282] The *Supplement to the Materia Medica* (*Bencao shiyi* 本草拾遺) is a lost materia medica compiled by Chen Zangqi 陳藏器 (fl. 8th century) and published in 739, see Zheng et al., *Dictionary of the Ben Cao Gang Mu*, 41–42. Displeased with the information in the *Newly Revised Materia Medica* by Su Jing, Chen Zangqi issued a revised and expanded edition, see Zheng et al., *Dictionary of the Ben Cao Gang Mu*, 66. Notably, many of the new additions were foreign substances not listed in the previous work, see Chen, "Transmission of Foreign Medicine," 245.

[1283] I presume the analogy to the Chinese mahogany tree (*Toona sinensis*, syn. *Cedrela sinensis*) is due to its dark-colored wood that could visually resemble aloeswood. Thus the recommendation to apply the buoyance test to determine the identity of a wood sample. *Chun* 椿 could also refer to the ailanthus (*Ailanthus altissima*, Hua, Buell, and Unschuld, *Dictionary of the Ben Cao Gang Mu*, 398 [#170]), similar in appearance to the Chinese mahogany, but with smoother bark. If judging solely by tree bark, the ailanthus is a better analogue to the *Aquilaria*. Elsewhere, an analogy is made to the leaves of the *chun* tree, see HC#42b.

[1284] Cf. XXBC:13.313–314; cf. BCGM:2.1937 [沉香/集解].

[1285] I understand this passage as a personal observation of Hong Chu.

[1286] Cf. BCGM:2.1937 [沉香/集解].

Aquilaria genus. These trees occur widely across Indomalaysia, the Indochinese Peninsula, the Indonesian Archipelago, southern China, and the Philippines.[1287] Unlike other scented woods such as sandalwood [HC#4] or lakawood [HC#17], aloeswood is only produced under specific conditions when certain species of *Aquilaria* tree are injured and infected. The infection triggers an immune response that creates deposits of dark oleoresin between the tree's wood fibers. Saturated areas are irregular in size and shape, but often remain distinct from the surrounding lighter-colored, non-aromatic sapwood. Resin-rich aloeswood is resistant to decay, thus medieval sources will speak of retrieving rotten *Aquilaria* logs in order to more easily harvest the prized aromatic. The harvesting process often involves carving away the lighter-colored sapwood portions, leaving behind an irregularly shaped darker aloeswood chunk. Due to the specific conditions in which aloeswood is produced, the long time it takes to form (often several decades), and the relatively small yield which is typically recovered, the cost of good quality aloeswood has always been among the most expensive of all East Asian aromatics.[1288] Because of its complex chemical profile, the scent of aloeswood is unusually rich, possessing a powdery vanilla scent, but also with a strong woody and floral character.[1289]

[1287] For determining scientific nomenclature and distribution of *Aquilaria* trees I have relied upon Shiou Yih Lee and Rozi Mohamed, "The Origin and Domestication of Aquilaria, an Important Agarwood-Producing Genus," in *Agarwood: Science Behind the Fragrance*, ed. Rozi Mohamed, Tropical Forestry (Singapore: Springer, 2016), 1–20. Lee and Mohamed report that a total of thirteen *Aquilaria* species are known to produce aloeswood, although not all have been commercially exploited through history. Several species of the closely related *Gyrinops* and *Gonystylus* genera, also of the *Thymelaeaceae* family, are additionally reported as producing aloeswood-like products, especially the *Gonystylus bancanus* of the Indonesian Archipelago, see Wheatley, "Geographical Notes," 70.

[1288] According to Yamada Kentarō not even one in one hundred *Aquilaria* trees will naturally produce aloeswood. For further comments on aloeswood harvesting, see Yamada, *Tōa kōryō shi kenkyū*, 178, 184, 189–91. It is also possible to artificially stimulate the creation of aloeswood by slashing, boring, or nailing into an *Aquilaria* tree.

[1289] The unique olfactory characteristics of aloeswood, and the methods devised to burn it properly, are discussed in Yamada, *Tōa kōryō shi kenkyū*, 177–83; Jung, "Cultural Biography of Agarwood," 106, 113–14.

The early history of aloeswood in China remains poorly understood or, at times, inaccurately characterized, and is worth examining in some detail. It has been suggested that aloeswood may have been known during the Western Han (202 BCE–8CE) due to the imperialist expansion of Emperor Wu 武 (r. 157–87 BCE) to the tropical south, specifically with the annexation of Nanyue in 110 BCE.[1290] *Aquilaria sinensis* (syn. *A. grandiflora*), a tree capable of producing aloeswood, is known to occur throughout this region, including present-day Guangdong, Guangxi, and Hainan. Yet, there are no surviving Western Han or Eastern Han documents of sound textual provenance that speak to aloeswood harvesting in this period. We do possess documents announcing Emperor Wu's possession of aloeswood, but all of these date to the later medieval period well after the emperor's reign. For example, the *Yellow Maps of the Three Capitals* (*Sanfu huangtu* 三輔黃圖) speaks of the glories of Emperor Wu's Cultivating Lychee Palace (*Fuli gong* 扶荔宮) that was constructed to house the "odd plants and strange trees" (*qicao yimu* 奇草異木) imported from the newly conquered regions of the far south. This reputedly included one hundred specimens of the aloeswood tree.[1291] No contemporaneous Western Han documents attest to such an ambitious project. Moreover, evidence suggests the *Yellow Maps of the Three Capitals*, which may have circulated as early as the end of the Eastern Han, was continually enlarged over the centuries and only approached its final form during the Tang, if not later. In either regard, the text was compiled centuries after Emperor Wu's death and should instead be read as part of a

[1290] See e.g. Fu, *Xiang wenhua*, 24.
[1291] SFHT:3.247, trans. Smith, "Ritual," 679–80. The authenticity of *Yellow Maps of the Three Capitals* has been under scrutiny since the Song, see Tai-Loi Ma, "The Authenticity of the 'Nan-Fang Ts'ao-Mu Chuang.'" *T'oung Pao*, Second Series, 64, no. 4/5 (1978): 231.

much broader early medieval trend in exalting the famed emperor's imperial conquests, more so than as an authentic witness to his construction projects.[1292]

The first clear description of aloeswood harvesting in southern China comes to us in the *Records of Guangzhou* (*Guangzhou ji* 廣州記), a gazetteer compiled by Gu Wei 顧微 and conventionally ascribed to the Jin (265–420):

> All of Xinxing county has aloeswood [trees], they are like the *tongxin* plant. The local peoples chop them apart and after several years pass the flesh [i.e., sapwood] rots away. The heartwood is the aloeswood.[1293]
> 新興縣悉是沈香，如同心草。土人斫之，經年肉爛盡。心則爲沈香。

Xinxing 新興 county, in present-day Guangdong, was first established in 351, thus providing a *terminus post quem* for this passage.[1294] I believe the totality of evidence suggests Gu Wei compiled this report in the early-to-mid fifth century.[1295] Crucially, this proposed dating

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[1292] Even if we accept the replanting of *Aquilaria* saplings in Chang'an during the Western Han, the *Yellow Maps of the Three Capitals* reveals all of the tropical plants withered and died soon thereafter. It seems unlikely the *Aquilaria* trees would had the requisite time to produce resin saturated wood in this scenario.
Another tale concerning aloeswood and Emperor Wu can be found in the medieval compilation entitled the *Records of Cavern Darkness* (*Dongming ji* 洞冥記). In brief, an anecdote claims a special "perfumed wood" (*xunmu* 薰木) was given as tribute from the strange country of Xianzhi 鮮袛 which was then fashioned into a boat that rotted and sank (*chen* 沉). Subsequently, the retrieved remnants were crushed into fragments and their scent could be smelled over a great distance. The Song-era editors of the *Imperial Readings of the Taiping Era* presumably read this as an explanation for the Chinese name of aloeswood, Sinking in Water Aromatic (*chenshui xiang*), and include the tale under the aloeswood section, see TPYL:8.982.865, trans. Smith, "Ritual," 604. There is no reason to accept this as an authentic story of aloeswood circulating during the reign of Emperor Wu. Other historical figures are also anachronistically associated with aloeswood, see for example my comments to Musk from Jiuzhen at HC#67

[1293] T2122:573c29–a02 (citing Sinking Aromatic [*chen xiang*]); cf. BCGM:2.1940 [蜜香/集解] (citing Honey Aromatic [*mi xiang*] without description of harvesting process).

[1294] According to the *Book of Song*, in the seventh year of *yonghe* 永和 (351), Emperor Mu 穆 (r. 344–361) of the Eastern Jin divided Cangwu commandery and created Xinxing county, see SShu:38.1193–94; see also Hua, Buell, and Unschuld, *Dictionary of the Ben Cao Gang Mu*, 330. There are other historical counties named Xinxing in China during this period, but none are located where *Aquilaria* trees are known to occur. With the overthrow of the south by the Southern Qi in 479, Xinxing county was renamed Xincheng 新成 county, see NQS:14.262–63.

[1295] There are two works entitled the *Records of Guangzhou*, both currently dated to the Jin, see Zheng et al., *Dictionary of the Ben Cao Gang Mu*, 157–58. The *Forest of Pearls in the Garden of the Dharma* specifies the author of the above passage as Gu Wei, while the *Systematic Materia Aromatics* omits authorship, see citations in the footnote of the translated passage above. The other *Records of Guangzhou* is attributed to Pei Yuan 裴淵. We know very little about Gu Wei and while I treat him as an author of the early-to-mid fifth century, this is not

corresponds to a sudden surge in reports concerning aloeswood in the coastal south. For example, the *Treatise on Nanyue* (*Nanyue zhi* 南越志), compiled by Shen Huaiyuan 沈懷遠 (ca. 5th cent.) of the Liu Song (420–479), also speaks of the "aromatic forests" (*xianglin* 香林) of Penyun 盆允 county in present-day Guangdong. We may presume this referred to regional forests of *A. sinensis* trees, pockets of which still exist west of the Pearl River Delta today.[1296] Furthermore, when the fifth century Buddhist monk Zhu Fazhen 竺法真 (mid-to-late 5th cent.)[1297] described regional products around Mt. Luofu (*Luofu shan* 羅浮山), he also carefully describes how the local peoples (*turen* 土人) in Xinhui 新會 commandery and Gaoliang 高涼 commandery, both in present-day Guangdong, cut down the trees and wait

without some speculation. Gu Wei's work is not found in the "Bibliographic Treatise" section of the *Book of Sui*. It is, however, cited in the *Essential Techniques for All People* (*Qimin yaoshu* 齊民要術), completed between 533 and 544, thus providing a *terminus ante quem*, see e.g. QMYS:10.92.40.5. The specific assignment of Gu Wei to the Jin era can be found in the *Shuofu* collectanea of the early Ming, see Wolters, *Indonesian Commerce*, 289n.7. In contrast, Hu Lichu 胡立初, based on the belief that Gui Wei copied from Pei Yuan's work of the Eastern Jin, assigns Gu Wei to the late Liu Song era, see QMYS, p. 1057n.9. Similarly, O.W. Wolters broadly treats the *Records of Guangzhou* as a product of the last half of the fifth century, see Wolters, *Indonesian Commerce*, 88, 89. It should be added the language of Gu Wei's description of aloeswood harvesting seems to have been borrowed by the monk Zhu Fazhen, who likely wrote in the latter half of the fifth century (see below and relevant footnotes). Moreover, Gu Wei appears to have written before the rise of the Southern Qi in 479, when the county of Xinxing was renamed. It is for these reasons that I consider Gu Wei to have composed the *Records of Guangzhou* either during the final years of the Jin or first few decades of the Liu Song, writing after Pei Yuan, but before Zhu Fazhen.

[1296] See citation in Yang, *Xiang shi*, 129–30 (citing the *Records of Initial Study* [*Chuxue ji* 初學記]; Yang Zhishui also corrects the error Penyuan 盆元 to Penyun); cf. TPYL:8.982.863 (missing the citation to Penyun), cf. BCGM:2.1940 [蜜香/集解] (missing the citation to Penyun). At the very end of the Eastern Jin, Penyun county was established as part of Nanhai commandery in the second year of *yuanxi* 元熙 (420) and in the same year (under the victorious Liu Song) it was made the seat of newly established Xinhui commandery, see SShu:38.1198. The *Treatise on Nanyue* also speaks to the harvesting of aloeswood in Jiaozhou, see my comment to comments to Wood Honey Aromatic at HC#42. For more on compilation of the *Treatise on Nanyue*, see HC#20a. For a different reference to an aromatic forest in Vietnam that also likely refers to a large stand of *Aquilaria* trees, see HC#49.

[1297] The *Biographies of Eminent Monks* appends a short note regarding Zhu Fazhen to the biography of Sengzong 僧宗 (438–496): "Fazhen was at that time a craftsman," 法眞並爲當時匠者。T2059:380a06–07. In the mid-sixth century, the *Essential Techniques for All People* cites this work as *Commentary on Climbing Mt. Luofu* (*Deng luo shan shufu* 登羅浮山疏), see QMYS:10.92.47.1 and 10:92.62.22. Daoshi cites the title of his work as the *Commentary on Climbing Mt. Luo* (*Deng luo shan shu* 登羅山疏), see T2122:573b25. I speculatively treat Zhu Fazhen as a contemporary of Sengzong, thus dating his life to the mid-to-late fifth century.

many years before extracting the aloeswood and bringing it to market.[1298] Moreover, due to the flurry of such activities around this region, when the *Records Narrating the Strange* (*Shuyi ji* 述異記) of the late fifth century talks about the "Aromatics Guilds" of Nanhai commandery [HC#89], again comprising present-day Guangdong, it likely was referring to local indigenous peoples harvesting aloeswood. In addition, the same text speaks of the strange exports of the "Aromatic Isle" of Hainan [HC#90], which was known later in the medieval period as an exporter of the finest quality aloeswood.

Overall, based on surviving documents, and in spite of the indigeneity of *A. sinensis* in the Chinese tropics, a domestic aloeswood industry seems to have first developed in Guangdong, west of the Pearl River Delta around the fifth century. As described in our documents, the harvesting procedure involved cutting up *Aquilaria* trees and allowing the resultant logs to rot, exposing the decay-resistant aloeswood.[1299] It is worth underscoring that

[1298] "The leaves [of the aloeswood tree] resemble the holly [*Ilex purpurea*] and the tree's appearance is towering. When the wood is dried and splitting, and as the outer bark is decaying and rotting, the interior becomes fragrant. Although the mountains [i.e., Mt. Luofu?] have these trees, the aromatic is not exported [from this area]. The local peoples of Xinhui [commandery] and Gaoliang [commandery] cut them apart and after several years pass the flesh [i.e., sapwood] rots away. The heartwood is the aloeswood. It is [also] exported from Bijing county. The trees are as large as the *jizang*. The local peoples fell [the trees] and wait for several years until the outer layers have completely disappeared. They then carve out the heartwood to harvest the aromatic," 葉似冬青，樹形崇竦。其木枯折，外皮朽爛，內乃香。山雖有此樹，而非香所出。新會高涼土人斫之，經年肉爛盡，心則為沉香。出北[→比]景縣，樹薊贓大，土人伐之累年，須外皮消盡，乃割心得香。TPYL:8.982.865 (citing Sinking Aromatic [*chen xiang*]). Zhu Fazhen's first description of aloeswood harvesting appears to copy the *Records of Guangzhou* (discussed above), replacing Xinxing county with Xinhui and Gaoliang commanderies. Both Xinhui and Gaoliang were located west of the Pearl River delta, while Mt. Luofu was located to its east, thus the mountains Zhu Fazhen cites as having *Aquilaria* trees, but which do not produce aloeswood, might be Mt. Luofu. Bijing county is one of the administrative divisions of Rinan that date back to the Western Han, see HS:28.2.1630. Zhu Fazhen's second description of aloeswood harvesting likely refers to this region.

[1299] It remains uncertain when artificial stimulation techniques were introduced, such as slashing or boring into an *Aquilaria* tree to trigger its immune response. Early medieval descriptions of aloeswood harvesting use a variety of terminology pertaining to cutting the tree, including *zhuo* 斫, "to chop," *duan* 斷, "to break," and *fa* 伐, "to cut down." I understand all of these to refer to cutting apart or falling a tree, but the meaning for *zhuo* is especially ambiguous and may refer to carving or slashing at the wood. This seems to be Li Huilin's interpretation for the description of aloeswood harvesting in the *Prospect of the Plants and Trees of the Southern Regions* (which uses *fa*), see Li, *Fourth Century Flora*, 88–89, 143.

we have no evidence such a commercial enterprise was undertaken during the Han.[1300] Equally, it was previously suggested by Yamada Kentarō that the domestic production of aloeswood only began in the middle of the Tang.[1301] The reports provided above prove the local peoples of the far south were harvesting aloeswood during the Six Dynasties and it is possible a domestic industry was well-established by the time the Liu Song fell to the Southern Qi (479–502).

These fifth century reports were not the earliest concerning aloeswood known to the Chinese. Other medieval sources attest to the harvesting of this valued aromatic from beyond the southern Chinese borders, such as present-day Vietnam and Cambodia, and later, during the Liang, from the Malay Peninsula. Notably, several *Aquilaria* species that produce aloeswood are found in these regions, including *A. malaccensis* (syn. *A. agallocha*) and *A. crassna*.[1302] According to the *Treatise on Strange Things of the Southern Regions* (*Nanzhou yiwu zhi* 南州異物志) by Wan Zhen 萬震 (mid-to-late 3rd cent.), a governor under the Eastern Wu (222–280), aloeswood was reported as being exported from Rinan, a vital port in present-day central Vietnam seated near the city of Huế.[1303] Once the southernmost commandery of the Han empire, Rinan was lost to local incursions in the second century and

[1300] The *Book of Han* notes rhinoceros horn, ivory, tortoise shell, pearls, silver, copper, fruit, and cloth as exports of the Chinese southern coast, nothing is said of aloeswood or other aromatics, see HS:28.2.1670 and comments in Wang, "Nanhai Trade," 8. In the *Book of Later Han*, the old Jiaozhi commandery is noted as having many natural treasures, including pearls, kingfisher feathers, rhinoceros horn, ivory, tortoise shells, beautiful woods and strange aromatics, see HHS:31.1111 and comments in Wang, "Nanhai Trade," 25. I prefer to read "strange aromatics" as indicating re-exported materials, but nevertheless, the Eastern Han Jiaozhi commandery only comprised northern Vietnam and did not extend far into present-day Guanxi, let alone eastwards into Guangdong, see map provided in de Crespigny, *Generals of the South*, 268 (Map 10).
[1301] Yamada, *Tōa kōryō shi kenkyū*, 192–93; for similar comments about domestic aloeswood production during the Tang, see Schafer, *Golden Peaches*, 164; Kieschnick, *The Impact of Buddhism on Chinese Material Culture*, 278n.229; Jung, "Cultural Biography of Agarwood," 110, 111.
[1302] For a map depicting the areas known to the medieval Chinese as the sources of aloeswood, see Wheatley, "Geographical Notes," 68. Note that both Guangdong and Assam (discussed below) are missing from this map.
[1303] T2122:573c24–29; TPYL:8.982.865. This passage is translated and discussed in my comments to Wood Honey Aromatic at HC#42. For the dating of Wan Zhen's life, see Chapter 2, Section 3.

by the early third century was under the control of the Mon-Khmer polity known as Linyi 林邑.[1304] Chinese forces never regained more than a nominal presence in Rinan, thus Wan Zhen's report should attest to the harvesting activities of regional peoples familiar with the forest landscape, perhaps the Mon-Khmer or one of the now unknown ethnic groups classed as the Yue 越 (Vietnamese Việt) by Chinese authorities.[1305]

The only potential earlier discussion of aloeswood harvesting comes in the ambiguously titled *Treatise on Strange Things* (*Yiwu zhi* 異物志), which may date to the end of the first century, but more likely dates to the middle of the third century.[1306] Following this latter dating, aloeswood may have been regarded as one of the products of Funan 扶南, a regional entrepôt on the Mekong Delta of great significance for early maritime trade that linked the Roman Empire and India with China.

A strict chronology of events is difficult to infer from surviving sources, but it appears the first substantial Chinese knowledge of aloeswood harvesting came from commercial ports along the Indochinese Peninsula in the mid-to-late third century. Later medieval sources specifically cite local ethnic groups around Linyi as being well acquainted with aloeswood trees and specific harvesting procedures. These aloeswood products most likely formed the backbone of perfume markets in Rinan, such as attested in Chinese sources in the late fifth century [HC#86]. This early maritime trade along the coasts of the Gulf of

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[1304] For discussion on the debates over the ethno-linguistic identity of Linyi (Vietnamese Lâm Ấp) once thought to be the Cham, see Vickery, *Champa Revisited*, 12-23. For the history of Chinese interaction with various ethnic groups of Vietnam during the Six Dynasties, including the battles over of Rinan (V. Nhật Nam), see Taylor, *The Birth of Vietnam*, 66–103.

[1305] For the imprecise Chinese use of the term Yue for the peoples of Vietnam, see Taylor, *The Birth of Vietnam*, 33–34.

[1306] Yamada considers Wan Zhen's passage the earliest Chinese source to mention aloeswood, see Yamada, *Tōa kōryō shi kenkyū*, 185–86. I discuss the dating and attribution of the *Treatise on Strange Things* in my comments to Wood Honey Aromatic at HC#42.

Tonkin may have ultimately spurred domestic Chinese aloeswood production around Guangdong and Hainan.

Of related importance is the fact that both Gu Wei and Zhu Fazhen claim "local" or indigenous peoples were in charge of aloeswood harvesting in China at the time. Gungwu Wang has argued that shipping along the southern coast was the expertise of indigenous Yue sailors who also had access to local forests that produced the best timber for shipbuilding.[1307] It may be the case that these sailors passed knowledge of aloeswood harvesting from regions like Rinan to the local Yue familiar with the mountain forests of Guangdong and who possessed the expertise to locate aloeswood-producing *Aquilaria* stands. In the end, local sailors, regional forest dwellers, and merchant middle-men all came to reap profits through the growing interests in aromatic exotica by cosmopolitan, and deep-pocketed, Chinese clientele.

An early exemplar of fabulous wealth combined with an interest in novel aromatics was the official Shi Chong 石崇 (249–300). While governor of Jingzhou 荊州 in present-day Hubei and Hunan, it is said Shi Chong extorted money and goods from merchants travelling to the Jin capital in the north, thus allowing him to amass a vast fortune. In addition to an extraordinary collection of shimmering pearls, large coral trees, and beds of ivory – all materials obtainable from the Gulf of Tonkin – Shi Chong also reputedly had supplies of aloeswood provided to his guests as a perfume.[1308] Even if such stories were fabricated to criticize Shi Chong's ostentatious display of wealth, this anecdote concerning aloeswood,

[1307] Wang, "Nanhai Trade," 21, 23.
[1308] Richard B. Mather, *Shih-Shuo Hsin-Yü: A New Account of Tales of the World*, 2nd ed. (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2002), 493–94 (this anecdote is noted in my comments to onycha at HC#35); for another anecdote regarding aloeswood powder, see Chapter 4, Section 5 and Wang, "Nanhai Trade," 35.

first preserved in the *New Account of the Tales of the World* (*Shishuo xinyu* 世說新語) compiled by Liu Yiqing 劉義慶 (403–444), provides a snapshot of the kinds of goods that were symbolic of highest luxury at the time.[1309]

The eventual domestic production of aloeswood did not stop the flow of foreign imports. Later in the medieval period, Emperor Yuan 元 of the Liang (r. 552–555), writing under the alias of the Master of the Golden Tower (*Jinlou zi* 金樓子), describes the aromatic wood as one of the products coming from Funan.[1310] Furthermore, as noted in the earlier discussion of camphor, the *Book of Liang* alternatively describes two different grades of aloeswood as products of the kingdom of Langkasuka, on the eastern coast of the Malay Peninsula near present-day Patani .[1311] In fact, aloeswood remained both major import commodity and foreign tributary gift throughout the Song.[1312]

[1309] A similar theme is found in the biography of Wu Yinzhi 吳隱之 (d. 413), a Regional Inspector (*cishi*) of Guangzhou who is chiefly known for his frugality in spite of his post that made previous officials rich. After returning from the port of Panyu, where his forces were routed by a local rebel leader, we are told the following brief anecdote: "His wife, of the Liu clan, presented him with one *jin* of Sinking Aromatic [i.e. aloeswood]. Upon seeing it, Yinzhi immediately cast it into the waters of Huting." 其妻劉氏，齎沉香一斤，隱之見，遂投於湖亭之水。JS:90.2343; see also TPYL:8.982.864.

[1310] TPYL:8.982.865 (citing Sinking in Water [Aromatic][*chenshui* (*xiang*)]). Notably, Emperor Yuan describes aloeswood as one product of a miraculous chimera-like tree which grows several different types of aromatics; for more on this tree, see my comments to *Jian* Aromatic at HC#22.

[1311] LS:54.48.795, trans. Wheatley, "Langkasuka," 390–91. A passage attributed to the *Book of Sui* also describes aloeswood harvesting in Doukun, an unknown polity or tribal group on the Malay Peninsula, but the harvesting process is mistakenly provided under the name *huo xiang*, or Malayan patchouli [HC#38], see TPYL:7.788.344, trans. Wheatley, "Malay Peninsula as Known to the Chinese," 10–11. Berthold Laufer only considers this passage in light of the potential identification of *huo xiang* as the leaves of the *Cinnamomum tamala* (i.e. *tamālapattra*) tree, see Laufer, "Malabathron," 25–26, 36. The description is undoubtedly a portrayal of aloeswood harvesting and is moreover a poor copy of the passage first found in the ambiguously titled *Treatise on Strange Things* noted above. A notable difference, however, is that the *Book of Sui* describes harvesting *zhan xiang* 棧香, a lower grade tier of aloeswood, see my comments to *Jian* Aromatic at HC#22. In turn, this passage appears to have been further paraphrased by the *Prospect of the Plants and Trees of the Southern Regions* which states: "*Zhan* Honey Aromatic is exported from Doukun. The *Zhan* Honey Aromatic tree is unknown, it is only the aromatic that is seen," 棧蜜香，出都昆。不知棧蜜香樹若為，但見香耳。TPYL:8.982.863. Notably, this passage is not preserved in the received edition of this text, see Li, *Fourth Century Flora*, 87–90. For more on the problematic authorship of the *Prospect of the Plants and Trees of the Southern Regions*, see the relevant footnote at HC#41a.

[1312] See, for example, the numerous aloeswood products listed as foreign tribute in Lin, *Songdai xiangyao*, 168–93; see also Bielenstein, *Diplomacy*, 88–89, 371,

In terms of perceived quality, at least during the Song, the *Treatise of the Supervisor of Guihai* (*Guihai yuheng zhi* 桂海虞衡志), compiled by Fan Chengda 范成大 (1126–1193) in 1175, and the *Notes from Beyond the Mountains* (*Lingwai daida* 嶺外代答), compiled by Zhou Qufei 周去非 (12th cent.) in 1178, both claim the highest grade aloeswood was produced on Hainan, reporting that pieces as thin as paper would still sink in water.[1313] Further geographical distinctions are also made by Zhou Qufei, claiming that aloeswood sourced from the Indochinese Peninsula was considered superior to that of the Indonesian Archipelago.[1314] This was repeated in the *Treatise on the Barbarians* from the early thirteenth century.[1315]

Despite Hong Chu's entry above [3a], which is an error in citation, Chinese authorities rarely viewed aloeswood as an Indian product.[1316] This is partly unexpected since Indian knowledge of aloeswood predates that of China and, additionally, it was regionally available to the subcontinent. Specifically, aloeswood was first known as a tributary item from kingdoms of the northeast in present-day Assam around the turn of the common era. For example, aloeswood is cited as a valuable treasure in the *Arthaśāstra*, a Sanskrit work compiled in the first century BCE, but edited up through the first century CE. This work describes the dark scented wood as arriving as tribute from Joṇga and Doṇga, both in

[1313] See passages in Yamada, *Tōa kōryō shi kenkyū*, 194–96. As highlighted by Yamada, the later work copies much of the former.
[1314] Yamada, *Tōa kōryō shi kenkyū*, 195–96; see also Wheatley, "Geographical Notes," 69–70.
[1315] Hirth and Rockhill, *Chau Ju-Kua*, 204; see also Wheatley, "Geographical Notes," 69–70; Jung, "Cultural Biography of Agarwood," 112.
[1316] See relevant footnote at HC#3a. A potential exception may be found in the *Treatise on the Guang Region* which claims Wood Honey, an early variant name for aloeswood, was exported from Jiaozhou (comprising the Chinese far south and present-day northern Vietnam) as well as the Western Regions, see T2122:573c18. Yamada acknowledges that while the Chinese may have first heard of aloeswood through contact with the Western Regions, the primary foreign source was the tropical south, see Yamada, *Tōa kōryō shi kenkyū*, 192.

present-day Assam, as well as from overseas.[1317] The *A. malaccensis* grows in northeastern India and across the Malay Peninsula and would have been the origin for such tributes.[1318] Known as *agaru* in Sanskrit, aloeswood was appreciated as an important ritual aromatic and fumifuge. It was also an important aromatic for Indian Buddhism. Due to its dark color and association with the properties of heat, aloeswood was often paired in Buddhist scriptures with sandalwood, a scented wood of lighter color that was associated with coolness.[1319] Not surprisingly, we find aloeswood cited in the first generation of Eastern Han translations of Buddhist scriptures where it is rendered as Honey Aromatic (*mixiang* 蜜香).[1320] These translated Buddhist scriptures are the earliest extant Chinese sources to give a name to aloeswood, a fact that is often overlooked when recounting aloeswood's history in East Asia.[1321] The reason for such a name remains obscure, as it is not derived from the Sanskrit *agaru*.[1322] A much later Chinese tradition claimed Honey Aromatic derived from the fact that aloeswood was redolent of sweet honey.[1323]

[1317] Nayana Sharma Mukherjee, "Trade in Medicinal Drugs in Ancient India," *Proceedings of the Indian History Congress* 78 (2017): 155; see also McHugh, *Sandalwood and Carrion*, 66; Yamada, *Tōa kōryō shi kenkyū*, 178, 183. In addition, the *Mahābhārata* also describes aloeswood as an exotic tribute from the kings of the northeast, see McHugh, *Sandalwood and Carrion*, 169. For further textual references to aloeswood in India, see Arlene López-Sampson and Tony Page, "History of Use and Trade of Agarwood," *Economic Botany* 72, no. 1 (2018): 110, 114–15.

[1318] The overseas variety of aloeswood noted in the *Arthaśāstra* likely came from the Malay Peninsula.

[1319] McHugh, *Sandalwood and Carrion*, 85.

[1320] As seen in the *Yogācārabhūmi* (*Daodi jing* 道地經; T607:232c27) and the *Aṣṭasāhasrikā-prajñāpāramitā-sūtra* (*Daoxing bore jin* 道行般若經; T224:473a01); see also Chapter 2, Section 3.

[1321] The name Honey Aromatic appears in the *Supplementary Record by Famous Physicians*, a collection of commentaries on the *Classic of Materia Medica of the Divine Husband* and completed in the early fifth century. It is considered synonymous with Wood Aromatic, a term that was used in the third century to refer to aloeswood, but more typically referred to scented root plants, such as costus. For more on this unresolved issue, see my comments to Wood Honey Aromatic at HC#42.

[1322] The most common etymology for *agaru* (or *aguru*) is unexpected: *a-guru*, "not heavy, light," see e.g. Yamada, *Tōa kōryō shi kenkyū*, 183; López-Sampson and Page, 108. This runs counter to aloeswood's fame for sinking in water. Consequently, Tom Hoogervorst has suggested an early Southeast Asian borrowing into an Indo-Aryan language, leaving us with a mere folk-etymology of the Sanskrit name, see Hoogervorst, "Southeast Asia," 192.

[1323] BCGM:1.854–855 [木香/解名]. Yamada notes that the people of Jiaozhou in the eleventh century called aloeswood Honey Aromatic, suggesting that it may have evolved into a regional name, see Yamada, *Tōa kōryō shi kenkyū*, 191. Yamada did not recognized the Buddhist origin of this term.

With the *Treatise on Strange Things of the Southern Regions* by Wan Zhen, we find the appearance of the name that came to be most closely associated with aloeswood: Sinking in Water Aromatic (*chenshui xiang* 沈水香; J. *jinsuikō*), or often simply, Sinking Aromatic (*chenxiang* 沈香; J. *jinkō*). As noted earlier, this descriptive nomenclature reflects the fact that premium quality aloeswood was heavily saturated with oleoresin, thus causing it to sink in water. Such a curious property not only played to the medieval imagination about strange and wondrous exotica, but was a relatively simple way for merchants to identify aloeswood from similar dark-colored woods [3c]. Ultimately, between the fourth and sixth centuries, the combination of a growing taste for novel aromatics by southern elite, an increasing Buddhist presence that embraced the use of aloeswood incense, and the loss of access to overland trade routes for those living in the coastal south all helped promote an interest for tropically-sourced aloeswood. This multifaceted demand also likely drove the continued search for prized aromatic on the Indochinese Peninsula as well as the development of domestic centers of production in the Chinese south, thus creating a positive feedback loop where desires could be more readily meet, but never fully satiated since aloeswood was most often burned when used.[1324]

By the first half of the fifth century aloeswood was cited in the earliest known Chinese incense blending manual, compiled by the southern court historian Fan Ye 范曄 (398–446), where it is reported as having an agreeable and mild scent [HC#84]. Moreover, in the early sixth century, Tao Hongjing names aloeswood as one of the six most valued

[1324] Aspects of these aesthetic, religious, and economic forces on aloeswood are discussed in Kieschnick, *The Impact of Buddhism on Chinese Material Culture*, 277–78; Jung, "Cultural Biography of Agarwood," 107–08.

aromatics used by perfumers in China.[1325] As for its more esoteric uses, aloeswood was also listed among the aromatics in the Buddhist balneotherapy revealed by the goddess Sarasvatī.[1326] In the version contained in the eighth century translation of the *Sutra of Golden Light*, it is glossed as *ejielu* 惡揭嚕, Middle Chinese **ʔâk-kʰjäi-luo*, or *agaru*. The Daoist text known as the *Scripture of the Moving Pearl* (*Liuzhu jing* 流珠經) also offers this praise: "The Perfected are fond of the Purple Sublimity and Mysterious Tree incense, for all who smell them are overjoyed."[1327] An interlinear note tell us that this pair of arcane terms points to aloeswood and Jian Aromatic, the latter being a lesser grade of aloeswood [HC#22].

One of the greatest difficulties in examining the East Asian history of aloeswood is the bewildering number of names under which it came to be traded. Already by the third century report of Wan Zhen, aloeswood was known in at least two varieties, a superior quality that sank in water and an inferior quality that exhibited a neutral buoyancy called Jian Aromatic, as noted above.[1328] By the middle of the seventh century, the trade jargon had increased to five different designations based on appearance and physical properties.[1329] This list is partly noted in the entry above [3a], with only Horse's Hoof (*mati* 馬蹄) missing to complete the list of five. In total, Hong Chu includes twelve different names and commercial grades for aloeswood in the base text of the *Materia Aromatica*,[1330] Based on such nuanced distinctions in quality, Yamada argues that aloeswood emerged as the most important

[1325] XXBC:12.313; see also Yamada, "Chin sunawachi kaori," 2–3; Yamada, *Tōa kōryō shi kenkyū*, 172–73. The list of six aromatics includes aloeswood, frankincense, cloves, patchouli, elemi, and liquidambar.
[1326] T664:386c14 and T665:435a03–04.
[1327] 真人愛紫微幽木之香，聞者皆喜。謂沈水箋香。DZ839.11a.
[1328] Yamada thinks a third grade, Qian Aromatic, was a later interpolation to the text, see Yamada, *Tōa kōryō shi kenkyū*, 186 and my comments to Jian Aromatic at HC#22.
[1329] XXBC:12.314.
[1330] For a historical overview of early aloeswood distinctions, see my comments to Jian Aromatic at HC#22.

aromatic for blending perfumes and incense in medieval China.[1331] This is perhaps best exemplified by examining the blending recipes at the end of Hong Chu's catalogue. By including the various nomenclature for aloeswood under a single category, Yamada was able to demonstrate that for the sixteen recipes he analyzed, aloeswood products constituted a disproportionate amount of the total volume – accounting for just over 37 percent of all ingredients.[1332]

Lastly, in addition to perfumery, aloeswood was also important for the Chinese visual arts. It was sometimes used for smaller sculptures, such as Buddhist statuary [HC#24] or, reputedly, as a construction material for buildings, such as seen with the famed Aloeswood Pavilion of the Tang [HC#104]. Outside of the most rare and valuable specimens, however, high-quality aloeswood pieces were relatively small and thus were not typically used for large projects. Consequently, sweetly-scented aloeswood emerged as a favorite material for objects like Buddhist rosaries.[1333] In terms of surviving historical objects, the treasures of Shōsō-in 正倉院 in Nara, Japan, include a hexagonal sutra box covered in "aloeswood powder" and a writing brush made of aloeswood and spotted bamboo.[1334] Arguably the most famous piece of aloeswood at Shōsō-in, which is considerably large at nearly five feet (152 cm) in length, is called the *ranjatai* 蘭奢待. While small pieces has been cut off on the rare auspicious occasions, the material itself is not considered the premium grade of "sinking" aloeswood, but a lesser variety known as Yellow-Aged Aromatic [HC#23].[1335]

[1331] Yamada, "Chin sunawachi kaori," 2–3; Yamada, *Tōa kōryō shi kenkyū*, 172–73.
[1332] Yamada, "Chin sunawachi kaori," 5; Yamada, *Tōa kōryō shi kenkyū*, 174–76.
[1333] Kieschnick, *The Impact of Buddhism on Chinese Material Culture*, 133–34.
[1334] Schafer, *Golden Peaches*, 164.
[1335] Bedini, *Trail of Time*, 34–35; Quan Fei, "Famen si Tang ta digong chutu Tangdai xiangliao chutan 法門寺唐塔地宮出土唐代香料初探," *Nongye kaogu* 農業考古 4 (2016): 249. It is also claimed that the piece arrived during the reign of Emperor Shōmu (r. 724–748), Bedini, *Trail of Time*, 34.

Aloeswood in a natural (or nearly natural) state was also valued and could be treated as a sculpture or miniature mountainscape unto itself.[1336] For example, when the crypt under the Famen Temple pagoda was opened in 1987, eleven pieces of irregularly shaped aloeswood were recovered, totaling nearly four pounds (1701 grams). Each piece was painted with gold powder to accentuate the grain and highlight the wood's contours. According to an inscription left by Emperor Yizong 懿宗 (r. 859–873), he interred eight "mountain" pieces of aromatics, two each of frankincense, sandalwood, cloves, and aloeswood. After excavation, nothing was found of the first three kinds and the recovered aloeswood pieces are presumed to represent the "mountains" of aloeswood left by the emperor.[1337] The prestige afforded to natural shapes of aloeswood perhaps explains the rather curious depiction of aloeswood in the early sixteenth century *Classified Essentials of Materia Medica*. Under the caption for the aloeswood tree from Guangzhou, a slender sapling with green leaves emerges from the side of a large, craggy, and asymmetrical wooden block. It is reminiscent of an ornamental "scholars' rock," but possibly represents a sculptural aloeswood mountain.[1338]

4) White Sandalwood (sandalwood) 白檀香[1339]

[4a] Chen Zangqi[1340] states in the *Supplement to the Materia Medica*, "The tree is like

[1336] Stein, *World in Miniature*, 84–91, 302n.180.
[1337] Quan Fei, "Famen si Tang ta digong," 246–47, 248; Shaanxi sheng wenwu kaogu yanjiusuo, *Famen si*, Vol. 2, Plate 251.1 (items FD5: 101–1–5).
[1338] The image is available as part of the online digital collection of the Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin found here: https://digital.staatsbibliothek-berlin.de/werkansicht?PPN=PPN3346157326&PHYSID=PHYS_2316&view=overview-toc&DMDID=DMDLOG_0031. The image is found in Vol. 17, p. 2316.
[1339] Sandalwood products were most often distinguished by their color, of which white, yellow, and purple (or red) were the most common designations. Despite the appellation of White Sandalwood, the fragrant heartwood of the sandalwood tree possesses a yellowish to golden brown hue. Buddhist and Daoist sources would sometimes refer to this aromatic wood as True Sandalwood (*zhentan* 真檀).
[1340] See HC#3c.

rosewood[1341] and is exported from South of the Seas[1342]. It treats heart and abdominal pain[1343], cholera[1344], malignity strike[1345], ghost *qi*[1346], and is an insecticide.

[4b] Furthermore, the *Tang Materia Medica* states, "Its taste is salty. Its [nature] is slightly cold. It treats malign poison[1347] and wind poison and is exported from the states of Kunlun[1348] and Panpan[1349]. It treats melting wind accumulation[1350] and edema[1351]."

[4c] Furthermore, there is "purple sandalwood" [i.e., sanderswood[1352]] which people grind into a paste [to treat] wind poison and all sorts of swelling. Although it does not grow in China, people everywhere [throughout China] possess it.

[1341] This refers to the native Chinese species *Dalbergia hupeana*; for more on this tree, see Schafer, "Rosewood," 129–30.

[1342] Here, Hainan 海南 does not refer to the present-day island of Hainan off the south Chinese coast, a name which it received only during the Song. As detailed by Schafer, "South of the Seas" (*hainan*) was used through the Tang to describe distant countries along the Indochinese Peninsula and among the Indonesian Archipelago, see Schafer, *Shore of Pearls*, 9. This also matches better with the distribution of sandalwood trees, which are not known to occur on Hainan.

[1343] Zhang and Unschuld, *Dictionary of the Ben Cao Gang Mu*, 575–76.

[1344] Zhang and Unschuld, *Dictionary of the Ben Cao Gang Mu*, 233.

[1345] A disease caused by malign *qi* or the exhaustion of *yin* and *yang qi*, see Zhang and Unschuld, 682.

[1346] An imbalance in one's *yin* and *yang qi* due to demonic ghosts, see Zhang and Unschuld, 201.

[1347] Zhang and Unschuld, 139.

[1348] In the early medieval period, the toponym Kunlun 崑崙, first pointing to a mythic mountain range in the far West, began to be applied as a generic ethnonym for dark-skinned peoples of Malay ethnicity, see Pelliot, "Indochine," 261–63; Wang, "Nanhai Trade," 60; Schafer, *Golden Peaches*, 45–46; Wolters, *Indonesian Commerce*, 199–200. Unlike Panpan (see following note), Kunlun did not designate an independent polity and by the end of the fifth century the term was also used generically in medieval sources to refer to prominent maritime merchants and skilled sailors of Southeast Asia in contact with China, again probably originally of Malay descent, but later to encompass other groups (Chan, Khmer, Śrīvijan, etc.), see Pelliot, "Indochine," 257–60; Wang, "Nanhai Trade," 103; Wolters, *Indonesian Commerce*, 153–54, 242, 244. By extension, Kunlun could also geographically refer to maritime Southeast Asia, see Wang, "Nanhai Trade," 60n.63.

[1349] Panpan 盤盤 was an independent state located on the isthmus of the Malay Peninsula close to present-day Bandon Bay. Panpan sent tribute delegations to China starting in the middle of the fifth century and may have been the seat of the *coup d'état* that overthrew the regional power, Funan, in roughly the same period, see Wolters, *Indonesian Commerce*, 45, 163–64, 168, 234, 273n.79; for more on the tributary products of Panpan, see Wang, "Nanhai Trade," 51, 54–55, 74, 119.

[1350] I have been unable to identify this illness. Tao Hongjing notes that foreigners used sandalwood to treat this illness, see XXBC:314. For wind swelling, see Zhang and Unschuld, *Dictionary of the Ben Cao Gang Mu*, 173.

[1351] Zhang and Unschuld, 475.

[1352] Indian purple sandalwood, sometimes also known as red sandalwood (*chitan* 赤檀), is the *Pterocarpus santalinus*, commonly known as sanderswood. Despite its Chinese name, sanderswood is not counted among the sandalwood *Santalum* genus. For more on this tree and its wood, see McHugh, *Sandalwood and Carrion*, 183; Schafer, "Rosewood," 130–31; Schafer, *Golden Peaches*, 134–35; Yamada Kentarō, "Sendan (chandana) kō," *Nagoya gakuin daigaku ronshū* 17, no. 3 (1981): 3–7.

[4a] 陳藏器云：本草拾遺曰：樹如檀，出海南，主心腹痛，霍亂，中惡，鬼氣，殺蟲。[1353]

[4b] 又唐本草云：味鹹，微寒，主惡[1354]風毒，出崑崙盤盤之國。主消風積[1355]，水腫。[1356]

[4c] 又有紫真檀，人磨之以塗風腫[1357]，雖不生於中華，而人間遍有之。[1358]

[COMMENTS] Sandalwood is oftentimes considered the fragrant heartwood of the tropical *Santalum album* tree native to the Indonesian Archipelago, spanning from eastern Java and through the Lesser Sunda Islands to Timor, as well as parts of southern India.[1359] As James McHugh notes, however, the common name "sandalwood" is also applied to the wood of several other *Santalum* species spread across Oceania as well as trees of a different genus in East Africa and the West Indies.[1360] The common Sanskrit term for sandalwood, *candana*, has a similarly broad range of potential botanical referents and according to McHugh, in the broadest sense, *candana* referred to a fragrant wood that could be ground to a paste. The

[1353] Cf. BCGM:2.1944–1945 [檀香, 白旃檀, 紫檀/集解, 主治].
[1354] Read 惡 as 惡毒, following XXBC:14.359.
[1355] Read 積 as 腫, following XXBC:12.314 [sic].
[1356] Cf. XXBC:14.359; cf. BCGM:2.1945 [紫檀/氣味, 主治]. In the received version of the *Newly Revised Materia Medica,* this is a description for purple sandalwood (*zi zhentan mu* 紫真檀木). The illnesses of melting wind accumulation and edema are not noted in the *Newly Revised Materia Medica* as preserved in the *Systematic Materia Medica*.
[1357] Read 風腫 as 風毒諸腫, following XXBC:359.
[1358] Cf. XXBC:14.359; cf. BCGM:2.1945 [檀香, 紫檀/集解, 主治].
[1359] The non-continuous phytogeographic distribution of the *Santalum album* has caused some to question if *S. album* was introduced into India from Malaysia, see Wheatley, "Geographical Notes," 65; Yamada, "Sendan (chandana) kō," 10. If this is the case, the Indian cultivation of *S. album* occurred by at least 1000 BCE, the dating of sandalwood charcoal found at Sannarachamma Hill, see McHugh, *Sandalwood and Carrion*, 183, 184–85. For a map depicting the sources of *S. album* sandalwood, see Wheatley, "Geographical Notes," 66. Notably, many sandalwood species are hemi-parasitic, meaning they require nearby host plants to provide the appropriate nutritional requirements.
[1360] McHugh, *Sandalwood and Carrion*, 183; see also Yamada, "Sendan (chandana) kō," 7.

lighter-colored aromatic wood of the *S. album* was a common candidate for crushing or filing into a powder.

5) Suhe Aromatic (storax → rasamala resin / rasamala wood? → storax) 蘇合香[1361]

[5a] The *Materia Medica of the Divine Husbandman*[1362] states, "It grows in the river valleys of Zhongtai[1363]."

[1361] There has long been confusion over the origins of this Chinese name. Laufer has noted that *suhe* 蘇合 (or variously 酥合, 酥和 or 蘇和, especially in Buddhist sources) is "doubtless the transcription of a foreign word," but found no suitable phonetic equivalent in Sanskrit, Greek, or Semitic languages, see Laufer, *Sino-Iranica*, 456, 459–60; also Needham and Lu, *Science and Civilisation in China,* Vol. 5, Part 2*,* 140n.f. More recently Haw has suggested that *suhe*, Late Han Chinese **sa-gəp*, approximated the Greek *sagapenon*, a type of ancient medicine, see Haw, "Storax," 102–04. As noted by Haw, the identification of *sagapenon* has never been clearly established, but he nevertheless argues on the fact that both **sa-gəp* and *sagapenon* were at times described as mixtures and that the Chinese term referred to the Mediterranean medicine. Partly lost in his argument is the fact that his understanding of *sagapenon* as a mixture is drawn from the analysis of a commercially procured product from the mid-nineteenth century, see Haw, 103n.143, 104n.146. Haw offers no classical source that describes *sagapenon* as a mixture. The older, although unproven, understanding of *sagapenon* was that it referred to the gum of the umbelliferous *Ferula persica*, which Haw himself admits; see also Howes, *Vegetable Gums and Resins*, 161. Notably, *su* 蘇, of the name *suhe*, was a fragrant native Chinese plant with purple under-sided leaves now identified as in the mint family, possibly *Perilla frutescens*, see Hua, Buell, and Unschuld, *Dictionary of the Ben Cao Gang Mu*, 426 (#1116). This adoption of Chinese botanical nomenclature might help account for the reason why the *Materia Medica of the Divine Husbandman* [5a] reports that *Suhe* Aromatic was native to China, the unknown Zhongtai, in spite of the fact that it was widely viewed as an exotic foreign import since the first century. Furthermore, as we see in the early medieval lore of *Suhe* Aromatic, it was thought to be decoction of many blended (*he* 合) aromatics; see my comments below. Consequently, the name *suhe* could have reasonably been parsed as the "blend of *su* plants," but this is admittedly not attested in medieval Chinese sources.

[1362] The *Materia Medica of the Divine Husbandman* (*Shennong bencao* 神農本草), also known as the *Classic of Materia Medica of the Divine Husbandman* (*Shennong bencao jing* 神農本草經), is traditionally attributed to the legendary Shennong 神農 ("Divine Husbandman"), a cultural hero who initiated the study of pharmaceutics in after he personally tested all of the herb and plants to determine which ones were poisonous or medicinal, see Zheng et al., *Dictionary of the Ben Cao Gang Mu*, 397. The received text was edited up through the first or second century, but many believe it contains more ancient medicinal knowledge, see Zheng et al., 398. This is considered the foundational text of the materia medica tradition in China, having been first expanded by Tao Hongjing before receiving supplementation in the coming centuries.

[1363] See HC#2a.

[5b] Tao the Recluse states, "According to popular lore this is lion excrement. Foreign countries claim this, but this is not so. Nowadays it all comes from the Western Regions[1364] but the genuine kind is difficult to distinguish."

[5c] "It is purplish-red in color like sanderswood and is firm and solid. It is extremely fragrant and heavy like stone. When burned, the best kind [leaves] ash that is white. It is a treatment for warding off evil [*qi*], malaria[1365], epilepsy[1366], attachment-illness[1367], and driving away the three worms."

[5a] 神農本草云：生中臺川谷。[1368]

[5b] 陶隱居云：俗傳是師子糞，外國說不爾。今皆從西域來。真者難別。[1369]

[5c] 紫赤色如紫檀堅實，極芬香，重如石，燒之灰白者佳。主辟邪，瘧，癇，疰，去三蟲。[1370]

[COMMENTS] Storax, also sometimes known as styrax (after the Greek *sturax*), of the classical Mediterranean world is often thought to be a resinous exudate from the *Styrax*

[1364] From the Western Han onwards, the Western Regions referred to the frontier borderlands west of the Jade Gate (*Yumen guan* 玉門關). In its more restrictive sense, it referred to the garrison outposts and oasis kingdoms around the Tarim Basin east of the Pamir Mountains, or what is primarily present-day Xinjiang. Modern scholarship has tended to also call this area Eastern Turkestan, Serindia, or Eastern Central Asia. It its more expansive sense, the Western Regions also included the vast terrain west of the Pamir Mountains, including Western Central Asia, the Indian sub-continent, and Western Asia.

[1365] Zhang and Unschuld, *Dictionary of the Ben Cao Gang Mu*, 364.

[1366] Zhang and Unschuld, 554.

[1367] Zhang and Unschuld, 688.

[1368] Cf. XXBC:12.321; cf. BCGM:2.1962 [蘇合香/集解].

[1369] Cf. XXBC:12.321; cf. BCGM:2.1963 [蘇合香/正誤]. In the received version of the *Newly Revised Materia Medica*, Tao Hongjing continues on to say that storax is not used as a medicine, but only as an ingredient for blending perfumes.

[1370] Unattributed, paraphrased quote from the *Newly Revised Materia Medica*; cf. XXBC:12.321; cf. BCGM:2.1963 [蘇合香/正誤], cf. trans. Laufer, *Sino-Iranica*, 458. The editors of the *Newly Revised Materia Medica* also confirm the identification of storax as lion excrement was the "fabrication of foreigners" 胡人誑言.

officinalis native to parts of southeastern Europe, the Anatolian Peninsula, and the ancient Levant of the eastern Mediterranean coast.[1371] This identification has caused considerable controversy and is worth briefly summarizing before turning to medieval Chinese reports.

Carl Linnaeus (1707–1778), the creator of the modern scientific taxonomic system, believed ancient storax was extracted from the small deciduous tree known in modern Hebrew as *livneh*, which he consequently named *Styrax officinalis* in 1753 as the principal medicinal (officinal) type of the *Styrax* genus.[1372] Notably, this identification was supported by British botanist Daniel Hanbury (1825–1875) in the middle of the nineteenth century based on what appears to have been three chief observations. First, after examining the writings of Pliny (23/24–79 CE) and Dioscorides (ca. 40–ca. 90), Hanbury determined the reputed sources of ancient storax coincided with the phytogeographic distribution of *S. officinalis*.[1373] Moreover, both Pliny and Dioscorides claim the storax-producing plant resembled a quince tree, which according to the view of Hanbury represented a reasonable match to the *S. officinalis* that possesses similar oblong leaves.[1374] Lastly, the resin described by Dioscorides was noted as being bright yellow (and black for that of a lesser quality resin,

[1371] For a map showing the distribution of *S. officinalis*, see Suzanne Amigues, "Le styrax et ses usages antiques," *Journal des savants* 2, no. 1 (2007): 265. One the varied uses of the English terms storax and styrax, see Langenheim, *Plant Resins*, 347.
[1372] Classical Latin *styrax* (also *storax*), principally referred to the resin of a tree, not the tree itself. Moreover, there is disagreement over the derivation of the Greek term *sturax* and its relationship to another Greek term, *stactē*, which was used as a translation for the Hebrew *nāṭāf*, one of the ingredients of the Temple Incense blend. Because of these undetermined relationships, *nāṭāf* is sometimes understood as a storax resin and sometimes as a different resin, such as myrrh. For a discussion on some of the linguistic issues around Greek and Latin *sturax*/*styrax*, see Dan H. Nicolson and George C. Steyskal, "The Masculine Gender of the Generic Name Styrax Linnaeus (Styracaceae)," *Taxon* 25, no. 5–6 (1976): 581–87.
[1373] Daniel Hanbury, "On Storax," in *Science Papers, Chiefly Pharmacological and Botanical* (London: MacMillan and Co., 1857), 130–32.
[1374] Daniel Hanbury, "Additional Observations on Storax," in *Science Papers, Chiefly Pharmacological and Botanical* (London: MacMillan and Co., 1863), 147. Hanbury also notes the Modern Greek term for the *S. officinalis* is the "wild quince," Hanbury, 147n.1.

a point to which we will return), which according to Hanbury matches the exudate of several other species of *Styrax* known as benzoin.[1375]

A significant concern for Hanbury remained, however. In spite of the fact that several Southeast Asian *Styrax* spp. produce a fragrant golden oleoresin, the Mediterranean *S. officinalis* appeared to produce no resinous exudate of any kind. In an apparent attempt to mitigate such dispositive evidence against his identification, Hanbury retells anecdotes of two botanists, Henri-Louis Duhamel du Monceau (1700–1782) and Abbé Guillaume Mazeas (1720–1775), who reported finding *S. officinalis* resin in the past.[1376] Yet, Hanbury admits that when he asked colleague Jules Émile Planchon (1823–1888) to procure such a resin from the *S. officinalis* in the botanical garden of Montpellier, "neither aqueous sap nor resinous juice flowed from the incisions."[1377] At the end of his initial study in 1857, Hanbury attributes his failures to general lack of worldwide supply, noting that, "always scarce and valuable, [storax] has in modern times disappeared from commerce."[1378] Rather surprisingly, six years later, Hanbury admits that he has still been unsuccessful in finding *S. officinalis* resin, this time prescribing the failure to examining insufficiently old trees.[1379] He ends his paper by asking any traveler or resident of Asia Minor or northern Syria to "carefully examine the stems of *Styrax officinale* [sic] with a view to discover any adherent resin."[1380] Although Hanbury never writes on ancient storax again after 1863, we are afforded a story, near the end of the botanist's life, which appears to verge on the miraculous. We are told that

[1375] Hanbury, "On Storax," 129, 132. Hanbury also notes that surviving examples of storax in old materia medica collections agree "very fairly with the account left by Dioscorides."
[1376] Hanbury, "On Storax," 129–30; Hanbury, "Additional Observations on Storax," 147–48; see also Amigues, "Styrax," 270–271.
[1377] Hanbury, "On Storax," 129–130n.3.
[1378] Hanbury, 145.
[1379] Hanbury, "Additional Observations on Storax," 148.
[1380] Hanbury, 150.

Hanbury, "after having long searched for this [*S. officinalis*] resin in many localities," was finally able to find the exudate "to his delight" on December 9, 1874. He had discovered it on a single *S. officinalis* specimen he personally planted in Italy six year earlier in the winter of 1868.[1381]

Regardless of Hanbury's reputed discovery of *S. officinalis* resin in Italy, many other authorities since have found it difficult, some have said impossible, to draw an exudate from this shrubby tree.[1382] Such problems have led many to alternatively suggest that ancient storax was instead harvested from the *Liquidambar orientalis*, a large sweetgum tree native only to the Anatolian Peninsula – and the main source of the commercial product known as storax today, possessing a vibrant vanilla-balsamic odor.[1383] The oleoresin of the *L. orientalis* is collected after bruising the outer bark of the tree, triggering the plant to infuse the inner bark layer with the fragrant exudate. Then the bark is stripped off and either immediately pressed, so as to force the release of the storax, or boiled, whereby the storax can be skimmed off the top and then further pressed and extracted out of the softened bark pieces. The latter process produces an opaque, greyish black and viscous aromatic substance with the consistency of honey and a notably sweet odor.[1384]

[1381] Alwin Berger, *Hortus Mortolensis: Enumeratio Plantarum in Horto Mortolensi Cultarum–Alphabetical Catalogue of Plants Growing in the Garden of the Late Sir Thomas Hanbury...at La Mortola, Ventimiglia, Italy* (London: West, Newman & Co., 1912), 432–33.

[1382] Andreas Lardos, José Prieto-Garcia, and Michael Heinrich, "Resins and Gums in Historical Iatrosophia Texts from Cyprus: A Botanical and Medico-Pharmacological Approach," *Frontiers in Pharmacology* 2 (2011): 13–14. Following a study performed in the 1970s, it is now believed that *S. officinalis* in western Turkey do not produce resin, but hearsay reports given to the authors claimed trees in southeastern Turkey did produce it, Lardos, Prieto-Garcia, and Heinrich, "Resins and Gums," 14. Moreover, it has been claimed that *S. officinalis* in Lebanon also do not produce resin, see Amigues, "Styrax," 270n.30.

[1383] For a map showing the distribution of *L. orientalis*, see Amigues, "Styrax," 273. As described by Jean Langenheim, the resin itself is yellowish in color, Langenheim, *Plant Resins*, 347–48.

[1384] Hanbury, "On Storax," 139–41; F. N. Howes, "Age-Old Resins of the Mediterranean Region and Their Uses," *Economic Botany* 4, no. 4 (1950): 316; Faik Yaltirik and Asuman Efe, "Liquidambar Orientalis: Hamamelidaceae," *Curtis's Botanical Magazine* 17, no. 2 (2000): 69–70. In contrast, a simple notching method is noted in Amigues, "Styrax," 271; cf. p. 277 (citing both the notching and decoction process).

The suggestion of identifying the oleoresin of the *L. orientalis* with classical storax date to the nineteenth century and was explicitly rejected by Hanbury. He argued that the *Liquidambar*, a large tree with acutely lobed leaves, looked nothing like the quince tree described by Dioscorides, nor did it produce a golden-colored exudate.[1385] Moreover, its modern narrow distribution on the Anatolian Peninsula means it was not likely found in the Levant, a known ancient producer of storax. The emergent consensus of the late nineteenth century acceded a sort of middle ground to accommodate these conflicting interpretations. It was accepted that ancient storax originally referred to the resin of the *S. officinalis*, but the name was later applied to the resin of the *L. orientalis*. To distinguish between these two, the former has sometimes been called "solid storax" and the latter "liquid storax." The historical shift is generally attributable to the idea, as already noted by Hanbury, that solid storax was exceedingly scarce, even in the ancient period, and a new source was found to meet the demand. As to when such a change occurred it not clearly articulated, but assuming such a shift occurred – a point not accepted by all authorities – it must have happened after the description of Dioscorides in the first century. Notably, according to Hanbury, the earliest description of liquid storax in Greek sources occurs in the sixth and seventh centuries, with the growing commercial expansion of the Byzantine Empire.[1386] As we shall see, however, there is evidence to suggest there was knowledge of *L. orientalis* resin far earlier, possibly even in the time of Dioscorides.

Turning to our Chinese sources, the origin and production of Suhe Aromatic, which I translate as storax, is regularly noted in early medieval sources, especially imperial histories, something that was rare for aromatics. For example, the *Supplement to the Book of Han* (*Xu*

[1385] Hanbury, "Additional Observations on Storax," 147.
[1386] Hanbury, 146; Howes, "Age-Old Resins," 315.

Han shu 續漢書), compiled by Sima Biao 司馬彪 (d. ca. 306), claims Suhe Aromatic originated in the Roman Empire where it was the result of boiling all sorts of liquids (*zhi* 汁) drawn from a blend of aromatics.[1387] This story was later folded into Fan Ye's more widely circulating *Book of Later Han* (*Hou Han shu* 後漢書).[1388] The *Treatise on the Guang Region* (*Guang zhi* 廣志), a gazetteer compiled during the mid-fifth century, provides a pair of similar accounts. It notes that Suhe Aromatic is an export of the Roman Empire, but that some people instead claim it comes from the country of Suhe 蘇合. In terms of its production, it states that people collect aromatics and press out (*zha* 搾) the liquid or sap to make a fragrant paste or ointment (*xianggao* 香膏), of which the residual dregs were then sold to merchants. The *Treatise on the Guang Region* then provides the alternative explanation that Suhe Aromatic was the boiled reduction of many aromatics, mirroring the claims of the above Chinese histories. The entry concludes by saying Suhe Aromatic is "not a naturally occurring single substance."[1389]

On its face, these descriptions seem to plainly describe the modern extraction process of the *L. orientalis* which produces liquid storax. For reasons that remain unclear, Berthold Laufer, based on much of this same evidence, concluded these early Chinese sources could only be referring to the solidified resin of *S. officinalis*, citing the work of Hanbury to prove

[1387] 大秦國，合諸香煎其汁，謂之蘇合。T2122:573a25–26, TPYL:8.982.860; cf. trans. Laufer, *Sino-Iranica*, 456.

[1388] See HHS:78.2919, trans. Yu, *China and the Ancient Mediterranean*, 70; see also Liu, *Songdai Xiangpu*, 21. The same story was also retold in the *Records of the Later Han* (*Hou Han ji* 後漢記), see Yu, *China and the Ancient Mediterranean*, 137.

[1389] 出大秦國。或云。蘇合國。國人採之。搾其汁以爲香膏。乃賣其滓與賈客。或云。合諸香草煎爲蘇合。非自然一種物也。T2122:573a26–29; cf. TPYL:8.982.860; cf. trans. Laufer, *Sino-Iranica*, 456–57; cf. trans. Yu, *China and the Ancient Mediterranean*, 177; cf. trans. Haw, "Storax," 101. This same story was retold in the *Book of Liang*, with the added note that the final product that reached China was not very fragrant, see LS:54.48.798, see also Laufer, *Sino-Iranica*, 457; Liu, *Songdai Xiangpu*, 21; Yu, *China and the Ancient Mediterranean*, 118.

his case.[1390] It appears that Laufer (and many others since) accepted Hanbury's claim that ancient storax was derived from the *S. officinalis* and as a consequence only interpreted these Chinese sources as describing the firm yellow-colored exudate. If we examine the full description of storax by Dioscorides, however, he also describes a lesser quality of storax as being black in color and further notes that it was commonly adulterated with other ingredients. It could even be extruded into cold water to form worm-like shapes.[1391] From this broader perspective, even ancient storax was "not a naturally occurring single substance," just as our Chinese sources claim.

Moreover, Suzanne Amigues has recently shown that Strabo (63 BCE–24 CE), who lived in Asia Minor, was not only aware that *L. orientalis* produced a scented exudate, but that he also called this substance storax. While Strabo does not discuss the modern decoction and expression methods for *L. orientalis*, he describes an exudate flowing from the bark caused by woodworm damage that was commercially traded in various purities and mixtures.[1392] Amigues argues the *L. orientalis* resin of the lowest quality, as described by Strabo, was reserved for medicine, and furthermore, this was precisely the "black storax" type described by Dioscorides.[1393] Additionally, Amigues demonstrates that by the time of Galen (129–216) the presumptive superior yellow storax was so rare and expensive that the common trade of storax principally involved a resin much darker in color, pointing again to

[1390] Laufer, *Sino-Iranica*, 458n.1.
[1391] Hanbury, "On Storax," 130–31. To account for storax's identity as mixture, J. Thorley also points out that Pliny describes the use of storax as one of the ingredients in a "royal perfume" made for the kings of Parthia, see J. Thorley, "The Silk Trade between China and the Roman Empire at Its Height, *Circa* A.D. 90–130," *Greece and Rome* 18, no. 1 (1971): 78. Thorley does not speculate how a single ingredient became conflated with the name of the entire recipe, however.
[1392] Amigues, "Styrax," 288–94.
[1393] Amigues, 294n.11, 308.

L. orientalis resin.[1394] This latter storax was so commonplace, in fact, that Galen compared it to wine imbibed at theatre performances.[1395]

Based on the above evidence, I believe the storax brought into China during the early medieval period, and possibly the only Mediterranean storax ever known to the Chinese, was the oleoresin of the *L. orientalis*.[1396] As to whether the *S. officinalis* was the "original" source of storax, or if the plant ever produced a resin in sufficient quantities to support trade in storax, is a problem I do not see being resolved in the near future.[1397]

One might dismiss, as does Laufer, these early Chinese accounts as fanciful tales used to explain away the mysterious name of *suhe* 蘇合, literally "*su* blend," by providing a folk etymology related to the aromatic's production or country of origin (notably, *su* 蘇 itself was a fragrant native Chinese plant, possibly *Perilla frutescens*[1398]). Yet, to outright reject all early Chinese reports as pure fiction seems unwarranted. There is some tantalizing evidence to suggest that elite Eastern Han consumers not only knew about the *stories* of Suhe Aromatic, but were also successful in obtaining the actual product and, quite possibly, relatively accurate knowledge of its origins.

[1394] Amigues, 311–312.
[1395] Amigues, 311–312.
[1396] One need not presume storax obtained from *L. orientalis* was always in a pure liquid state, as Amigues notes, "semi-liquid" storax was transported in animal skin bags, see Amigues, 310. Moreover, to add to the ease of long-distance transport, let alone its use as incense, would necessitate that even semi-liquid storax was dried to a state of residue in some manner. When sold commercially in modern times, *L. orientalis* storax was infused into sawdust to create a solid cake, see Amigues, 277.
[1397] After the most recent reports of finding *S. officinalis* resin in the eighteenth century – and the reported re-discovery in by Hanbury in 1874 – it appears the next report of finding *S. officinalis* resin, exuding from an injured tree on Cyprus, occurred in 2007, see Lardos, Prieto-Garcia, and Heinrich, "Resins and Gums," 14. As one possible explanation for such rarity, it has been suggested that only specific phenotypes of *S. officinalis* produce resin, and moreover, to produce the exudate when injured, the plant must be of sufficient age and exposed to optimal ecological conditions, see Amigues, "Styrax," 264; see also Langenheim, *Plant Resins*, 354–55. Unless we consider the possibility of a significant modern deforestation of *S. officinalis* and the concomitant eradication of resin-producing varieties, it is difficult to imagine how such a hard-to-find substance could have sustained what was once a significant ancient trade in storax.
[1398] See HC#125c.

We can surmise the early acquisition of storax based on a letter written by the first century historian Ban Gu 班固 (32–92) to his younger brother, Ban Chao 班超 (32–102). In the late first century Ban Chao was stationed in Khotan and Kashgar, oasis kingdoms on the southwestern part of what would become known at the Silk Road. Ban Gu relays a message from Dou Xian 竇憲 (d. 92), a powerful courtier and brother of the dowager empress, to procure certain items from the region, presumably for use at the imperial court:

> Palace Attendant Dou orders you to transport seven hundred bolts of variegated silk and three hundred bolts of white silk to trade for Yuezhi horses, storax, and woolen carpets.[1399]
> 竇侍中令載雜彩七百匹，白素三百匹，欲以市月氏馬，蘇合香，毾㲪。

As we see from this correspondence, not only was the imperial household familiar with Suhe Aromatic, but Ban Chao was thought to have a clear means of acquiring it through his connections with foreign merchants in the Tarim Basin. Moreover, in 97 CE, Ban Chao would expand the Chinese knowledge of the Western Regions by sending Gan Ying 甘英 (fl. 97) as an envoy to the Roman Empire. And while Gan Ying reportedly only made it to the head of the Persian Gulf (some claim it was the Mediterranean), it is not unreasonable to presume that both he and Ban Chao acquired reasonably sound information regarding goods that ultimately made their way to the cosmopolitan centers of China.[1400] Notably, storax is cited in the *Periplus Maris Erythraei*, a first century handbook of trade for Greco-Roman merchants, where it is said to have been exported from the Roman Empire to Indian ports at

[1399] I am quoting the synoptic passage as cited in Liu, *Songdai Xiangpu*, 21; Sun, *Handai wuzhi wenhua*, 415. The relevant fragments of Ban Gu's letter are found in TPYL:7.814 and TPYL:8.982; both sections are cited in the seventeenth century *Cart of Aromatics* (*Xiang sheng* 香乘), see SKQS:844.382b.12–14.
[1400] For more on Ban Chao as described in Chinese histories, see Yu, *China and the Ancient Mediterranean*, 5, 10–11, 57–58, 117, 157–58n.493; for more on Gan Ying in these same sources, see Yu, 5, 10–11, 25, 66n.95, 117n.320, 157–58n.493.

Barbarikon (present-day Karācī) and Barygaza (Bharuch) on the Arabian Sea.[1401] The request of Dou Xian to procure *Suhe* Aromatic at the end of the first century thus fits well with what we know of the contemporary trade in storax.

While this does not guarantee that Chinese stories of storax production were necessarily accurate, we do know that it was a valued luxury good by the end of the first century and there was an established network of trade that could transport it across the Eurasian continent. In a story that may be spurious, the fifth or sixth century *Records of Going on Military Campaign* (*Congzheng ji* 從征記) reports that the tomb of the warlord Liu Biao 劉表 (142–208), located in Gaoping commandery in present-day Shanxi, was re-opened in the early fourth century, subsequently releasing a strong scent of storax.[1402] It was claimed the aromatic had been placed inside the coffin, which, if we take this story to be authentic, means storax had to have been available in China by the very early part of the third century when the crypt was sealed. The Eastern Han general Zhuge Liang 諸葛亮 (181–234) was also said to have been aware of storax, thus confirming that it was in circulation among the elite, at the very latest, by the early third century.[1403]

There were also other early medieval stories about storax that were clearly more fantastic – and recognized as such by the Chinese. Writing at the end of the third century, the

[1401] Casson, *Periplus*, 75, 81; Amigues, "Styrax," 310–311. Of course, the fact the Dou Xian requests storax points to the reality that the aromatic was already known to the imperial court. Given that this remains the earliest citation to storax in Chinese sources, and that we are afforded sound external documentation attesting to its trade in India during the same period, it would be beyond the limits of our evidence to argue that storax was known to the Chinese well before the Eastern Han.

[1402] TPYL:8.982.860. Notably, his body was also claimed to look as if it was still alive, placing this story among other tales of the strange where corpses are said to retain a fabulous smell and still look animate, see e.g. T2122:572c12–13.

[1403] TPYL:3.359, trans. Tian, "Letters and Gifts," 183–84n.129. To this we could also add the poetry of Fu Xuan, a figure discussed below, who notes a gift of storax, see TPYL:8.982.860, trans. Birrell, *New Songs*, 241. Storax also appears in Buddhist translation for the first time in the third century, see e.g., T196:154c07 and T185:479b29.

scholar Fu Xuan 傅玄 (217–278) noted that Suhe Aromatic was the excrement of wild beasts, concluding that everyone in China thought this was "strange" (*guai* 怪).[1404] Additionally, as seen in Hong Chu's entry [5b], such origin stories were treated with great suspicion. Tao Hongjing relays that Suhe Aromatic was thought to be the excrement of lions, but also dismissed this claim as a falsehood of foreigners.[1405] Lions were known to the early medieval Chinese as fierce predatory animals that blocked passageway to the Roman Empire. First hand contact with lions would have been minimal for most Chinese, but at least one living specimen was presented as tribute by the Parthians to the Chinese court in the year 87.[1406] These fearsome animals would also give rise to other fantastic beliefs, such that bows strung with lion tendons could snap the strings of other weapons when plucked, or that summertime flies and mosquitoes did not dare come close to a fly whisk made of a lion's tale.[1407] Consequently, stories about a trade in lion excrement could have been the concoctions of merchants hoping to capitalize on naïve customers who were be willing to pay exorbitant prices for goods with miraculous powers. Regardless of its speculated origins, the *Supplementary Record by Famous Physicians* (*Mingyi bielu* 名醫別錄) reports that it has the power to allow one to "communicate with spirits" (*tong shen* 通神), underscoring its early medieval perception as an especially powerful drug.[1408]

If we turn to the material descriptions of Suhe Aromatic in medieval Chinese sources, additional complexities arise. In the eighth century, the *Supplement to the Materia Medica*

[1404] 西國胡言，蘇合香者，獸所作也。中國皆以爲怪。T2122:573a29–b01; cf. TPYL:8.982.861.
[1405] XXBC:12.321 and Laufer, *Sino-Iranica*, 458.
[1406] Yu, *China and the Ancient Mediterranean*, 64, 143.
[1407] YYZZ:16.1167–1168 .
[1408] XXBC:12.321; BCGM:2.1962 [蘇合香/集解]. The perceived power of storax appears to have attenuated later in the medieval period, as Tao Hongjing flatly claims that storax was "no longer used in medicine; it is only good for blending aromatics" 不復入藥唯供合好香爾。XXBC:12.321.

acknowledged the confusion regarding the nature and origin of Suhe Aromatic. It first describes lion excrement as an extremely foul smelling reddish-black (*chi hei* 赤黑) substance, contrasting it with fragrant Suhe Aromatic that it described as yellowish-white (*huang bai* 黃白). Nevertheless, the work still admits that the two substances are "similar" (*xiangsi* 相似), suggesting the confusion between the items was not clear-cut in all cases. It then goes on to explain that some considered lion excrement, in apparent contradiction to the above description, to be the juice of leaves, wood, and bark of trees.[1409] Laufer offers a rather elegant explanation to the curious statement. This conflation with lion excrement may have been based on the Sanskrit term *rasamala*, "impure excretions," which had been later adopted by Malay and Javanese traders to refer to commercially traded "storax."[1410] If this interpretation is correct, this means there were two kinds of Suhe Aromatic in circulation by the eighth century, one that was yellowish-white and another that was traded as "lion excrement," but which was in actuality an aromatic viscid pressed out of different parts of a tree.

This distinction appears to match extraordinarily well with the golden colored solid storax described by Dioscorides and the liquid storax pressed out from the *L. orientalis* known to Byzantine Greeks by the sixth century. But I do not believe the situation is as simple as this. If we compare the above description to the description of Suhe Aromatic from the *Newly Revised Materia Medica* published a century earlier, and copied without attribution by Hong Chu [5c], we find it described as purplish-red (*zi chi* 紫赤) in color like sanderswood and both firm and heavy. In the rest of the passage, uncited by Hong Chu, Suhe

[1409] BCGM:2.1963 [蘇合香/正誤]; cf. trans. Laufer, *Sino-Iranica*, 458.
[1410] Laufer, *Sino-Iranica*, 458; see also Hanbury, "On Storax," 138; Bretschneider, *Botanican Sinicum*, Part 3, 464; cf. Schafer, *Golden Peaches*, 315n.19 (who suggests *rasamālā*, "perfumed garland").

Aromatic is claimed to be imported from both the Western Regions and Kunlun 昆崙, the latter being a general designation for maritime Southeast Asia. Consequently, not only were there conflicting physical descriptions of Suhe Aromatic (dark/reddish-black and yellowish-white), but also conflicting reports as to its geographic origins (Western Regions and Southern Seas).[1411]

A missing aspect to this puzzle that has not been adequately addressed elsewhere is the identity of storax in Buddhist Sanskrit sources from the medieval period. There is good evidence that Suhe Aromatic was adopted by Buddhist translators in China as early as the late third century to render Sanskrit *turuṣka*.[1412] The clearest evidence for this is seen in the Chinese rendering of the *Dhāraṇī Collection Sutra* (*Tuoluoni ji jing* 陀羅尼集經; T901) by the Indian monk Atikūṭa in 654, and thus roughly contemporaneous with the *Newly Revised Materia Medica*.[1413] The work introduces the transcription *dulusejia* 都嚧瑟迦, Middle Chinese **tuo-luo-ʂjɛt-ka*, which Atikūṭa notes is also translated as Suhe Aromatic (*suhe xiang* 酥合香).[1414] Aided by the direction of Atikūṭa to treat the final two graphs of *dulusejia*

[1411] Tao Hongjing reported a century earlier that all specimens of Suhe Aromatic came from the Western Regions [5b].

[1412] See my comments to *turuṣka* at HC#76.

[1413] The title of this work is sometimes reconstructed as the **Dhāraṇīsaṃgraha*, but the work, as a composite whole, appears to have been compiled in China, albeit based on numerous authentic Indian materials, see Shinohara, *Spells, Images, and Mandalas*, 29–32.

[1414] T901:839a26; this specific translation appears two other times, see 794c05, 872c14. The *Systematic Materia Medica* provides as transcription for Suhe Aromatic as *dulusejian* 咄魯瑟劍, but this should not be read as a statement from the *Treatise on the Guang Region*, see BCGM:2.1963 [蘇合香/釋名], cf. Bretschneider, *Botanican Sinicum*, Part 3, 463 (who makes this mistake). The proper citation for this transcription is found in T2131:1104c07 (giving the slight variant *duolusejian* 咄嚕瑟劍). The orthographic variant *suhe* 酥合 used here is found in a handful of esoteric Chinese Buddhists texts, but can also be traced to the early fifth century, see T309:1015c29. The sixth century *Sutra of the Mūrti Maṇḍala and its Incantations* (*Mouli mantuoluo zhou jing* 牟梨曼陀羅呪經, T1007) provides a transcription for the variant *suhe* as *dusuojia* 突縮迦, see T1007.667c02. If we emended this to something like *du*[*lu*]*suojia* 突[嚧]縮迦, it better approximates *turuṣka*. Earlier in the same text, it cites *dulusejia* 堵嚕色迦 as part of an incense mixture, see T1007.664c02. It should be noted that the frequently encountered *suyou* 酥油 (or 蘇油) referred to butter or ghee, not storax.

as a single phonetic sound, we can see that this represents a transcription for *turuṣka*. Modern scholarship has most commonly treated *turuṣka* as frankincense resin, in spite of the fact the term is found together with *kundurūka*, such as we see in the *Lotus Sutra*, which is also identified as frankincense.[1415] Luckily, Atikūṭa provides a further piece of information that is critical to our investigation – he notes that *turuṣka* is an oil (*you* 油).

These comments in the *Dhāraṇī Collection Sutra* allow us to make three important claims. First, this is the strongest evidence to support the contention that Suhe Aromatic was traded as a viscid substance in medieval China. Critically, Atikūṭa's translation is contemporary with Byzantine Greek descriptions of liquid storax, thus we can conclude with some certainty that Suhe Aromatic referred to the decocted and pressed storax of the *L. orientalis*. Second, this description adds weight to the accuracy of earlier Chinese reports describing Suhe Aromatic as a heavily processed liquid (remembering that Strabo did not describe such methods). Moreover, it pushes the earliest known confirmation of *L. orientalis* resin in Chinese documents from the thirteenth century (discussed below) into the seventh century. Third, at least in the context of the *Dhāraṇī Collection Sutra*, we know that *turuṣka* did not refer to frankincense and, equally, was understood as liquid storax from the Mediterranean.

Ultimately, we can use these insights to speculate resolutions to the conflicting reports in medieval materia medica literature. We now have better footing to potentially identify the liquid "lion excrement" described in the eighth century as *L. orientalis* resin, but a more detailed history of the term *rasamala* is necessary. As Laufer notes in passing, but

[1415] As summarily stated by Laufer, "the term *turuṣka* refers to real incense (olibanum)," Laufer, *Sino-Iranica*, 458.

unfortunately does not fully explore, *rasamala* was trade jargon of the nineteenth century; it remains only speculation that it was used in the medieval period. More importantly, Malay and Javanese merchants primarily used the term *rasamala* to refer to an entirely different tree native to the region, namely the *Altingia excelsa* (syn. *Liquidambar altingiana*). This tree is found on the Malay Peninsula and parts of Indonesia, as well as elsewhere in tropical South and Southeast Asia and produces a viscid golden oleoresin.[1416] According to modern accounts, this resin, which I will refer to as rasamala resin (variously called rose malloes or Burmese storax), is collected using a notching method.[1417]

Some historical insight regarding this terminology is provided in the fifteenth century handbook of Chinese-Malay words and phrases entitled the *Translated Words of Malacca* (*Manlajia guo yiyu* 滿剌加國譯語). It lists Suhe Aromatic as a rendering of the Malay *mula* 木剌, which might reflect [*rasa*]*mala*, but this is uncertain.[1418] To add further complexity, there is some evidence that the name *rasamala*, or *roçamalha* in the report of Garcia da Orta (1501–1568), was used in the Indian port of Bombay to indicate *L. orientalis* resin in the sixteenth century.[1419] Consequently, depending on geographic origin, *rasamala* may refer to liquid storax (if from the Western Regions) or rasamala resin (if from the Southern Seas), the

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[1416] Hanbury, "On Storax," 138, 143–44; Bretschneider, *Botanican Sinicum*, Part 3, 464–65; Hirth and Rockhill, *Chau Ju-Kua*, 201; Wang, "Nanhai Trade," 109n.81; cf. Laufer, *Sino-Iranica*, 459 (who fails to clearly articulate this point). Hanbury claims this version of "liquid storax" never found its way to Europe. In terms of modern scientific nomenclature, it should be pointed out that the *Liquidambar* genus is sometimes considered synonymous with the *Altingia* genus, yet at other times are treated as separate genera under the *Altingiaceae* family.

[1417] Rose malloes, not to be confused with the *Hibiscus* species rose mallows, and similar variants like *rosa mallas*, are European corruptions of *rasamala*; see also Hanbury, "On Storax," 138, 143–44; Bretschneider, *Botanican Sinicum*, Part 3, 464–65; Laufer, *Sino-Iranica*, 459.

[1418] E.D. Edwards and C.O. Blagden, "A Chinese Vocabulary of Malacca Malay Words and Phrases Collected between A. D. 1403 and 1511 (?)," *Bulletin of the School of Oriental Studies, University of London* 6, no. 3 (1931): 725 (#138). The full Malay name for *A. excelsa*, a popular timber tree, is *kayu rasamala*.

[1419] Hanbury erroneously relates that Garcia da Orta claimed the Chinese knew liquid storax under the name of *rocamalha*, see Hanbury, "On Storax," 143; see also Bretschneider, *Botanican Sinicum*, Part 3, 465. This issue is resolved in Laufer, *Sino-Iranica*, 458n.6.

latter which may have also been utilized by Malay traders as a local substitute for Mediterranean storax.[1420]

This point appears to be addressed from a different angle in the *Brush Talks from Dream Creek* (*Mengxi bitan* 夢溪筆談) by Shen Kuo 沈括 (1031–1095). Shen Kuo asserts that Suhe Aromatic is red in color "like firm wood" and contrasts this to a so-called Suhe Oil (*suhe you* 蘇合油), which resembles a viscid glue or gum. Importantly, Shen Kuo also notes that Suhe Oil is the commodity most commonly used by people.[1421] This work does not provide us with the purported origin of Suhe Aromatic or Suhe Oil, but Laufer proposes that references to a dark-colored Suhe Aromatic that have some similarity to wood be treated as the dark reddish-brown timber of the *A. excelsa* tree which also bears a strong fragrance.[1422] This would also point to the heavy purplish-red variety of Suhe Aromatic noted in the *Newly Revised Materia Medica* [5c].[1423] Considering that the Malay *rasamala* (or *kayu rasamala*)

[1420] Laufer believes Malay traders used the name *rasamala* for trans-shipped liquid storax, Laufer, *Sino-Iranica*, 458. Laufer is not particularly clear on this point, but it does not appear he ascribes to the belief that rasamala resin was used as a substitute product for liquid storax. Jean Langenheim notes that *Altingia* resin (i.e rasamala resin) was used as a substitute for storax from *Liquidambar*, but provides no details, see Langenheim, *Plant Resins*, 350.

[1421] 今之蘇合香赤色如堅木，又有蘇合油如糊膠，人多用之。MXBT:26.204, cf. BCGM:2.1962 [蘇合香/集解]; see also Emil Vasilievitch Bretschneider, *Botanican Sinicum: Notes on Chinese Botany from Native and Western Sources, Part II. The Botany of the Chinese Classics* (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trübner & Co., Ld., 1893), 464; Laufer, *Sino-Iranica*, 459. Previous scholarship has pointed to a presumed tenth century text, the *Treatise on Universal Geography* (*Huanyu zhi* 寰宇志), to underscore the rising importance of storax oil and its particular origin in Annam and Eastern Sumatra during this period, see Bretschneider, *Botanican Sinicum*, Part 3, 464; Hirth and Rockhill, *Chau Ju-Kua*, 200; Laufer, *Sino-Iranica*, 459; Wang, "Nanhai Trade," 109n.81. This title, as cited in the *Systematic Materia Medica*, is no longer believed to refer to the tenth century work of Yue Shi 樂史 (930–1007), with the full title of *Treatise on Universal Geography of the Taiping Era* (*Taipin huanyu zhi* 太平寰宇志), but to the *Treatise on Comprehensive Geography of the Great Ming* (*Da Ming yitong zhi* 大明一統志) from the Ming, see Zheng et al., *Dictionary of the Ben Cao Gang Mu*, 92–93, 450, 623. If this is accurate, the belief that *Suhe* Aromatic imported into China had primarily been a southeast Asian substitute by the tenth century needs to be critically re-examined.

[1422] Laufer, *Sino-Iranica*, 458–59; For further descriptions of this wood, see Bretschneider, *Botanican Sinicum*, Part 3, 464–65.

[1423] Additionally, *Suhe* Aromatics has also been treated as a kind of sappanwood (*sumu* 蘇木; *Caesalpinia sappan*, syn. *Biancaea sappan*) in the eleventh century, which might reflect their similar names in Chinese, see BCGM:2.1962 [蘇合香/集解], trans. Bretschneider, *Botanican Sinicum*, Part 2, 463. Notably, Edward Schafer claims that classical Mediterranean storax was dark purple in color, a claim I have not been able to confirm, see

refers specifically to the *A. excelsa* tree, and by extension its timber, this identification seems justified and is further supported by the fact that the *Newly Revised Materia Medica* reports Suhe Aromatic as imported from Kunlun. Equally, the fact that the *Brush Talks from Dream Creek* identifies a Suhe Oil might indicate the viscid oleoresin of the rasamala tree. If such speculations are correct, a shift in the referent of Suhe Aromatic from Mediterranean storax to Southeast Asian rasamala wood and rasamala resin may have begun by the seventh century.[1424]

It should not be assumed a shift to a Southeast Asian substitute, either as rasamala resin or rasamala wood, was complete by the eleventh century. In the thirteenth century, Zhao Rukuo's 趙汝适 (1170–1231) *Treatise on the Barbarians* mentions storax oil in several passages, many of which talk about exported products of countries located in Western Asia and East Africa. Specifically, storax oil is noted as an item of trade coming from Baghdad (*Baida* 白達), Ghazni (*Jicini* 吉慈尼), the Berabera Coast (Somaliland) (*Bipaluo* 弼琶囉), and Rûm (Asia Minor)(*Lumei* 蘆眉). Storax oil is also noted in relationship to Śrīvijaya, a dominant trading emporium located on Sumatra. Zhao Rukuo specifically notes that this product is not native to Sumatra, but is imported by Dashi Arab traders.[1425] In all of these cases, storax oil is must be referring to the liquid storax of *L. orientalis*, even though most of its reputed origin ports could only be regional redistribution centers. This international trade

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Schafer, *Golden Peaches*, 168. As we have seen, the description in Dioscorides and the view held by Hanbury was that classical storax was yellow or golden. I presume that Schafer was relying on the description of storax in the *Newly Revised Materia Medica*, which might not have referred to classical storax at all, but rasamala wood. Presumably, when dried, the resin of the *L. orientalis* would have also been dark in color, thus we cannot omit this from consideration in this case.

[1424] Langenheim claims that rasamala resin "has been used since A.D. 700 by Hindus who have lived on Java," but offers no further details, see Langenheim, *Plant Resins*, 350.

[1425] For the relevant passages discussing storax oil, see Hirth and Rockhill, *Chau Ju-Kua*, 61, 128, 135, 138, 141, 200–201.

appears to have continued through the successive centuries. Early in the sixteenth century, an illustration in the *Classified Essentials of Materia Medica* depicts a group of non-Chinese foreigners in tall, pointed boots and turbans carrying a large ceramic jug of Suhe Aromatic. A note to the illustration claims that it is "refined through the process of decoction" (*jian liancheng* 煎煉成), thus confirming its identity as liquid storax.[1426] Moreover, according to Emil Bretschneider, when he procured Suhe Oil in Beijing in the late nineteenth century and had it analyzed, it was determined to be liquid storax.[1427]

One final point needs to be addressed. To my knowledge, a yellow-colored Suhe Aromatic is only noted once in earlier medieval Chinese sources, in the *Supplement to the Materia Medica*. If we consider this an import from the Western Regions, aside from being the elusive solid yellow storax of Dioscorides (of which I am highly skeptical), this might refer to Indic *turuṣka*, the "gum of the Türks," which by that time may have already started to refer to both storax and golden frankincense. If we consider it as an import from the Southern Seas, it might have referred to the rasamala resin of the *A. excelsa*, or even possibly benzoin which became known in late medieval China as Parthian Aromatic [HC#6].[1428] Ultimately, the identify of an eighth century yellowish-white "storax" remains elusive.

To summarize the most important points of terminology, Suhe Aromatic (*turuṣka*) was among the earliest foreign aromatics known to the Chinese and referred to

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[1426] A description of this illustration can be found in Ming Chen, "Fanciful Images from Abroad," 306. The image is available as part of the online digital collection of the Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin found here: https://digital.staatsbibliothek-berlin.de/werkansicht?PPN=PPN3346157326&PHYSID=PHYS_2343&view=overview-toc&DMDID=DMDLOG_0031. The image is found in Vol. 17, p. 2343.

[1427] Bretschneider, *Botanican Sinicum*, Part 3, 465. Needham's comment that *L. orientalis* gum "was never exported to China," is patently incorrect, see Needham and Lu, *Science and Civilisation in China,* Vol. 5, Part 2, 142n.e.

[1428] As noted by Langenheim, rasamala resin is often a replacement for Styrax [i.e. benzoin]," Langenheim, *Plant Resins*, 74.

Mediterranean storax. This was most likely the dark "liquid storax" produced from the *L. orientalis*, now to be equated with the black storax of Dioscorides. It seems highly unlikely the resin of *S. officinalis* was ever known to the Chinese. As early as the mid-seventh century, Suhe Aromatic may have started to refer to a product or products from the Southern Seas, which might be tentatively identified as golden rasamala resin and possibly even dark rasamala wood, but when (or even if) such substitutions became commonplace cannot be determined from the evidence on hand. Eventually, and certainly by the eleventh century, a product known as "storax oil" was also in circulation and this appears to have referred to both Southeast Asian rasamala resin and Mediterranean liquid storax, with only the latter continuing into the modern period as a commercial product (at least in European contexts). Consequently, while Suhe Aromatic may have taken on additional referents since its initial introduction in the first century, one of its meanings always indicated the decocted and pressed oleoresin of the *L. orientalis*.

6) Parthian Aromatic (gum guggul → Sumatran benzoin / Siamese benzoin) 安息香[1429]

[6a] The [*Tang*] *Materia Medica* states, "Exported from the Western barbarians[1430], it resembles pine resin. It is yellowish-black in color and is [shaped like] a clump. When fresh it is soft and pliable. Its taste is pungent and bitter. It is non-toxic. It treats the malign *qi* of the heart and abdomen and ghost attachment-illness[1431].

[6b] The *Miscellaneous Morsels from Youyang* states, "Gum guggul is exported from Persia[1432], and the tree [from which it comes] is named Warding Off Evil. The tree is approximately three *zhang* tall and the color of its bark is yellowish-black. Its leaves have

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[1429] The origin and meaning of the Chinese name *anxi xiang* 安息香 (or 安悉香) is disputed, but it may have derived from the Chinese name for the Parthian Empire (247 BCE–224 CE), also known as the Arsacid Empire for its founder, Arcaces I (r. 238–210 BCE). *Anxi* 安息, Late Han Chinese **ʔan-sɨk*, is a Chinese transcription of Arcaces. The political nomenclature first started appearing in early Chinese dynastic histories and was also applied to foreign tributes, such as the "Parthia Bird" (*anxi que* 安息雀), i.e., the ostrich, see Yamada Kentarō "Ansoku kō shōshi," *Nagoya gakuin daigaku ronshū* 11, no. 3/4 (1975): 114. Even after the Sassanid Persians took control of the Parthian territory in the third century, the Arsacid name continued to be used for this imported aromatic (it should be noted that the Chinese term for the Sassanian Empire, Bosi, also continued to be used long after the fall to Arab Muslims; see relevant footnote at HC#1a). Indeed, the earliest attestation to Parthian Aromatic in Chinese sources is after the fall of the Arsacid "Parthian" Empire and the term was still used as a main headword in the sixteenth century *Systematic Materia Medica*, see BCGM:2.1961. This long lexical life can be partly attributable to the semantic reading of *anxi* 安息 as "placing at rest" (or "ease and rest"), underscoring the perceived therapeutic and apotropaic effects of the exotic oleogum, see Laufer, *Sino-Iranica*, 467; Yamada, "Ansoku kō shōshi," 118–19; Jeffrey Kotyk, "On the Identification and Use of *Ānxī-Xiāng* in Medieval China," *Quaderni Di Studi Indo-Mediterranei* 12 ([2019] 2020): 521–28. As noted in the entry above [6b], late medieval lore claimed the gum resin was extracted from a tree called "warding off evil" (*bixie* 辟邪), a generic phrase encountered regularly in Chinese pharmacological texts that is roughly equivalent to claiming a drug "cures all ills," see Haw, "Storax," 95; also Yamada, "Ansoku kō shōshi," 118–19. Jeffrey Kotyk has suggested the semantic meaning of *anxi* was the original intent of the term, partly based on the religio-medical contexts in which the aromatic was often employed, see Kotyk, "Ānxī-Xiāng," 523. It remains noteworthy that surviving Chinese sources never claim Parthian Aromatic actually originated in old Parthia. Nevertheless, given the history of Parthia as a source of fantastic goods in the minds of the early medieval Chinese and the belief that the aromatic originated from regions around the collapsed Parthian Empire, I believe the ambiguity of the name *anxi* allowed those who traded the aromatic to parlay the perceptions of the enhanced power of foreign exotica with those of the recuperative and protective effects of the aromatic as a drug.

[1430] While *xirong* 西戎 may generically refer to "Western barbarians," the medieval Chinese sometimes considered the Persians to be *rong* 戎, "barbarians," who lived in Western Asia, see Laufer, *Sino-Iranica*, 465; Wolters, "Po-Ssŭ Pine Trees," 341. It has also been suggested that *xirong* refers to Tibet, see Hua, Buell, and Unschuld, *Dictionary of the Ben Cao Gang Mu*, 319.

[1431] Zhang and Unschuld, *Dictionary of the Ben Cao Gang Mu*, 202–03.

[1432] The *Commiphora wightii*, the woody shrub that produces gum guggul, occurs in the far eastern extreme of the Sasanian "Persian" Empire, in a region known today as Baluchistān. Consequently, a Persian trade in gum guggul is theoretically possible. Nevertheless, according to Laufer, this aromatic is not noted in relevant Persian historical documents, see Laufer, *Sino-Iranica*, 467.

four lobes which do not wither in winter. In the second month it blossoms yellow-colored flowers that have a faint greenish heart. [The tree] does not bear fruit. By cutting the bark one extracts the gum like syrup. This is called gum guggul."

[6a] 本草云：出西戎，似柏[1433]脂，黃黑色為塊。新者亦柔軟[1434]，味辛，苦，無毒，主心腹惡氣，鬼疰。[1435]

[6b] 酉陽雜俎曰：安息香，出波斯國，其樹呼為辟邪。樹長三丈許，皮色黃黑，葉有四角，經冬不凋。二月有花，黃色，心微碧，不結實。刻皮出膠如飴，名安息香。[1436]

[COMMENTS] Gum guggul is a semi-transparent oleogum exuded from the *Commiphora wightii* (syns. *C. mukul*, *C. roxburghii, Balsamodendron mukul, B. roxburghii, B. wightii*[1437]*),* a woody shrub common to the arid rocky regions of northwest India (especially Rājasthān), southern Pakistan (Baluchistān and Sindh), and found more sparsely elsewhere on the Indian subcontinent.[1438] Gum guggul shares some similarities to classical myrrh, also extracted from

[1433] Read 柏 as 松, following XXBC:13.338.
[1434] Read 軟 as 韌, following XXBC:13.338.
[1435] Cf. XXBC:13.338; cf. BCGM:2.1961–1962 [安息香/集解, 氣味, 主治].
[1436] Cf. YYZZ:18.1329–1331; cf. BCGM:2.1961 [安息香/集解]. I am skeptical Hong Chu possessed a copy of the *Miscellaneous Morsels from Youyang*, he may have copied this passage from the *Extensive Records of the Taiping Era*; see my comments to *Bīrzai* Aromatic at HC#51 and relevant footnotes therein.
[1437] This variant nomenclature deserves a brief historical note. The nineteenth century saw a profusion of botanical classifications, often based on superficial differences in taxonomic philosophy that have slowly been winnowed out over the past century. The *Balsamodendron* ("balsam tree") genus gained early acceptance among botanists, but the classification was mostly folded into the *Commiphora* genus, sometimes commonly known as the myrrh genus, by the end of the nineteenth century. Moreover, several individual species in genus *Commiphora* are now considered taxonomically indistinct and treated as synonymous. In addition, several species from the genus *Amyris* are also now placed in the *Commiphora* genus. Scholars who rely on older works and dictionaries to identify plant species will often be overrun with nomenclature that in recent years has been significantly reduced. Currently, there six species of *Commiphora* identified as occurring on the Indian subcontinent and only one of them, *C. wightii*, produces the oleogum known as gum guggul, see Neeraj Jain and Rajani S. Nadgauda, "Commiphora Wightii (Arnott) Bhandari—A Natural Source of Guggulsterone: Facing a High Risk of Extinction in Its Natural Habitat," *American Journal of Plant Sciences* 4, no. 6 (2013): 57–68.
[1438] Wolters, *Indonesian Commerce*, 113; Yamada, "Ansoku kō shōshi," 117–18 (note that Yamada, "Ansoku kō shōshi," was reprinted in Yamada, *Tōa kōryō shi kenkyū*, 129–151); Jain and Nadgauda, "Commiphora Wightii," 58; Mukherjee, "Medicinal Drugs," 156.

a *Commiphora* species, and thus was sometimes used as less expensive substitute or adulterant for the prized Biblical incense. In Greek and Roman Mediterranean commerce, gum guggul was considered among a class of "false myrrhs" and traded under the name bdellium (from the Greek *bdellion*).[1439] Ultimately, the common English name gum guggul derives from the Sanskrit *guggulu (*or *gulgulu*).[1440] Both myrrh and gum guggul will naturally exude from fissures in the plant's bark, forming globules on the trunk and branches in a process colloquially known as "weeping." To expedite natural production, however, harvesters will also employ a notching and tapping method.[1441] Partly due to gum guggul's translucent nature, its coloring can vary, thus the exterior of larger clumps can appear dark red or brown, while interiors can appear golden-yellow. *Commiphora* gums are generally sweet-smelling like frankincense resin, but with a more earthy, almost leathery, scent profile.

Parthian Aromatic (*anxi xiang* 安息香 or 安悉香), the early medieval Chinese name for gum guggul, is ascribed a rather dramatic entrance into the Chinese olfactory landscape.

[1439] In English, the term bdellium is often used to refer to *Commiphora* oleogums considered inferior to myrrh. Consequently, "Indian bdellium" and "Indian myrrh" later specifies gum guggul, in contrast, for example, to "African bdellium" or "African myrrh," which refers to the oleogum of an African *Commiphora* spp., see Casson, *Periplus*, 125; McHugh, *Sandalwood and Carrion*, 233–34.

[1440] Berthold Laufer believed the Sanskrit term *guggulu* initially referred to Indian frankincense, i.e. the oleoresin of the *Boswellia serrata*, and only "in more recent times" was extended to gum guggul, a "subsequent (and probably erroneous) application of the word," Laufer, "Bird Divination," 5–6n.1. Regardless of his strong assertion, Laufer never provides a well-reasoned explanation. When he picks up the same discussion a few years later, he lessens the force of his claims reporting that *guggulu* referred to both *B. serrata* and *Balsamodendrum mukul* (read *Commiphora wightii*) exudates and underscores they both derive from the same torchwood family of *Burseraceae*, see Laufer, *Sino-Iranica*, 467; see also the multiple identifications in Yamada, "Ansoku kō shōshi," 117. More recently, Richard Haw has again attacked the identity of *guggulu*, finally claiming "it is not clear what it really was," Haw, "Storax," 89. While nineteenth century Anglo-colonial scholarship tends to report a vast range of possible referents for *guggulu*, creating a sense of deep uncertainty as to its referent, classical Sanskrit sources are consistent in identifying *guggulu*'s origins outside of India in the region of Sindh (*saindhava*, "coming from the country of Sindhu"), precisely where *C. wightii* occurs in great numbers, see Daniel T. Potts et al., "Guḫlu and Guggulu," *Wiener Zeitschrift Für Die Kunde Des Morgenlandes* 86 (1996): 297–301; see also McHugh, *Sandalwood and Carrion*, 233–34, 283n.63. While it may be the case that *guggulu* came to refer to different scented materials, its seems its principal referent in the ancient and early medieval period was gum guggul (bdellium).

[1441] Howes, *Vegetable Gums and Resins*, 153; Langenheim, *Plant Resins*, 368–73.

It first appeared as part of the ritual repertoire of the Buddhist thaumaturge Fotudeng 佛圖澄 (232?–348) who employed it as part of a magical rite to end a water shortage. This earliest version of this tale is preserved in the *Biographies of Eminent Monks* (*Gaoseng zhuan* 高僧傳; T2059), compiled in the early sixth century, and later recounted in the *Book of Jin* (*Jin shu* 晉書), a dynastic history completed in 648.[1442] Notably, the earliest record of this story is more than a century and a half after Fotudeng reputedly lived.[1443] While one should remain critical of the historicity of such belatedly recorded fantastic events, the appearance of a material like Parthian Aromatic fits the pattern of foreign luxury goods traversing both overland and maritime trade routes by the late third and early fourth centuries. Such items include Mediterranean storax [HC#5], Arabian frankincense [HC#9], northern Indian saffron [HC#7], and Moluccan cloves [HC#8]. More clearly to this point, the preface to Fan Ye's incense blending manual, dating to between 433 and 446, groups Parthian Aromatic with other imported substances, including Himalayan spikenard [HC#19], storax, and saffron.[1444] Additional corroborating evidence can be found in the mid-fifth century *Treatise on the Guang Region*, which notes a Parthian Gum (*anxi jiao* 安息膠), along with Yun Gum (*yun jiao* 蕓膠, HC#28), a strong vermifuge that was known as an export of Rome since the third century, and an unknown Black Gum (*hei jiao* 黑膠).[1445] The specific description of our

[1442] T2059:384a05–12, trans. Arthur Frederick Wright, "Fo-t'u-Teng: A Biography," *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 11, no. 3/4 (1948): 341 and JS:95.2486, trans. Wolters, *Indonesian Commerce*, 115 (citing the TPYL), trans. Haw, "Storax," 91–92, respectively. For the relationship between these two biographical accounts, see Wright, "Fo-t'u-Teng," 329–32.

[1443] For comments regarding skepticism regarding the historicity of Fotudeng's biography, and thus skepticism regarding the introduction of Parthian Aromatic into China during the fourth century, see Yamada, "Ansoku kō shōshi," 114 and Kotyk, "Ānxī-Xiāng," 521.

[1444] For a translation of Fan Ye's preface, see HC#84.

[1445] TPYL:8.982.867. The peculiar name of Parthian Gum is included in the Daoist "Recipe for Incense Beads that Merge with the Upper Prime," see my comments to incense beads at HC#106. It also appears in the Six Dynasties *Grotto Perfection Mystery Scripture of the Secret Books on Great Cinnabar of the Grotto Perfection*

"Parthian" item as a "gum," as well as its inclusion alongside a known foreign import, Yun Gum, matches well with the presumed identity of Parthian Aromatic as an imported oleogum.[1446] Ultimately, the earliest period in which we can confirm the circulation of Parthian Aromatic in China is the mid-fifth century and the earlier reports of Fotudeng remain something of an outlier.

What do our early medieval sources tell us of where Parthian Aromatic originated and, subsequently, of its botanical identity? Returning to the biography of Fotudeng, we are informed that he was from the Western Regions (possibly Kucha) and spent time in Greater Kaśmīra (Jibin) in northern India studying under famous Buddhist teachers.[1447] Even if this is the fiction of later hagiographers, this still gives us important insight into the realm of the imagination of the medieval authors, namely that the Western Regions, the area of Kaśmīra, and Parthian Aromatic were all potentially conceptually interrelated. Moreover, as Yamada Kentarō explains, imperial histories such as the sixth century *Book of Wei* (*Weishu* 魏書), chronicling the history of the Wei dynasties (386–550), and the seventh century *Book of Sui*, trace the origins of Parthian Aromatic to Kucha (Qiuci 龜茲), an oasis kingdom on the northern trading route of the Tarim Basin. The *Book of Sui* also claims it originated close to the region of Greater Kaśmīra, namely Zābul (Cao 漕) in present-day eastern Afghanistan, a view that is mirrored by the *Comprehensive Statues* (*Tongdian* 通典) of the early ninth

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Supreme One and Lord Emperor (*Dongzhen taiyi dijun taidan yinshu dongzhen xuanjing* 洞真太一帝君太丹隱書洞真玄經; DZ1330), see DZ1330:07a–07b and my discussion in Chapter 5, Section 7.

[1446] *Jiao* 膠, the term I am treating as a tree exudate, was primarily used in early Chinese medical literature to refer to gelatin extracted from the hides and antlers of animals, see for example XXBC:15.370–71.

[1447] T2059:383b19–20, trans. Wright, "Fo-t'u-Teng," 337. Arthur Wright speculates that Fotudeng was born in Kucha of Indian parentage, see Wright, 333, 336. For more on the identity of the toponym Jibin and my decision to translate it as "Greater Kaśmīra," see my comments to Kaśmīri Incense at HC#68.

century.[1448] We should also note that an early-to-mid fifth century text, the *Records of Guangzhou*, claims Parthian Aromatic was exported by "Persians," but I believe this to be a spurious citation that is better read within a tenth century historical milieu (we will return to this below).

Taken all together, this grouping of sources point to two main origins for Parthian Aromatic in Kucha and Greater Kaśmīra, regions positioned on opposite sides of the Pamir Mountains. Both regions would fall under the ambiguously defined "Western Regions" of Chinese historians. This more generalized toponym echoes the claims in the mid-seventh century *Newly Revised Materia Medica*, cited as the *Tang Materia Medica* by Hong Chu above, which claims Parthian Aromatic is exported by "Western barbarians" [6a]. There is little reason to believe that Kucha actually produced the aromatic substance; the oasis was more likely a regional emporium for products coming from further west over the Pamirs and handled by Sogdian trading firms.[1449]

We get a hint of precisely such a scenario in Fotudeng's biography. After arriving in China (his biography does not provide an exact time frame), Fotudeng is reported as regularly sending a disciple to the Western Regions to purchase incense.[1450] The Western Regions in this case most certainly refers to the chain of oases around the Tarim Basin, or what is sometimes termed Eastern Turkestan or Serindia, since a trip over the Pamirs into

[1448] See relevant citations in Yamada, "Ansoku kō shōshi," 114; see also Wolters, *Indonesian Commerce*, 115. The *Comprehensive Statutes* specifically names Greater Kaśmīra (Jibin) as the producer of Parthian Aromatic, while the *Book of Sui* cites Zābul. It should suffice to say that both regions are closely related, if not treated as synonymous at different times in history, see Yamada, "Ansoku kō shōshi," 114–15; see also Wolters, "Po-Ssŭ Pine Trees," 336. Both Cao and Jibin generally referred to regions south of the Hindu Kush, around present-day eastern Afghanistan, northern Pakistan, and northwestern India. Notably, the region just west of Kaśmīra proper, Gandhāra, was sometimes rendered by medieval Chinese Buddhist translators as "the country of fragrances" (*xiangguo* 香國), see Yamada, "Ansoku kō shōshi," 115.
[1449] A similar stance is taken in Wolters, *Indonesian Commerce*, 115, 299n.26.
[1450] JS:95.2489; T2059:385b17–22, trans. Wright, "Fo-t'u-Teng," 353.

northwest India would be much more time consuming and far more dangerous to complete. The *Sogdian Ancient Letters*, dated to the early fourth century and thus roughly contemporaneous to the attested lifetime of Fotudeng, confirm such mercantile enterprises in the region east of the Pamirs. These documents attest to a trade in both Tibetan musk [HC#2] and Indonesian camphor [HC#1] around Dunhuang and Loulan at the eastern end of the Tarim Basin.[1451] Moreover, as we have seen previously, the Eastern Han Chinese court believed Mediterranean storax could be procured among the oasis kingdoms along the southwestern portion of the Tarim Basin.[1452] Lastly, as we will see below, the oasis kingdom of Khotan was still sending large tributes of Parthian Aromatic to China in the eleventh century, suggesting it continued to be readily available in the region throughout the medieval period.

Even if we exclude Kucha as an originator of Parthian Aromatic, we still encounter a point of concern: the *C. wightii* that produces gum guggul also does not occur in the region of Greater Kaśmīra (including Zābul) that rests just south of the Hindu Kush. In contrast, the *Periplus Maris Erythraei*, a first century handbook for Greco-Roman trade, appropriately cites the coastal region of present-day Sindh as the producer of bdellium (i.e., gum guggul), which is reported as being shipped out of the ports at Barbarikon and Barygaza on the Arabian Sea.[1453] As an important note of history to this point, the Sindh region, comprising much of the alluvial plain of the Indus, was conquered by the Parthians in the first century,

[1451] de la Vaissière, *Sogdian Traders*, 43–70; see also Chapter 2, Section 3.
[1452] As discussed in my comments to storax at HC#5; see also Chapter 2, Section 3.
[1453] Casson, *Periplus*, 73, 185. Sindh neighbors Baluchistān on the east; the latter region was known to the Greeks as the deserts of Gedrosia where "false myrrh," or bdellium, was produced, see Laufer, *Sino-Iranica*, 467.

establishing what we know as the Indo-Parthian Kingdom (20 CE–ca. 225 CE).[1454] Consequently, the Chinese name for gum guggul, Parthian Aromatic, could be treated as correctly identifying the old territory from which the fragrant tree gum was harvested. Moreover, the Indo-Parthians controlled trade at the port of Barbarikon, positioned on the mouth of the Indus, from which gum guggul was exported, further entwining the polity and commercial product.[1455]

The question still remains however, why medieval Chinese sources cite Greater Kaśmīra and Zābul as producers of gum guggul when both remain north of the modern phytogeographic range of *C. wightii*. In addition, as we have already seen, the earliest possible introduction of Parthian Aromatic into China is the fourth century, a century after the collapse of the Parthian Empire in the early third century. There is no simple solution to these quandaries, but we can offer partial and speculative solutions. By the middle of the sixth century, Chinese historical documents report the existence of a new "Parthia" (Anxi) just west of the formal Sassanid Persian territory, long after the fall of the Parthian Empire. Scholars now believe the name was adopted for the oasis kingdom of Bukhārā northwest of

[1454] Casson, *Periplus*, 189. The founder, Gondophares I (r. 20 CE–46 CE), advanced into the territory of the Indo-Scythians overtaking regions along the Indus River, including Sindh and Punjāb. According to the *Periplus Maris Erythraei*, while the Indo-Parthians controlled trade at Barbarikon there were constant challenges to the throne, but the *Kuṣāṇa* Empire had yet to overtake the Sindh (known still in Greco-Roman sources as Sythia), see Casson, *Periplus*, 46–47, 75, 189.

[1455] Laufer notes that Parthian Aromatic "is not mentioned in the ancient historical documents relative to Parthia…and Persia," Laufer, *Sino-Iranica*, 467. If Laufer's hesitancy is simply based on the use of specific nomenclature, we might surmise Western sources do not cite "Parthia Aromatic" because the commercial substance already had a well-established name, *bdellion*/*bdellium*, before the Parthian advance eastward towards the Indus. Otherwise, the *Periplus Maris Erythraei* rather securely connects the Indo-Parthian Kingdom with trade in gum guggal. As to why Chinese sources do not attest to gum guggul earlier, when the Indo-Parthia Kingdom was still in power, is more difficult to ascertain. But it should be kept in mind that supra-regional aromatics of all kinds are rarely documented in Han-era sources (outside of translated Buddhist scripture), with Mediterranean storax, Moluccan cloves, and possibly Indian costus root as rare Han imports. Foreign aromatics first appear with greater regularity in the third century, when the Sassanian Empire had already conquered Parthia.

the Hindu Kush, one of the long-standing territorial homelands of the Sogdians.[1456] This is revealing on two fronts. On one hand, while this does not adequately account for the *origin* of the Parthian Aromatic name, it can help explain why the name *continued* to be used well after the fall of the Parthian Empire: it was kept alive by Sogdian merchants trading with the Chinese. Additionally, the semantic reading of *anxi* 安息, the Chinese toponym for Parthia, is "placing at rest," a compelling and marketable name for a commodity that highlights its potential therapeutic and apotropaic effects.

On the other hand, if the principal Chinese suppliers of Parthian Aromatic were Sogdians, the latter were also merely importers, or more accurately, re-exporters, of gum guggul after it was transported north from its harvesting regions closer to the Arabian Sea in Sindh, Baluchistān, and Rājasthān. It seems likely that Sogdian trading firms acquired the commercial goods in markets around Kaśmīra and Zābul, which themselves were merely regional emporiums for gum guggul, but were nevertheless conflated for places of origin by the Chinese.[1457] In short, Chinese reports repeatedly confused gum guggul redistribution centers for places of production, whether that be Kucha, Kaśmīra, or Zābul. We run into this mistake quite frequently in medieval Chinese materials, nor is it restricted to just Chinese authors.[1458]

Within a century after Fotudeng's reported death, translators of Chinese Buddhist texts make clear the connection between Parthian Aromatic and the Indic term *guggulu*. For

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[1456] de la Vaissière, *Sogdian Traders*, 119–22; Haw, "Storax," 92; see also Kotyk, "Ānxī-Xiāng," 522–23 and sources cited therein. The kings of Bukhārā maintained friendly relationships with the Chinese throughout the medieval period, sometimes sending saffron as tribute, see Chavannes, *Documents sur les Tou-kiue*, 132–47, 203–05, 224–225, 273.

[1457] A similar stance, absent Sogdian middlemen, is taken in Yamada, "Ansoku kō shōshi," 117–18.

[1458] For example, in the first century, Pliny believed bdellium came from Bactria, again, north of the Hindu Kush and far from its origin point, see Wolters, *Indonesian Commerce*, 113. More acutely, Indonesian articles of commence seem to have caused great confusion for many Roman, Arab, Indian, and Chinese authorities, see for example my comments to camphor at HC#1 and cloves at HC#8.

example, in the early fifth century, Dharmakṣema's (385–433) translation of the *Bodhisattvabhūmi* (*Puti dichi jing* 菩薩地持經; T1581) uses the term *qiuqiuluo* 求求羅, Middle Chinese *gjəu-gjəu-lâ,* to transcribe *guggulu*.[1459] Not long thereafter, in 431, Guṇavarman's (367–431) translation of the same text opts for the generic translation of Gum Aromatic (*jiao xiang* 膠香), underscoring the tactile quality of the fresh foreign import.[1460] Then between 646 and 648, Xuanzang's translation of the *Yogācārabhūmi-śāstra* (*Yuqie shidi lun* 瑜伽師地論; T1579), an expansive work incorporating the *Bodhisattvabhūmi*, transcribes *guggulu* as *jujueluo* 局崛羅, Middle Chinese **gjwok-gjwət-lâ*, to which the commentary by the Silla monk Dullyun 遁倫 (ca. 650–730) glosses as Parthian Aromatic.[1461]

The most striking aspect of this *guggulu* passage in the *Bodhisattvabhūmi* is that the scripture specifically warns *against* its use. When describing the improper types of offerings at a *caitya* to the Tathāgata, a bodhisattva is told not to smear the shrine (or image) with yellow orpiment, make ablutions with ghee, nor use any kind of impure material such as

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[1459] T1581:926a24. This transcription is miscopied as *shushuluo* 朮朮羅 in the ninth century Buddhist dictionary *Pronunciation and Meaning of the Complete Canon* (*Yiqiejing yinyi* 一切經音義; T2128), see T2128:606a01; cf. Haw, "Storax," 88n.35 (who uses this error to attempt to undermine the connection to *guggulu*). The proper form, along with the variants *juejuluo* 掘具羅 and *jujuluo* 窶具羅, is noted in twelfth century Buddhist dictionary, the *Compilation of Translated Buddhist Terms* (*Fanyu mingy ji* 翻譯名義集; T2131), see T2131:1105a11. This latter text also glosses these transcriptions as Parthian [Aromatic] (*anxi*), which Pelliot used to first make the connection between Parthian Aromatic and *guggulu*, correcting pervious identification errors, see Pelliot, "Chau Ju-kua," 480.

[1460] T1582:991c25. Guṇavarman's text specifically states: "do not burn Gum Aromatic or perfume with aromatics to make offerings" 不燒膠香熏香供養. It is tempting to treat *xun1xiang* 熏香 as a truncated form of Xunlu Aromatic, or frankincense, but it seems unlikely given both the translations of Dharmakṣema and Xuanzang omit any mention of it.

[1461] T1579:534a25 and T1828:549c20, respectively. To these early transcriptions we can add *julujulu dupo* 俱嚧俱嚧杜婆, *gulgulu dhūpa*, or "gum guggul incense"; for *gulgulu*, see Monier Monier-Williams, *A Sanskrit English Dictionary* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1899), 360. This transcription found in the sixth century *Sutra on the Secret, Well-Established Dhāraṇī of the Vast and Great Treasure Tower* where it is glossed as *anxi* 安悉, see T1077:667c01. Richard Haw rejects the equation of Parthian Aromatic with *guggulu*, but he primarily focuses on materia medica literature and is apparently unaware of the rich Chinese Buddhist tradition that makes this equation readily apparent, see Haw, "Storax," 88–89, 93.

guggulu or *arka* flowers.[1462] In what appears to be an interlinear comment, Guṇavarman notes that "all kinds of reeking and filthy objects cannot be used to make offerings," suggesting that *guggulu* was considered noxious to the nose.[1463] Proscriptive boundaries around smell are as social as they are olfactory and the specific rule against using *guggulu* is certainly related to its close association with non-Buddhist practices. For example, *guggulu* is noted in early Indic sources as the best sacrificial offering for the gods and was also described as constituting the body and flesh of the fire god Agni. In later sources, gum guggul is noted as being beloved by Śiva.[1464] Buddhists, on the other hand, showed early favor to sandalwood [HC#4] and aloeswood [HC#3], a complimentary paring of light and dark colored aromatics known for their cooling and heating qualities, respectively.

The *Bodhisattvabhūmi* was likely completed by the end of the third century, meaning that the reputed use of Parthian Aromatic by Fotudeng would have occurred only a few decades after it was explicitly rejected as suitable for Buddhist ritual devotions.[1465] One wonders if such religious limitations made the aromatic more alluring and powerful in the hands of a skilled thaumaturge such as Fotudeng (at least in the eyes of our hagiographical authors). It is also notable that in addition to Fotudeng, Dharmakṣema spent time in and around Kaśmīra before arriving in China and that Guṇavarman was reportedly born into a

[1462] 不雌黃塗，不酥灌洗，不以種種局崛羅香，遏迦花等餘不淨物，而爲供養。T1579:534a25–26 (Xuanzang's translation). Both Dharmakṣema and Guṇavarman explicitly speak of performing these rites before an image of the Tathāgata, see T1581:926a24 and T1582:991c24, respectively.
[1463] 種種臭穢之物不以供養。T1582:991c27.
[1464] McHugh, *Sandalwood and Carrion*, 233–37, 239.
[1465] The proposed dating for the *Bodhisattvabhūmi* is discussed in Florin Deleanu, "Meditative Practices in the Bodhisattvabhūmi: Quest for and Liberation through the Thing-In-Itself," in *The Foundation for Yoga Practioners: The Buddhist Yogācārabhūmi Treatise and Its Adaptation in India, East Asia, and Tibet*., ed. Timme Kragh Ulrich (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2013), 886–87.

Kaśmīri royal family.[1466] Perhaps it is not surprising then that a text they both translated, itself with deep connections to the region of northern India, would focus on an aromatic that, in all likelihood, was available in regional markets.

Despite the relatively early appearance of Parthian Aromatic in China as powerful ritual substance, it is not otherwise commonly attested in the early medieval period, especially in comparison to its frequently prescribed use in later esoteric Buddhist rituals.[1467] The first Chinese *materia medica* to incorporate gum guggul was the mid-seventh century *Newly Revised Materia Medica*, cited in the entry above [6a]. This suggests Parthian Aromatic was not familiar to Tao Hongjing in the early sixth century when he annotated and enlarged the *Classic of Materia Medica of the Divine Husbandman*. It is also not found among the prescriptions in the *Emergency Prescriptions to Keep up your Sleeve* (*Zhouhou beiji fang* 肘後備急方; DZ1306), redacted through the twelfth century, but first compiled by Ge Hong and edited by Tao Hongjing. Nor is it listed among Daoshi's catalogue of aromatics in his *A Grove of Pearls from the Garden of Dharma*, in spite of the fact that he elsewhere explicitly mentions Parthian Aromatic when retelling the biography of Fotudeng.[1468] This latter omission could be explained by the fact that his record of aromatics was built upon descriptions and stories from older Chinese sources, and the oldest extant description of Parthian Aromatic was in the *Newly Revised Materia Medica*, which was completed in 659,

[1466] For reconstruction on the timeline of Dharmakṣema's life, including his time in Greater Kaśmīra and Kucha, see Jinhua Chen, "The Indian Buddhist Missionary Dharmaksema (385-433): A New Dating of His Arrival in Guzang and of His Translations," *T'oung Pao*, Second Series, 90, no. 4 (2004): 215–63.
[1467] One possible exception to this apparent trend is the appearance of Gum Aromatic (*jiao xiang*) in the early fifth century translation of the *Lotus Sutra*. Judging by Guṇavarman's use of the same term to render gum guggul a just few decades later, it seems the substance prohibited by the *Bodhisattvabhūmi* had made its way into one of the most prominent East Asian Buddhist scriptures, albeit under a rather generic name. For a discussion of the list of aromatics in the *Lotus Sutra* where Gum Aromatic appears, see my comments to *turuṣka* at HC#76.
[1468] T2122:745a08.

less than a decade before Daoshi completed his encyclopedia in 668. It is possible Daoshi did not have access to this work and thus had no information to construct an individual entry for Parthian Aromatic. It would appear the *Bodhisattvabhūmi* proscription against using gum guggul may have had its intended effects, at least in some Buddhist circles, up through sixth century.

An early exception appears to be the late fifth century *Consecration Sutra* (*Guangding jing* 灌頂經; T1331), a work of an uncertain pedigree with many passages revealing patently Chinese worldviews and concerns.[1469] The ninth division of the scripture focuses on therapeutic rites and contains hallmarks of practices drawn from early institutional Daoist healing cults clothed in a loose Buddhist idiom, such as instructions to bath the body and wash out the mouth while observing certain abstinences (or precepts) like the avoidance of pungent alliums, alcohol, and meat.[1470] The text further directs a person who has fallen ill to smear the ground with fragrant paste and to "burn all sorts of incense, such as *turuṣka* [HC#76], *spṛkkā* (?), aloeswood, sal dammar [HC#33], *po xiang* 婆香 (?), and Parthian Aromatic."[1471] As a consequence, the text further explains, the ill person will force the pathogenic demons into hiding so they no longer cause harm.

[1469] Michel Strickmann, "The Consecration Sūtra: A Buddhist Book of Spells," in *Chinese Buddhist Apocrypha*, ed. Robert E. Buswell Jr. (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1990), 75–118.

[1470] T1331:523b25–b29.

[1471] 燒衆雜香。兜婁婆，畢力伽，沈水，膠香，婆香，安息香等。T1331:523c05–06. The translation of some aromatics is conjectural. Notably, the first four are drawn from Kumārajīva's translation of the *Lotus Sutra*; for a discussion of these translation issues, see my comments to *turuṣka* at HC#76 (I read the above *douloupo* 兜婁婆, "*dūrvā*," as *douloupo* 兜樓婆, "*turuṣka*"). Gum Aromatic (*jiao xiang*), which I treat here as a truncation for White Gum Aromatic, or sal dammar, was also used as a translation for gum guggul, see discussion in my earlier comments. Since the *Consecration Sutra* pairs Gum Aromatic with Parthian Aromatic, I have elected to treat them as separate substances, although this might be too generous to a text whose author may have not been too familiar with these foreign materials and their nomenclature. *Po xiang* could be a truncated transcription, but given its brevity I am unsure which Indic terminology would be an appropriate match. Notably, *jiao xiang*, *po xiang*, and *anxi xiang* appear as a cluster a handful of times in the *Consecration Sutra*, suggesting the term *po xiang* was not in error, see T1331:501b05, 507a13 and 511b18.

In the decades around the start of the Sui Dynasty we start to see Parthian Aromatic appear more regularly in translated Buddhist scriptures. It appears, for example, listed among the ingredients for the balneotherapeutic ritual of Sarasvatī in the *Sutra of Golden Light*.[1472] The earliest Chinese rendition of this ritual was worked on by Jñānagupta (523–ca. 600), and likely completed in the 560s or 570s.[1473] Like Guṇavarman, Jñānagupta was from northwest India where gum guggul was regionally accessible. Using Jñānagupta's manuscript as a base, the text as it stands now was translated by the monk Baogui 寶貴 (fl. 597), who finished it in 597.[1474] In addition to being listed among the thirty-two ingredients of the ritual bath, gum guggul (identified as Gum Aromatic) is also individually identified as needing to be burned continuously as an offering.[1475]

Moreover, a few decades later, the *Dhāraṇī Collection Sutra*, translated in 654 by the Indian monk Atikūṭa, we see Parthian Aromatic appear as one of the most important fumifuges for Buddhist esoteric rites.[1476] In terms of sheer quantity, Parthian Aromatic appears nearly fifty times in the text, more than doubling citations to aloeswood which appears nearly two dozen times, as well as storax and camphor, which appear only about a dozen times each. In one section devoted to the creation of the Buddha Uṣnīṣa Samādhi

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[1472] T664:386c15 and T665:435a07 (where it is transcribed as *jujuluo* 窶具擺); also see Catherine Ludvik, *Sarasvatī Riverine Goddess of Knowledge: From the Manuscript-Carrying Vīṇā-Player to the Weapon-Wielding Defender of the Dharma* (Leiden: Brill, 2007), 312.

[1473] We know about the early efforts of Jñānagupta through an interlinear note in the received text, see Ludvik, *Sarasvatī*, 149. For a study on the life of Jñānagupta, see Édouard Chavannes, "Jinagupta (528-605 Après J.-C.)," *T'oung Pao*, Second Series, 6, no. 3 (1905): 332–56. The earliest extant Chinese translation of the *Sutra of Golden Light* by Dharmakṣema (T663) in the early fifth century does not contain this ritual. The Sanskrit edition, thought to date to the middle of the fifth century, does contain the balneotherapeutic ritual.

[1474] See the text's preface at T664:359c02.

[1475] 燒膠香供養不得斷絶。T664:387a01. Yijing's rendering of this passage has Parthian Aromatic, see T665:435a24. Ludvik's identification of Gum Aromatic as sweetgum (i.e. liquidambar, HC#33), a tree resin native to southern China is mistaken, see Ludvik, *Sarasvatī*, 288n.13.

[1476] Arriving in 651, Atikūṭa is considered to be the first Buddhist monk to introduce comprehensive *maṇḍala* practices and consecration rites into China; for more on significance of his work, see Shinohara, *Spells, Images, and Mandalas*, 28–63. For the dating of this text, see preface at T901:785a14.

Maṇḍala (*Foding sanmei mantuluo* 佛頂三昧曼荼羅), Parthian Aromatic is directed to be burned at the start of the rite, just after the altar ground is made level and cleaned.[1477] Later in the same section, gum guggul is listed as one among the Eight-Colored Aromatics (*base xiang* 八色香) which includes camphor, musk [HC#2], saffron, aloeswood, sandalwood, frankincense, storax, and sal dammar.[1478] Overall, gum guggul appears central to accomplishing the numerous rites outlined in the *Dhāraṇī Collection Sutra*. Furthermore, Jeffrey Kotyk has also recently demonstrated that Parthian Aromatic appears in late medieval Buddhist and Daoist astrological manuals associated with the planet Saturn and seems to be increasingly associated with apotropaic magic.[1479]

If we turn to physical descriptions of Parthian Aromatic in the medieval period we only have what is offered in the *Newly Revised Materia Medica* [6b]. It describes Parthian Aromatic as pliable yellowish-black clumps (*kuai* 塊), thus roughly fitting the physical characteristics of the semi-translucent oleogum globules harvested from the *C. wightii*. As we noted earlier, in the classical West, gum guggul was more often envisioned as an inferior grade of myrrh and used as an adulterant and bulking agent, thus giving it the name "false myrrh" or even "false frankincense."[1480] The close relationship between Parthian Aromatic and myrrh is clearly expressed in the eleventh century *Illustrated Classic of Materia Medica*

[1477] T901:786c14–16.
[1478] T901:787b01–03 (storax is listed, but explicitly excluded from the total count of eight). Elsewhere this text notes the "eight types of aromatics" (*bazhong xiang* 八種香) as saffron, aloeswood, storax, frankincense, *uragasāra* sandalwood, ox-head sandalwood, musk, and camphor, see T901:789a08–10.
[1479] Kotyk, "Ānxī-Xiāng," 524–26.
[1480] Wheatley, "Geographical Notes," 56; Wolters, "Po-Ssŭ Pine Trees," 334; Yamada, "Ansoku kō shōshi," 117.

(*Tujing bencao* 圖經本草) which claims that myrrh (*moyao* 沒藥) is to be classified as a kind (*lei*) of Parthian Aromatic.[1481]

Recently, Richard Haw has suggested Parthian Aromatic should instead be identified as liquid storax deriving from the *Liquidambar orientalis*, a tree native to the Anatolian peninsula just beyond the western boundaries of the old Parthian Empire. His identification is based solely on the description of the source tree in the *Miscellaneous Morsels from Youyang*, also noted in the entry above [6b]. His argument stands on the description of the yellow color of flowers and the acutely lobed structure of the leaves, which he identifies as characteristic of the *L. orientalis*.[1482] Haw was comparing the description against the Southeast Asia *Styrax* genus, a point we will return to below, but his critique stands against many *Commiphora* species which have oblong leaves and, typically, white or purple blossoms.

Several questions arise regarding Haw's new identification. First, can we take the comments in *Miscellaneous Morsels from Youyang* as botanically reliable? We know, as Haw also highlights, that the entire passage does not accurately describe the *L. orientalis*. The text describes the tree as an evergreen, which does not correspond to the decidedly deciduous *Liquidambar* (nor, should we note, does it adequately describe the *C. wightii*).[1483] I do not think this means we should treat the entire passage as useless for identification, but we should be careful regarding the authority we give such sources, especially one that was written, through admittance of the author himself, as a collection of strange tales based on

[1481] 亦類安息香。DZ768:23.13b.
[1482] Haw, "Storax," 93–99.
[1483] Haw, 97. Haw also has to adjust how many lobes the leaves are said to have: "The number four may well not have been normal: three or five would be more likely," Haw, 96.

hearsay.[1484] Unfortunately, Haw does not fully address the wide range of documents that circulated previous to the *Miscellaneous Morsels from Youyang* that more firmly connect Parthian Aromatic to Sanskrit *guggulu* – especially Buddhist sources – and ultimately to gum guggul. The description of the tree producing Parthian Aromatic in the *Miscellaneous Morsels from Youyang* remains highly idiosyncratic and certainly of minimal utility for establishing the identity of Parthian Aromatic five hundred years earlier.[1485]

Ultimately, Haw's inquiry was motivated by a different quandary, specifically regarding the universal recognition of Parthian Aromatic in modern commerce and medicine as the balsam known as benzoin.[1486] This is a strikingly different exudate derived from a South Asian species of tree. This issue was extensively studied by Yamada many decades ago and I only summarize his main points here, but add updated chronological information. Yamada directs our attention to the *Materia Medica of Overseas Drugs* which reputedly quotes the *Records of Guangzhou*, a lost gazetteer of the Chinese far south. The *Records of Guangzhou* claims Parthian Aromatic is produced by the "Persians" of the Southern Seas and resembles peach gum (*taojiao* 桃膠).[1487] In Yamada's reading, this passage points to a switch in the underlying referent of Parthian Aromatic, from Indian gum guggul to Southeast Asian benzoin, derived initially from a *Styrax* species native to Sumatra (*Styrax benzoin*). This later again switched to a *Styrax* species native to Thailand, Cambodia, and Vietnam (*S. tonkinensis*

[1484] See comments in Reed, *A Tang* Miscellany, 123. It has also been suggested that the author, Duan Chengshi, relied on word-of-mouth or the imprecise recollections of people who did not personally see or know the tree they purported to describe, see Yamada, "Ansoku kō shōshi," 121.
[1485] Based on the text's own claim as describing a tree from Persia, Yamada decides it corresponds to no known *flora*, yet remains closer to the *Styrax* than the *Commiphora*, see Yamada, "Ansoku kō shōshi," 119–22; see also Laufer, *Sino-Iranica*, 466; Wolters, *Indonesian Commerce*, 116–17.
[1486] See, for example, Hua, Buell, and Unschuld, *Dictionary of the Ben Cao Gang Mu*, 393 (#11); Nanjing zhongyiyao daxue, *Zhongyao da cidian* (#2026).
[1487] Yamada, "Ansoku kō shōshi," 121; see also Kotyk, "Ānxī-Xiāng," 522.

and *S. benzoides*) which was considered during the Song dynasty to produce a superior benzoin product. Generally speaking, benzoin, also called gum benjamin, is a golden colored balsamic resin, similar in color to peach gum, that exudes from several species in the *Styrax* genus and dries upon contact with the air. It is redolent of vanilla and cinnamon, due to its high concentration of benzoic and cinnamic acids.

By his own admission, Yamada was unaware of the identity of the *Records of Guangzhou*.[1488] Thus, Yamada used the then-prevailing belief about the date of the *Materia Medica of Overseas Drugs* to establish when this substitution started to occur, placing it sometime in the eighth or ninth century during the Tang.[1489] More recent research has placed the publication of the *Materia Medica of Overseas Drugs* in the tenth century.[1490] Of seeming primary importance, however, is the date of the *Records of Guangzhou*, the text which originally reported the pertinent information regarding the new identity of Parthian Aromatic. There are two gazetteers with this title, and both are tentatively considered products of the Jin (265–420), but I consider the work in question to be from the early-to-mid fifth century.[1491] Thus, should we consider this substitution of benzoin for gum guggul to have started sometime in the early medieval period? Notably, O.W. Wolters argues this precisely to be the

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[1488] Yamada, "Ansoku kō shōshi," 121n.18; the same comment was reprinted a year later in Yamada, *Tōa kōryō shi kenkyū*, 149n.18. According to O.W. Wolters, an earlier publication by Yamada that I have not consulted considers the passage in the *Records of Guangzhou* to be in error because it places the Chinese knowledge of benzoin in too early of a period, see Wolters, *Indonesian Commerce*, 88, 112–13, 289n.8, 298n.9. I have independently come to agree with Yamada's assessment, but place suspicion on the *Materia Medica of Overseas Drugs* which reputedly quoted the *Records of Guangzhou*.

[1489] Yamada first proposed this dating in the mid-1950s (see previous footnote). These dates, without addressing the corresponding rationale, have been copied by later scholars, see e.g., Wheatley, "Geographical Notes," 56 ("at the turn of the eighth and ninth centuries"); Schafer, *Golden Peaches*, 169 ("from the ninth century"); ("later T'ang times"); and Ludvik, *Sarasvatī*, 312n.13 ("in the ninth century").

[1490] After reviewing the known biographical elements of Li Xun, the compiler of the *Materia Medica of Overseas Drugs,* Chen Ming estimates he lived between the ninth and tenth centuries, see Chen, "Transmission of Foreign Medicine," 246–50. Carla Nappi situates him in the middle of the tenth century, see Nappi, *Monkey and the Inkpot*, 30, 205n.6.

[1491] See my comments (and relevant footnotes) to aloeswood at HC#3.

case, charging Yamada with needlessly treating the *Records of Guangzhou* as "meaningless."[1492]

I will not rehearse the nuances of Wolters' argument here, but merely note that his view presumes a deep Chinese commercial interest in gum guggul during the fifth and sixth centuries that would have initially driven the substitution with benzoin.[1493] Our early medieval sources simply do not bear this out. Not only was gum guggul infrequently mentioned in Chinese sources up through the end of the sixth century, there is no source that attests to benzoin arriving from Sumatra or other Southeast Asian polities throughout most of the medieval period. This is in spite of the fact that we have ample evidence for other regional goods, such as camphor and aloeswood, coming as tribute from these regions through the ninth century. Elsewhere, I discuss my reservations in the accuracy of the *Materia Medica of Overseas Drugs*' citations of early medieval gazetteers and I believe the *Records of Guangzhou* passage here should be treated with similar caution.[1494] Thus, instead of tracing the early stages of substitution of gum guggul with benzoin to the eighth or ninth century (as proposed by Yamada), or even earlier to the fifth century (as presumed by Wolters), the tenth century seems a better candidate. This dating also better corresponds with Chinese records of foreign tribute delegations arriving during the Northern Song. For example, the kingdom of Khotan sends a gift of Parthian Aromatic in 1074, which in this case must have still referred to gum guggul imported over the Pamirs.[1495]

[1492] Wolters, *Indonesian Commerce*, 113.
[1493] For his argument, see Wolters, *Indonesian Commerce*, 111–127, esp. 121, 125, 127. This dovetails into his parallel argument regarding a proposed fifth century substitution of frankincense with locally sourced Southeast Asian pine resin.
[1494] See especially my comments to Milky Aromatic at HC#13. I also note my suspicions in my comments to lakawood at HC#18 and lemongrass at HC#36, with the latter addressing clear anachronistic elements.
[1495] Lin, *Songdai xiangyao*, 186; Yamada, "Ansoku kō shōshi," 122; Yamada, *Tōa kōryō shi kenkyū*, 138–39; cf. Bielenstein, *Diplomacy*, 310 (who just notes "gifts").

By the twelfth century, however, the Chinese are cognizant of Parthian Aromatic as a product of maritime Southeast Asia.[1496] Also reflecting this change is the appearance of new terminology, Gold Color Aromatic (*jinyan xiang* 金顏香), which clearly identifies the bright yellow hue of benzoin.[1497] Both Parthian Aromatic and Gold Color Aromatic appear in Zhao Rukuo's *Treatise on the Barbarians* in the thirteenth century. The former is no longer associated with the regions around India and is only considered a product of Sumatra. Thus, according to Yamada, its referent had shifted to Sumatran benzoin drawn from the *S. benzoin* tree.[1498] One of the principal sources for Gold Color Aromatic, which was considered a superior product for perfumery, was Cambodia, and thus was identified by Yamada as Siamese benzoin from the *S. tonkinensis* (and possibly *S. benzoides*).[1499]

If we turn to the fifteenth century handbook of Chinese-Malay words entitled the *Translated Words of Malacca*, we see the equivalent to Parthian Aromatic given as *lugan* 魯

[1496] Yamada, "Ansoku kō shōshi," 122–23; Yamada, *Tōa kōryō shi kenkyū*, 138–39. As reported by Yamada, Parthian Aromatic appears in the *Collection of Institutional Matters of the Song* as part of the governmental register of thirty-seven items allowed to be freely traded by Chinese merchants. This is for the year 982 (misprinted as 987 originally by Yamada). In 1141, when the government monopoly over certain trade items was suspended, Parthian Aromatic appears alongside Gold Color Aromatic (see below), as free trade articles, presumably arriving from maritime Southeast Asia. In 1151, Ye Tinggui's *Record of Aromatics of the Southern Barbarians* (*Nanfan xiang lu* 南蕃香錄) reports that Parthian Aromatic is a product of Sumatra. In addition, Gold Color Aromatic is listed as a product of Dashi Arabs and Khmer Empire (Zhenla) while also being reported as yellow in color, that is, the color of benzoin. These passages from the *Record of Aromatics of the Southern Barbarians*, which are only summarized by Yamada, can be found in Liu, *Songdai Xiangpu*, 484.

[1497] As Yamada carefully outlines, this nomenclature was actually a transcription of the Malay term for benzoin, the semantic meaning was felicitous. Moreover, Yamada argues, the shift in referent for Parthian Aromatic was due to phonetic similarity with the Malay term for benzoin, not based on their physical or olfactory properties; Yamada, "Ansoku kō shōshi," 122–27; see also summary in Wheatley, "Geographical Notes," 56–59; Wolters, *Indonesian Commerce*, 125. Haw's argument, on the other hand, is premised on the physical and olfactory similarity of storax (not gum guggul) and benzoin, see Haw, "Storax," 100. In addition, Wolter's argument is based on the presumed deceptive practices of Sumatran Malay traders and the fact that both *guggulu* and benzoin were both "potent fumifuges," see Wolters, *Indonesian Commerce*, 126–27. For further comment on the Malay term for benzoin and its spread throughout the maritime south, see Hoogervorst , "Southeast Asia," 189–91.

[1498] Hirth and Rockhill, *Chau Ju-Kua*, 201–02; Yamada, "Ansoku kō shōshi," 127; Yamada, *Tōa kōryō shi kenkyū*, 142.

[1499] Hirth and Rockhill, *Chau Ju-Kua*, 198–99; Yamada, "Ansoku kō shōshi," 125–27; Yamada, *Tōa kōryō shi kenkyū*, 139–41.

干, probably to be emended to *luban* 魯半, which reflects the Arabic *lubān*.[1500] This is the name for golden-colored frankincense, but seems to have been adopted by Malay merchants to refer to locally sourced benzoin. In the early sixteenth century we find a rather interesting illustration for benzoin harvesting in the *Classified Essentials of Materia Medica*. On one hand, it depicts a tree as described in the *Miscellaneous Morsels from Youyang*, with acutely lobed leaves and yellow blossoms. As noted by Haw, this cannot reflect any known *Styrax* species. Nevertheless, on the other hand, it correctly depicts the gathering of the air-dried benzoin resin as non-Chinese foreigners are shown scraping small yellowish clumps off cuts in the bark of the tree.[1501] In modern commerce, Gold Color Aromatic has dropped from usage, leaving Parthian Aromatic to cover both Southeast Asian balsamic resins. Furthermore, after the eleventh century, gum guggul never seems to have reappeared as a viable article of tribute or trade in China.

In summary, gum guggul originally had a close relationship to ancient Vedic sacrifice and lore, thus its use may have been restricted by Buddhists in northwestern India who composed the *Bodhisattvabhūmi*. As a product of the same general region, gum guggul may have started spreading into the Tarim Basin by the fourth century (and certainly by the mid-fifth century) through Sogdian traders who were connecting Indian markets to Central Asian emporiums and Chinese consumers. By the end of the sixth century, gum guggul starts

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[1500] Edwards and Blagden, "A Chinese Vocabulary of Malacca Malay Words and Phrases," 725 (#137), 727 (Edwards and Blagden suggest the emendation to *luban*). As noted by Yamada, there was no term in classical or medieval western commerce for benzoin until the fourteenth century. The English term benzoin likely derived from the Arabic *lubān djāwī,* "the white (resin) of Java," see Yamada, "Ansoku kō shōshi," 130.

[1501] A description of this illustration can be found in Ming Chen, "Fanciful Images from Abroad," 306. The image is available as part of the online digital collection of the Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin found here: https://digital.staatsbibliothek-berlin.de/werkansicht?PPN=PPN3346157326&PHYSID=PHYS_2353&view=overview-toc&DMDID=DMDLOG_003. The image is found in Vol. 17, p. 2353.

appearing more regularly in translated Buddhist works, especially in esoteric scriptures such as the *Dhāraṇī Collection Sutra*. Notably, this is the period in which gum guggul is first noted in in Chinese materia medica literature, specifically in the *Newly Revised Materia Medica* of the mid-seventh century. Finally, by the late Tang or early Song, the old nomenclature for gum guggul, Parthian Aromatic, starts referring to a different aromatic resin, namely, the golden colored balsam known as benzoin. This is same substance Parthian Aromatic refers to today in modern Asian commerce and Traditional Chinese Medicine.

7) Yu Gold Aromatic (wild turmeric / unknown flower or herb → saffron / common turmeric / zedoary / *campaka* flowers? → tulip) 鬱金香[1502]

[7a] The *Abridged Account of Wei*[1503] states, "It grows in the Roman Empire."

[7b] "In the second or third month the flowers are like that of safflower[1504]. In the fourth or fifth month [the flowers] are gathered. This is the aromatic."

[7c] "It is [made from] a dozen leaves and the flowers of hundreds of plants."

[7d] The *Supplement to the Materia Medica* states, "Its taste is bitter. It is non-toxic. It treats *gu* poison and ghost attachment-illness. Crows, falcons, and so forth [consider it]

[1502] As discussed below, Yu Gold Aromatic most typically indicates saffron while Yu Gold originally indicated a native Chinese plant, possibly a wild turmeric.

[1503] The *Abridged Account of Wei* (*Weilüe* 魏略) is a lost historical record of the state of Cao Wei 曹魏 (220–266) that was written by the state historian Yu Huan 魚豢 (3rd c.) in the mid-third century, see Zheng et al., *Dictionary of the Ben Cao Gang Mu*, 501. A invaluable chapter called the "Records of the Western Barbarians" (*Xirong zhuan* 西戎傳) that describes the Roman Empire was preserved in the *Commentary to the Treatise of the Three Kingdoms* (*Sanguo zhi zhu* 三國志注) by Pei Songzhi 裴松之 (372–451) and published in 429, see SuiS:858–863. A recent translation of the section on the Roman Empire can be found in Yu, *China and the Ancient Mediterranean*, 80–113. It is unclear if the *Abridged Account of Wei* should be distinguished from Yu Huan's other work, the *Abridged Archives*, see HC#28b.

[1504] *Carthamus tinctorius*, a traditional substitute for saffron. See comments on safflower in Laufer, *Sino-Iranica*, 310–11, 324–28; Wheatley, "Geographical Notes," 93.

foul.[1505] It dispels the malign *qi* of the heart and abdomen, ghost attachment-illness, and can be added to various aromatics for use [in blending].

[7e] *Explaining Graphs* [*and Analyzing Characters*][1506] states, "Wild turmeric is a fragrant plant that is boiled with fermented *chang*-ale[1507] in order to draw down the spirits."

[7a] 魏略云：生大秦國。[1508]

[7b] 二，三月花如紅藍，四五月采之其香。[1509]

[7c] 十二葉，為百草之英。[1510]

[7d] 本草拾遺曰：味苦，無毒，主蠱[1511]毒，鬼疰，鴉鶻等臭，除心腹間惡氣，鬼疰，入諸香用。[1512]

[7e] 說文曰：鬱金，芳草。煮以釀鬯，以降神也。[1513]

[COMMENTS] Saffron is an intensely scented aromatic made from the crimson-colored stigmas of the *Crocus sativus*, a flowering plant cultivated at an early period in Asia Minor, Iran, and northwestern India (the plant's indigenous origins remain in dispute). The purplish-blue flower of the *C. sativus*, in the family of the iris, is well-known known for its peculiar

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[1505] This reading remains speculative.
[1506] *Explaining Graphs and Analyzing Characters* (*Shuowen jiezi* 說文解字) is a lexicographical work compiled by Xu Shen 許慎 (ca. 55?–ca. 149?) that was presented to the imperial throne in the beginning of the second century. For a study on the role of the Xu Shen's lexicography in the history of Chinese scientific thought, see Bottéro and Harbsmeier, "Shuowen Jiezi."
[1507] See discussion of *chang*-ale in Chapter 1, Section 3.
[1508] Cf. SGZ:30.861.
[1509] Unattributed, paraphrased quote from the *Supplement to the Materia Medica*; cf. BCGM:1.896 [鬱金香/集解]. Some scholars erroneously consider this an authentic quote from the *Abridged Account of Wei*, see Zhang Xuxu, "Zhongguo gudai yujin xiang kao," *Tianfu xinlun* 3 (2012): 135.
[1510] An unattributed quote, significantly rephrased, from *Explaining Graphs and Analyzing Characters*; cf. SWJZ:5.128; cf. T2122:573a23–24; cf. BCGM:1.895–896 [鬱金香/釋名].
[1511] Read 蟲 as 蠱, following BCGM:1.896 [鬱金香/注治].
[1512] Cf. BCGM:1.896 [鬱金香/氣味, 注治].
[1513] Cf. SWJZ:5.128; cf. T2122:573a23–24; cf. BCGM:1.895–896 [鬱金香/釋名].

nature of blooming in autumn. The primary commercial value, however, was the flower's dried stigmas, colloquially called "threads," which were always considered among the most expensive articles of ancient and modern trade. In Western antiquity saffron was highly prized as a golden-orange dye, perfume, spice, and medicine, and due to its value was often a target for substitution and adulteration.[1514] The smell of saffron is rather pungent, possessing a sweet honey-like scent with grassy and earthy notes. The varying purities of imported saffron may have caused some of the confusion in medieval Chinese sources regarding this aromatic's origins and attributes. Confusion for modern scholars is further compounded by the fact that the Chinese nomenclature for saffron, Yu Gold Aromatic (*yujin xiang* 鬱金香, also 郁金香, 欝金香), was derived from an older Chinese name for a very different kind of native plant, possibly a wild turmeric.

Outside of Buddhist scripture, saffron was known to the Chinese by at least the mid-to-late third century. The *Abridged Account of Wei* claims Yu Gold, or saffron, was found in great quantities in the Roman Empire [7a]. This claim is corroborated by the *Periplus Maris Erythraei*, a merchant handbook of the first century, which reports saffron (Greek *krokos*) as an export of Roman Egypt.[1515] The earliest Chinese description of saffron crocus flowers is found in the *Treatise on Strange Things of the Southern Regions* by Wan Zhen, the governor of Danyang commandery under the Eastern Wu. The regional gazetteer offers the following information:

[1514] For comments on the use of saffron, see Schafer, *Golden Peaches*, 124; for references regarding the adulteration of saffron, see Laufer, *Sino-Iranica*, 309n.1.

[1515] Casson, *Periplus*, 65, 152–53. As noted by Lionel Casson, the best quality saffron was produced in Asia Minor, and lesser quality elsewhere, but none was cultivated in Egypt. The *Periplus Maris Erythraei* makes no mention of turmeric trade from Rome or India, thus I see no reason to treat the Yu Gold in the *Abridged Account of Wei* as turmeric, cf. Laufer, *Sino-Iranica*, 313n.7.

> Exported from Kaśmīra (Jibin). The people of the country cultivate [saffron flowers], first gathering them to offer to the Buddha. After several days they wither and fade, thus they are removed and carried off. Afterwards, the saffron is gathered which is perfectly yellow in color and delicate. They resemble the extending seed-pods within the lotus flower. They can be used to scent alcohol.[1516]
> 出罽賓國。國人種之，先取上佛，積日萎熇，乃載去之。然後取鬱金，色正黃細，與芙蓉華裏披蓮者相似。可以香酒。

If my reading is correct, Wan Zhen appears to compare the yellow stigmas of the *C. sativus* to the long branching seed-pods (*lian* 蓮) that emerge from the native Chinese lotus flower (*furong* 芙蓉), a rather curious analogy.[1517] Regardless of this comparison, the passage describes the Buddhist use of crocus flowers for worship in northwest India, in addition to highlighting their utility for flavoring alcoholic beverages. The *Book of Liang*, compiled in 635, copies much of the wording of *Treatise on Strange Things of the Southern Regions*, but adds that merchants are responsible for recovering the old flowers from Buddhist temples and reselling them on the international market.[1518]

Indian Buddhist lore also connects the Kaśmīra region with the production of saffron. The **Aśokarājāvadāna*, reputedly translated by An Faqin 安法欽 (fl. ca. 306?) as the *Biography of King Aśoka* (*Ayu wang zhuan* 阿育王傳; T2042), but which probably dates to no earlier than the fifth century, contains the story of the monk Madhyāntika who was sent to Kaśmīra to spread the Dharma.[1519] After taming a local

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[1516] TPYL:8.981.858; cf. trans. Laufer, *Sino-Iranica*, 317; cf. BCGM:1.896 [鬱金香] (which incorrectly cites the passage as from the first century work of Yang Fu; see relevant comments regarding Yang Fu's treatise in HC#42). For more on the identity of Kaśmīra (Jibin), see HC#68.
[1517] For comments on *furong* as the lotus flower and *lian* as its seed-pod, see Xurong Kong, *Fu Poetry Along the Silk Roads: Third-Century Chinese Writings on Exotica* (Arc Humanities Press, 2022): 111–12.
Laufer reads the passage as describing yellow crocus flowers, requiring him to assert that *C. sativus* occur in a "great variation of colors," including yellow. Nevertheless, the authority he cites only reports the flowers to be "of a bluish purple, of lilac color," Laufer, *Sino-Iranica*, 317n.5.
[1518] LS:54.48.798; see also passing comments in Laufer, *Sino-Iranica*, 316.
[1519] For comments on the career of An Faqin, see Zürcher, *Buddhist Conquest*, 277, 423n.163.

serpent, Madhyāntika flies to Mount Aromatics (*xiang shan* 香山) and retrieves saffron flowers to propagate in Kaśmīra. The serpent agrees to allow the cultivation of saffron for as long as the Buddhist teachings survive, to which Madhyāntika replies the Dharma will last one thousand years.[1520]

The Buddhist use of saffron is further attested in three Chinese scriptures translated between the fourth and eighth centuries describing the ritual for bathing an image of the Buddha in celebration of his birthday.[1521] The procedure entails infusing water with a variety of aromatics to render the liquid both fragrant and colorful. The ingredients vary to some degree between the three texts, but saffron is included in all of them, with one set of directions reporting that it turns the water vermilion in color.[1522] To further underscore its importance, in the early fifth century translation of the *Mahāparinirvāṇa Sutra* (*Da banniepan jing* 大般涅槃經; T374) by Dharmakṣema, saffron is included as one of the aromatic pastes applied to the fragrant wood collected for cremating the body of the Buddha.[1523] All of these uses point to the significance of saffron and other aromatics for indicating the presence of an otherwise absent Buddha through smell during periods of Buddhist worship.

In addition, saffron was also viewed as a powerful medicine. This is attested by its inclusion among the ingredients in the Buddhist balneotherapy revealed by the goddess Sarasvatī in the *Sutra of Golden Light*. In this work saffron is transcribed as *chajumo* 茶矩麼, Middle Chinese **ḍa-kju-mje*, likely approximating the Sanskrit

[1520] T2042:116c08–c13; see also passing comment in Laufer, *Sino-Iranica*, 320–21.
[1521] For more on these works see Boucher, "Bathing the Buddha," 56–68.
[1522] T696:798b15 (noting the water turns vermilion), T697:799b06, and T698:800b17 (cf. trans. Boucher, "Bathing the Buddha," 67 ["Tulip incense"]).
[1523] T374:366c06.

kuṅkuma.[1524] Moreover, in the context of Chinese medicine, saffron is one of the three aromatics in the *Materia Aromatica*, along with costus root [HC#16] and thoroughwort [HC#29], reported as suitable for treating vicious *gu* poison [7d].

Not too long after Wan Zhen's account, it appears saffron may have been known directly to the Chinese along the shipping routes of the coastal south. For example, the fourth century alchemist Ge Hong includes Yu Gold, possibly saffron, among the prized aromatics of Jiangnan, listing it alongside native sweet basil [HC#32] and thoroughwort [HC#29], as well as foreign storax [HC#5].[1525] In the early-to-mid fifth century, Fan Ye, a southern official under the Liu Song, lists saffron in the preface to his now lost perfume blending catalogue alongside Mediterranean storax, Indian gum guggul [HC#6], and Himalayan spikenard [HC#19], all items he reports are not easily attainable in China [HC#84]. Saffron may have also circulated in the north by the late third century. Zuo Fen 左棻 (d. 300), the imperial concubine of Emperor Wu 武 (r. 266–290) of the Jin, reputedly wrote a poem in praise of Yu Gold, calling it an "odd plant" (*qi cao* 奇草) from a "weird land" (*shu yu* 殊域), strongly suggesting it was imported saffron from the old Roman Empire or Kaśmīra.[1526]

The first recorded foreign state to offer saffron as a tribute was Funan, which sent a delegation to the court of Emperor Wu 武 (r. 502–549) of the Liang in 519. According to the

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[1524] T664:386c16, T665:435a04; see also Ludvik, *Sarasvatī*, 313. Paul Pelliot believed *chajumo* should be emended to *jujumo* 菊矩磨 to better approximate *kuṅkuma*, which he understood as *Curcuma* (turmeric), see Pelliot, "Fou-nan," 270n.4. The Monier-Williams Sanskrit-English Dictionary only gives saffron as the definition for *kuṅkuma*, see Monier-Williams, *A Sanskrit English Dictionary*, 287; for discussion on the confusion between *kuṅkuma* and Indian turmeric (Skt. *haridrā*), see Laufer, *Sino-Iranica*, 314. Berthold Laufer prefers to read the transcription *chajumo* as *jāguḍa* (through a vernacular form **jāguma*), which also refers to saffron, see Laufer, *Sino-Iranica*, 318; Monier-Williams, *A Sanskrit English Dictionary*, 416–17. Jāguḍa was also a place name for Zābul in eastern Afghanistan which produced saffron and exported it to China during the Tang, see Laufer, *Sino-Iranica*, 316–17; Schafer, *Golden Peaches*, 186.

[1525] DZ1185:12.8b; see my discussion of this passage in Chapter 5, Section 7.

[1526] Zuo Fen's "Praise to Saffron" (*Yujun song* 郁金頌) is discussed in Zhang, "Yujin xiang kao," 137.

Book of Liang, in addition to saffron, the envoy delivered a sandalwood image from India, leaves of the *śāla* tree (*Shorea robusta*), storax, and "fire orbs."[1527] Even though Funan was rich with its own native exotica, especially prized aloeswood [HC#3], all of the tribute items originated much further west and the *Book of Liang* specifically describes saffron as solely the product of Kaśmīra.[1528] By the middle of the seventh century India was also sending purple crocus flowers as a tribute to the Tang court, where they were noted by courtiers as being smelled at a distance of more than ten paces.[1529] Less than a century later, in 719, the king of Bukhārā presented what was equivalent to thirty pounds of saffron to the Chinese emperor, certainly equivalent in cost to a king's ransom. As the foreign ambassador reported, the tribute was an effort to solicit the Chinese emperor's help in defense against the advancing Arab army.[1530]

The Chinese name for saffron is somewhat curious. The nomenclature borrows directly from an ancient Chinese plant known as *yu* 鬱 (also 郁, 欝) of which little is definitively known. According to the *Rites of Zhou*, a special libation officer was in charge of preparing sacrificial *chang*-ale by spicing it with the *yu* plant.[1531] We are further informed by the commentary of Zheng Xuan 鄭玄 (127–200) that the *yu* plant was known as Yu Gold (*yujin* 鬱金, also 郁金, 欝金) which he glosses as a "fragrant plant."[1532] Because of this

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[1527] LS:54.48.790; see also Pelliot, "Fou-nan," 270–71. Pelliot emends the error *poluo* 婆羅 to *suoluo* 娑羅, or *śāla*, see Pelliot, "Deux itinéraires," 270n.2. For a discussion of "fire orbs," which likely refer to burning lenses (Skt. *agnimaṇi*), see Schafer, *Golden Peaches*, 237–39. In addition, both saffron and storax are noted in the poetry of Wu Jun, an official under the Liang, see HC#125a.
[1528] LS:54.48.798.
[1529] TPYL:8.981.858; BCGM:1.896; see also Laufer, *Sino-Iranica*, 317; Schafer, *Golden Peaches*, 125.
[1530] As reported in the *Primordial Oracle of the Records Bureau* (*Cefu yuangui* 冊府元龜), see Chavannes, *Documents sur les Tou-kiue*, 203–04. Chavannes' identification of *Curcuma*, i.e. turmeric, is incorrect.
[1531] ZLZS:19.1662–63, trans. Biot, *Le Tcheou-li*, Vol. 1, 465–67. I discuss the "turmeric officer" in Chapter 1, Section 3.
[1532] 鬱，鬱金香草。ZLZS:17.1623.

association with gold and the claim that *chang*-ale may have been yellow in color (see below), it has been argued that in antiquity *yu* referred to a native species of turmeric, possibly *Curcuma aromatica*, or wild turmeric.[1533] More specifically, Berthold Laufer has suggested the "gold" in Yu Gold referred directly to the golden colored rhizome of the turmeric plant which would have imparted a characteristic scent, flavor, and color to the sacrificial ale.[1534]

It should be noted, however, that *Curcuma* species do not occur in the wild in the temperate Northern Plains of China.[1535] Consequently, if the identification is correct, the wild turmeric used in state sacrifice would have been imported from warmer southern regions. Not surprisingly, *yu* appears in the second century BCE medical manuscripts from Mawangdui located in subtropical Changsha, listed as part of a treatment for a leg wound.[1536] The southern origin of *yu* is also supported by a story in circulation by the Eastern Han that the aromatic plant came from the tropical borderlands. As described in *Explaining Graphs and Analyzing Characters*, *yu* was a fragrant plant offered as a tribute from the "Yu people" (*yuren* 鬱人) who lived in what was then known as Yulin commandery (*Yulin jun* 鬱林郡), in present-day Guangxi.[1537] It is difficult to historically assess this claim since, to my

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[1533] Cf. Pan, *Shijing*, 278–79 (listing both *Curcuma domestica*, syn. *C. longa*, and *C. aromatica*); cf. Hua, Buell, and Unschuld, *Dictionary of the Ben Cao Gang Mu*, 435 (#1425; *Curcuma longa*); cf. *Zhongyao da cidican* (#2766; *Curcuma wenyujin* and other spp.). The identification of ancient *yu* as *Curcuma longa*, or common turmeric, is unlikely given that it is not native to China and may not have been introduced until the Tang, see Laufer, *Sino-Iranica*, 313.

[1534] Laufer, *Sino-Iranica*, 323. Elsewhere, Laufer suggests several candidate for the *Curcuma* species known in antiquity, see Laufer, *Sino-Iranica*, 312–13.

[1535] Citing the work of Ren Zhoufang, Constance Cook notes that *C. longa* [sic] is "indigenous to northwestern China," see Cook, "Moonshine and Millet," 30n.20. This is inaccurate, *C. longa*, now identified in modern Chinese as *jianghuang* 姜黃, was introduced and cultivated only in the medieval period, see comments below. Moreover, no species of *Curcuma* is now identified as growing wild in northern China.

[1536] Harper, *Early*, 285.

[1537] SWJZ:5.128. This passage has already been highlighted by Paul Pelliot, G.A. Stuart, and F. Porter Smith, see Pelliot, "Fou-nan," 270n.4 and Stuart and Smith, *Chinese Materia Medica*, 139, respectively, As clarified by Berthold Laufer, Yulin commandery was founded in 111 BCE, thus postdating the use of the term *yu* and providing evidence for the fact that the southern commandery was named after the plant, not the other way

knowledge, there is no other reference to a Yu people living in the far south.[1538] Moreover, it would seem this gloss is a fanciful misreading of the "Yu person" (*yuren*, or "turmeric officer"), one of the libation officers who prepared and presented the *yu* spiced *chang*-ale in the *Rites of Zhou* noted above. Nevertheless, Li Tang has recently shown that the term *yu* drops from bronze inscriptions in the late Western Zhou, speculating this indicated the loss of access to the southern *yu* plant by Zhou rulers.[1539]

If the textual attribution is correct, the earliest use of Yu Gold to refer to Indian saffron comes in the translation work of the Eastern Han Buddhist monk Lokakṣema. As seen in the *Hundred Jewels of the Inner Treasury* (*Neizang bai bao jing* 內藏百寶經; T807),

around, see Laufer, *Sino-Iranica*, 322–23. In addition, the definition given in *Explaining Graphs and Analyzing Characters* describes the flowers of the *yu* plant being used for making the ale, not its root; see following footnote.

[1538] During the early medieval period it appears two streams of interpretation emerged where *yu* and Yu Gold were described as herbal or flowering plants. In Zheng Xuan's commentary to the "turmeric officer" in the *Rites of Zhou*, he describes part of the officiant's duties as such: "After mashing the Yu Gold, it is boiled and mixed with *chang*-ale," 築鬱金，煮之以和鬯酒。ZLZY:19.1662. In the subsequent passage, however, Zheng Xuan cites the Han exegete Zheng Zhong 鄭眾 (d. 83), cited as Zheng Sinong 鄭司農, who does not describe the use of a golden colored rhizome, but an herbal plant: "*Yu* is a plant name. Ten leaves makes a bundle, so [the officiant] takes one hundred and twenty bundles, mashes them, and boils them inside a *jiao*-vessel. It is made right up to before the sacrifice. *Yu* is a plant that resembles thoroughwort," 郁，草名。十葉為貫，百二十貫為築以煮之鐎中，停於祭前。郁為草若蘭。ZLZY:19.1662. Zheng Zhong's reference to boiling leaves and analogy to highly aromatic thoroughwort does not suggest the use of turmeric, but a different plant with scented oils concentrated in its leaves. This description was copied into the gloss of *yu* in *Explaining Graphs and Analyzing Characters*, SWJZ:5.128; see also similar citations in T2122:573a23–24; T2131:1105a13–14; for further references to *yu* resembling thoroughwort, see Laufer, *Sino-Iranica*, 323n.3. In addition to this "herbal Yu Gold" with scented leaves, another tradition originating in the Han seems to treat Yu Gold as having scented flowers. For example, the "Rhapsody on Yu Gold" (*Yujin fu* 鬱金賦), ascribed to the official Zhu Fu 朱穆 (100–163), highlights the plant's magnificent glistening and fragrant flowers. This theme is picked up again by Fu Xuan in the third century. In his "Rhapsody on Yu Gold," the poet describes the plant's flowers (*ying* 英) as intensely fragrant and golden in color; both the works of Zhu Fu and Fu Xuan are discussed in Zhang, "Yujin xiang kao," 137 (although I am skeptical of Zhang Xuxu's identify of Fu Xaun's Yu Gold as saffron). Moreover, as we will see below, there is a Han-era belief that *chang*-ale was spiced through the infusion of flowers from the Yu Gold plant. Both Xu Shen's *Explaining Graphs and Analyzing Characters* and Ying Shao's 應劭 (ca. 144–ca. 204) *Records of Geography and Popular Customs* (*Dili fengsu ji* 地理風俗記) report using "flowers of hundreds of [*yu*] plants" 百草之華 for this purpose, see SWJZ:5.128 and TPYL:8.981.857, respectively; see also T2122:573a23–24; T2131:1105a13–14. The relationship between Zheng Zhong's "herbal Yu Gold," Zhu Fu's "floral Yu Gold," and the modern scholarly identification of Yu Gold as rhizomatic turmeric remains uncertain and awaits further research.

[1539] Li Tang, "Xi Zhou shiqi 'chang' zhi chenming ji bianhua," *Wenbo* 6 (2021): 74–79.

Lokakṣema adopts the term for a passage where the scent of saffron is used as an analogy to describe the sweetness of the Buddha's breath.[1540] We can speculate several reasons why Lokakṣema (or a close contemporary) may have elected to use the Chinese name for wild turmeric as a translation for saffron.[1541] For one, saffron was used to spice alcohol in northern India, as reported in Wan Zhen's account noted above, just as wild turmeric was used in ancient China.[1542] Equally, both saffron and wild turmeric were employed to impart a rich color, such as we find with saffron in the ritual for bathing the Buddha and with wild turmeric infused *chang*-ale, which was known in the *Book of Odes* as "yellow liquid."[1543] Additionally, both plants were used in ritual settings as an offering to the Buddha or to ancestral spirits. Lastly, one medieval Chinese tradition dating to at least the Eastern Han believed spiced *chang*-ale was produced through the infusion of hundreds of flowers [7c], thus echoing the creation of saffron which was made though the collection of hundreds of crocus flowers.[1544] Such parallels between these two plants also led to apparent confusion. For example, in his catalogue of aromatics, the Buddhist monk Daoshi glosses the meaning of Yu Gold Aromatic, which was most likely intended to refer to saffron in Buddhist

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[1540] T807:752a04. According to Jan Nattier this translation is among of group of "second tier" texts that "still resemble [Lokakṣema's] language and style in overall terms," Nattier, *Guide*, 84.

[1541] There is a curious citation to Yu Gold Aromatic, nomenclature often treated as uniquely indicative of saffron, in Ying Shao's *Records of Geography and Popular Customs*. After describing the role of the turmeric officer and creation of spiced *chang*-ale, Ying Shao claims that "there are some who state nowadays that this [i.e., wild turmeric] is Yu Gold Aromatic," 或說，今郁金香是也。TPYL:8.981.858. While Ying Shao's older contemporary Zheng Xuan identified *yu* as Yu Gold, the identification of Yu Gold *Aromatic* is unexpected. If not simply a later interpolation, we might wonder if Ying Shao, who was reputedly familiar with Chicken Tongue Aromatic, i.e. cloves, applied the "aromatic" suffix to native wild turmeric or, on the other hand, if he had become aware of foreign saffron circulating under the name of Yu Gold Aromatic and conflated it with the ancient Chinese plant. It is worth noting that both cloves and saffron would have likely come into China from ports along the Indochinese peninsula.

[1542] With time, medieval Chinese poets also came to speak of saffron infused wine, just as was done in Rome centuries earlier, see Schafer, *Golden Peaches*, 126.

[1543] MSZY:16.1109 (Mao #239), trans. Waley, *Book of Songs*, 235 ("yellow flood"), see also Chapter 1, Section 3.

[1544] In such a case, however, it is questionable if *yu* should be treated as wild turmeric; for comments regarding an early "floral Yu Gold," see footnote above.

scriptures, by relying wholly on traditional Chinese sources that instead describe native turmeric.[1545]

The name Yu Gold was also possibly applied to foreign species of turmeric that entered China during the medieval period. This includes *C. longa*, or common turmeric, imported from India (and possibly cultivated in southwest China) and *C. zedoaria*, known as zedoary, from India and elsewhere in Southeast Asia.[1546] Due to such ambiguities, it can be difficult to know with certainty when "Yu Gold" intended to refer to saffron, native Chinese turmeric, or an imported *Curcuma* species. In the context of perfuming, however, we might more securely surmise the intended substance was saffron.[1547] This confusion is not only the product of ambiguous nomenclature; turmeric was long known as an inexpensive substitute for saffron since it possessed many of the same properties, especially regarding its ability to imbue materials with a golden color. A more nuanced distinction in nomenclature was sometimes deployed with the addition of the suffix "aromatic," thus Yu Gold *Aromatic* is thought to primarily refer to saffron, although this is not infallible.[1548] In other cases, carefully selected terminology plainly indicates turmeric. For example, in explaining the proper dye to use for monastic garments, Daoxuan clarifies that Yu Gold root (*yujin gen* 鬱金根) should be used as the raw material.[1549] This leaves no doubt the reference is to rhizomatic turmeric, not the stigmas of the saffron crocus flower.

[1545] T2122:573a20–24. Daoshi employs the term Yu Gold Aromatic, nomenclature typically reserved for saffron; see discussion below. Additionally, Daoshi elsewhere cites the *Treatise on Strange Things of the Southern Regions* in his catalogue, but does not cites the passage discussed above for his elaboration of Yu Gold Aromatic.
[1546] Laufer, *Sino-Iranica*, 312–14, 544–45; Schafer, *Golden Peaches*, 125, 185–86.
[1547] See discussion in Schafer, *Golden Peaches*, 186.
[1548] According to Laufer: "As a matter of principle, the term [*yujin xiang*] strictly refers to saffron," Laufer, *Sino-Iranica*, 314n.4; see also Schafer, *Golden Peaches*, 125. An exception might be made for Ying Shao's use of Yu Gold Aromatic, see earlier footnote; other exceptions can also be cited, see Laufer, *Sino-Iranica*, 323n.2.
[1549] T1804:86b15. It remains to be seen if saffron was used as a dye in medieval China, see Schafer, *Golden Peaches*, 125.

In addition to above, Berthold Laufer has also called to attention the use of Yu Gold in the ninth century Buddhist dictionary by Huilin 慧琳 (732–820) to describe a tree that grows in Kaśmīra with yellow flowers that are used to procure a strong aromatic liquid.[1550] Laufer suggests this may refer to large shrubs of the *Memecylon* genus, possibly the *Memecylon caeruleum* (syn. *M. tinctorium*), which are endemic to South Asia and widely used to produce yellow dyes. This identification seems unlikely. Notably, Huilin does not mention the use of these yellow flowers to create dyes, but only to make perfume. Equally, flowers of the *Memecylon* genus are famously known for their deep blue or purple hue and are not typically considered fragrant. Moreover, Huilin's intellectual successor, Xilin 希麟 (fl. 987), proposes that Yu Gold flowers came from the famed Indian *campaka* (*zhanbojia* 瞻蔔迦) tree, commonly identified as the *Magnolia champaca* [HC#81].[1551] Unlike the *Memecylon*, this tree has vibrant yellow flowers with an intense scent, and thus better matches the description offered by Huilin. Outside of Huilin's gloss, there is little discussion of a Yu Gold tree in Chinese sources, but if the identification of Xilin is correct it appears some medieval Buddhist translators may have imagined the famed golden *campaka* flowers when referencing Yu Gold.

In some ways this is only the beginning of the complexities behind the botanical and terminological questions regarding Yu Gold. As one last example, the earlier sixth century translation of the aforementioned Buddhist therapeutic bath in the *Sutra of Golden Light* differentiates between Yu Gold Aromatic and Yu Gold root, suggesting an attempt to clearly

[1550] Laufer, *Sino-Iranica*, 315; see also the *Pronunciation and Meaning of the Complete Canon*, T2128:766a14. Laufer misidentifies this Buddhist dictionary as dating to the year 649.
[1551] Xilin's gloss of *campaka* states: "The old [transcription] was *zhanbo*. The proper [transcription] is *zhanbojia*. The old translation was Yu Gold Flower." 舊云瞻蔔，正云瞻博迦，舊翻爲鬱金花。 T2129.948b08.

distinguish between saffron and turmeric, respectively.[1552] Curiously, however, Yu Gold root is later transcribed as *sushimi* 縮師蜜, Middle Chinese **suo-ṣi-mjiet*, which appears to approximate *sūkṣmā*, or cardamom pods, an apparent error that has no easy explanation.[1553]

Many of these issues come to a head in Hong Chu's entry above for Yu Gold Aromatic. As noted above, the *Abridged Account of Wei* refer to Yu Gold, which might refer to turmeric, but one could make a stronger argument for saffron since it was a known export of Roman Egypt. Two of the other passages are taken from the Eastern Han *Explaining Graphs and Analyzing Characters*, one attributed [7e], one unattributed [7c], both of which are taken from passages describing the production of ancient *chang*-ale. While the attributed passage might refer to wild turmeric, the unattributed quote highlights a plant with scented leaves or scented flowers and thus might reflect a different and hitherto unknown plant. Furthermore, another unattributed passage taken from the *Supplement to the Materia Medica* [7b] definitively does not refer to saffron because it describes the flowers as blooming in spring, while the *Crocus* only blooms in autumn.[1554] Hong Chu's haphazard collection of passages seems to reflect a confusion that would have been typical for the medieval period, even for someone who presumably knew more about Chinese aromatics than most others.[1555]

To summarize the terminological issues under consideration, Yu Gold Aromatic most commonly refers to the *C. sativus*, either the flower or the rendered aromatic from the stigmas known as saffron. Yu Gold, on the other hand could refer to wild turmeric native to

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[1552] T664:386c16–17.
[1553] See brief comments in Ludvik, *Sarasvatī*, 313–14 (Ludvik's identification of Yu Gold Aromatic as turmeric is incorrect). Of similar curiosity is the Red Flower of Tibet (*zang honghua* 藏红花), once thought by scholars to refer to safflower, but suggested by Laufer to properly refer to saffron arriving from Kaśmīra through Tibet, see Laufer *Sino-Iranica*, 324n.3.
[1554] Laufer, *Sino-Iranica*, 318.
[1555] In Hong Chu's defense, however, the Chinese genre of encyclopedia, the style in which the *Materia Aromatica* is compiled, were merely intended to group together similar terminology, regardless of referent.

China or an unknown flowering plant, most relevant to the contexts of ancient state sacrifice. In the context of foreign exotica, Yu Gold might refer to imported common turmeric or zedoary. Importantly, due to the Chinese literary preference for binomial constructions, Yu Gold could also have been used to refer to saffron, as might be the case when Yu Gold is used in the context of perfuming or treated with high reverence (as in Buddhist offertory practice). Moreover, some Buddhists might have taken Yu Gold to refer to Indian *campaka* flowers. As a final point of interest, there is no evidence that the modern identification of Yu Gold Aromatic as the tulip (*Tulipa gesneriana*) should be projected back into the medieval period.[1556]

8) Chicken Tongue Aromatic (clove) 雞舌香[1557]

The *Tang Materia Medica* states, "It grows in Kunlun, Jiao[zhou][1558], Ai[zhou][1559] and to the south. There are male and female trees with bark and leaves that both resemble the chestnut. The flowers are like the plum. The one bearing fruit resembling jujube pits is the female tree and is not used as an aromatic. The one without fruit is the male tree. The flowers are gathered and fermented to make them aromatic. Its [nature] is slightly warm. It treats pain in the heart and malign sores, it cures poison swelling caused by winds and sweat and drives away malign *qi*."

[1556] Zhang, "Yujin xiang kao," 135–38; Laufer, *Sino-Iranica*, 314n.4.
[1557] Chicken Tongue Aromatic (*jishe xiang* 雞舌香 or 鷄舌香) is descriptive of the appearance of the dark, dried clove bud.
[1558] An administrative region covering present-day Guangdong, Guangxi, and the northern parts of Vietnam, here paired with Gunagzhou, Hua, Buell, and Unschuld, *Dictionary of the Ben Cao Gang Mu*, 163, 164.
[1559] A medieval administrative district that comprised present-day north Vietnam, see Hua, Buell, and Unschuld, *Dictionary of the Ben Cao Gang Mu*, 50.

唐本草云：生崑崙及交，愛以南，樹有雌雄。皮葉不[1560]並似栗，其花如梅，結實似棗核者，雌樹也，不入香用。無子者，雄樹也。採花釀以成香，微溫，主心痛，惡瘡，療風毒[1561]，去惡氣。[1562]

[COMMENTS] Cloves are the dried flower buds of the clove tree, *Syzygium aromaticum* (syns. *Carophyllus aromaticum*, *Eugenia caryophyllata*, *E. aromatica*), native to the Maluku Islands, or Moluccas, of the eastern Indonesian Archipelago.[1563] The characteristic spicy and warm scent of cloves derives from their relatively high concentration of eugenol, a chemical compound also found in Sri Lankan/Indian cinnamon (*Cinnamomum verum*) blossoms and Chinese cassia (*Cinnamomum cassia*) blossoms.

If we are to believe the authenticity of the records at our disposal, Chicken Tongue Aromatic (*jishe xiang* 雞舌香), the earliest Chinese name for cloves, were famously used as breath fresheners in the Eastern Han imperial court [HC#95]. The existence of a palace culture around the use of cloves to sweeten courtiers' breath suggests a regular trade in the Indonesian aromatic by at least the second half of the second century. It is sometimes claimed in modern scholarship that cloves were known to the imperial court of the Western Han and specifically used as early as the third or second century BCE. There is simply no evidence to support such claims.[1564] The earliest citation to cloves in Chinese sources is Cai

[1560] Omit 不, following uncorrected Huacheng edition, p. 1808, XXBC:12.314, and BCGM:2.1949 [丁香/集解].
[1561] Read 風毒 as 風水毒腫, following XXBC:12.313 and BCGM:2.1941 [丁香, 雞舌香/主治].
[1562] Cf. XXBC:12.313–314; cf. BCGM:2.1940–1942 [丁香, 雞舌香/集解, 氣味, 主治]. The received version of the *Newly Revised Materia Medica* and the relevant passage in the *Systematic Materia Medica* does not contain malign sores.
[1563] The *S. aromaticum* only grows wild on a few of the northern Maluku Islands: Ternate, Tidore, Mutir, Makian, and Bachan.
[1564] Paul Wheatley claims cloves were known to the Chinese in the third century BCE, but this is not attested in any classical Chinese source. Wheatly fails to provide any citation, see Wheatley, "Geographical Notes," 45. A similar (erroneous) timeframe for clove introduction is postulated in many secondary works, including Lu

Zhi's 蔡質 (fl. 178) *Duties and Observances for Han Officials Selected for Use* (*Hanguan dianzhi yishi xuanyong* 漢官典職儀式選用), which notes their use as breath fresheners among the Secretarial Court Gentlemen.[1565] If we turn to early medical literature, cloves are not included in the *Classic of Materia Medica of the Divine Husbandman*, a work believed to have been edited up through the Eastern Han. The absence of cloves might be explained by their relative scarcity to physicians or a lack of a clear therapeutic purpose that justified their inclusion among medical literature.

Ultimately, it is impossible to know when cloves first arrived in China or how common they were in Chinese ports and urban markets during the Eastern Han. We might speculate, however, that Shi Ci 士賜 (fl. 160), who served under Emperor Huan 桓 (r. 146–168) as the governor (*taishou*) of Rinan, in present-day central Vietnam, may have played a role in sending early supplies to the Han court. After a series of disastrous local rebellions, the Han emperor stopped sending troops southward and allowed Shi Ci, a man with deep familial ties to the far south, to govern what soon emerged as a *de facto* independent state.[1566] Never formally breaking from the Han empire, we might assume that he, or his son Shi Xie 士燮 (137–226) who governed from his capital at Longbian 龍編, present-day Hanoi, on the

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Hongtao and Zeng Luoxin, "Ding xiang kao," *Zhongyao cai* 10 (1989): 39; R.S. Singh and A.N. Singh, "Impact of Historical Studies on the Nomenclature of Medical and Economic Plants with Particular Reference to Clove (Lavanga)," *Ancient Science of Life* 2, no. 4 (1982): 228; Mahdi, "Some Austronesian Maverick Protoforms," 190. It appears Eastern Han court protocol manuals, such as the *Duties and Observances for Han Officials Selected for Use*, may have been treated as explaining practices for the entire duration of the Han dynasty, including its earliest years of the third century BCE. We can infer this hypothesis was not the case because the stipulation to use cloves when addressing the emperor is not found in the older *Old Observances for Han Officials* (*Han guan jiuyi* 漢官舊儀) by Wei Hong 衛宏 (fl. 1st cent.), suggesting the practice was not adopted until after this text's completion.

[1565] TPYL:3.221; HGLZ:206; see also my comments to Suckled Aromatic at HC#95.

[1566] SGZ:49.1191; Wang, "Nanhai Trade," 27; Taylor, *The Birth of Vietnam*, 52.

Red River Delta, regularly sent tribute north, possibly accounting for the appearance of cloves in Cai Zhi's manual.

We can further speculate about how cloves may have arrive in the harbors of Jiaozhi. It is unlikely that Chinese ships, likely built and operated by the indigenous southern Yue, sailed to the Moluccas directly in this early period. Instead they most likely sailed to the rich entrepôt of Funan, in present-day Vietnam, on the Mekong Delta.[1567] The earliest evidence we have for this pattern of regional maritime trade in cloves comes in the Three Kingdoms period when the state of Eastern Wu was seeking to establish commercial relations with the ports of Southeast Asia. The Wu emissary Kang Tai 康泰 (ca. 250) travelled to Funan between 245 and 250 and compiled a report entitled the *Traditions of Foreign Lands during the Wu* (*Wu shi waiguo zhuan* 吳時外國傳).[1568] Kang Tai describes cloves as exports of the Wuma Islands (*wuma zhou* 五馬洲), now thought to be an early toponym for the Moluccas, located east of Java (*zhubo* 諸薄).[1569] Later in the same century, Wan Zhen, most likely writing from the seat of his governorship in Danyang under the Eastern Wu, reports that cloves are exported from the Island of Dubo (*Dubo zhou* 杜薄州; Java?) and refer to

[1567] Wolters, *Indonesian Commerce*, 39. For further comments on early maritime trade, see Chapter 2, Section 3 and sources cited therein.
[1568] Editions of Kang Tai's work circulated under several titles, see Pelliot, "Fou-nan," 275; Wheatley, "Malay Peninsula as Known to the Chinese," 3.
[1569] TPYL:7.787.332; cf. T2122:573b02; cf. TPYL:8.981.858 (the latter two works cite *wuma* 五馬, while the first transposes the graphs). The toponym Wuma (or Mawu) and its identification is not without controversy. Paul Pelliot speculated Zhubo was Java, but that Mawu pointed to Bali, Pelliot, "Deux itinéraires," 269–70. O.W. Wolters, based on the arguments of Rolf Stein, preferred to identify Zhubo as Borneo, but also identified Mawu as the "spice islands" (Moluccas) due to the production of cloves, Wolters, *Indonesian Commerce*, 39, 51–52, 270n38, 275n.20, 275–76n.24. Rao Zongyi, based on arguments of Toyohachi Fujita, treats Zhubo as Java and Wuma as the Moluccas, Rao, "Taiqing jinye shendan jing," 44–45. Regardless of the identity of Zhubo, if we are to treat Wuma (or Mawu) as a native producer, not a redistributor, of cloves, the identification can only be the Molucca Islands.

"withered [flowers] of plants that can be suckled to freshen one's breath."[1570] In combination, this pair of third century reports points to a trade in cloves running through Funan to southern China and, moreover, corroborates the earlier claims of Cai Zhi that cloves were used as a remedy for halitosis.

There is one further piece of evidence indicating access to cloves by the Chinese elite around the end of the Han. A preserved letter records that the military warlord Cao Cao 曹操 (155–220) sent cloves as a gift to Zhu Geliang 諸葛亮 (181–234), a trusted advisor to Liu Bei 劉備 (161–223), the warlord of the Shu Han during the Three Kingdoms and also one of Cao Cao's arch enemies. The surviving fragment of the letter transmitted to us simply states, "I am presenting you now with five catties of cloves to convey my humble sentiments."[1571] Xiaofei Tian has analyzed the symbolic ambiguity of such a gift: was it a subtle gesture suggesting that Zhuge Liang should occupy one of the highest positions of the Han court, where suckling on cloves was an olfactory practice necessary for meeting with the emperor? Or was Cao Cao suggesting that Zhuge Liang had "bad breath," reflecting poor counsel provided to his lord?[1572] In either case, the letter suggests it was feasible for the northern elite to have access to cloves by at least the first two decades of the third century. A century later, cloves appear in the work of fourth century southern herbalist Ge Hong who speaks of using them to improve one's vision.[1573]

[1570] 是草萎，可含香口。T2122:573b08; cf. TPYL:8.981.858 (replacing Dubo with Suzhou 蘇州 and *wei* 萎, "to whither," with *hua* 花, "flower"). *Dubo* is often, although not always, considered synonymous with *zhubo*, see e.g. Rao, "Taiqing jinye shendan jing," 44–45.

[1571] 今奉雞舌香五斤，以表微意。CCJ:3.69; as translated in Tian, "Letters and Gifts," 183.

[1572] Tian, 183. For the use of cloves in the Han court, see HC#95.

[1573] DZ1185:15.12b; cf. trans. Ware, *Alchemy*, 258. Ware confusingly renders Chicken Tongue Aromatic as "Aquilaria," possibly confusing it with Chicken Bone Aromatic, i.e. a lesser quality aloeswood.

Given the presumed introduction of cloves into India in the first century BCE, if not earlier (a point we will return to below), cloves are not frequently encountered in the earliest strata of translated Chinese Buddhist scriptures. They first appear in works dating to the late fourth century, such as we find in the revised *Madhyamāgama* (*Zhong ahan jing* 中阿含經) translated by Saṃghadeva 僧伽提婆 (ca. late 4th cent.) and Saṃgharakṣa 僧伽羅叉 (working as the guarantor, i.e. the reciter of the original Indic text). Cloves are included as part of a list of scented pastes applied to the body of kings and great ministers along with aloeswood [HC#3], sandalwood [HC#4], storax [HC#5], and Indian *douliang* [HC#34].[1574] If we turn to Chinese scent culture, a similar use as bodily perfume was recorded by the sixth century pharmacologist Tao Hongjing. He prescribes cloves as part of a medical prescription, along with powdered Malayan patchouli [HC#38], costus roots [HC#16], and lead carbonate to protect against foul body odor.[1575] Ultimately, Tao Hongjing was instrumental in canonizing this aromatic flower bud in Chinese materia medica literature, including it in his *Collected Annotations on the Classic of Materia Medica of the Divine Husbandman* (*Shennong bencao jing jizhu* 神農本草集注) and citing it one of the six most prized aromatics used by contemporary Chinese perfumers.[1576] In addition, the roughly contemporaneous *Essential Techniques for All People* (*Qimin yaoshu* 齊民要術), completed between 533 and 544, preserves several directions for making scented cosmetics with cloves, including scented hair

[1574] T26:519a28, trans. Marcus Bingenheimer, Anālayo, and Roderick S. Bucknell, eds., *The Madhyama Āgama (Middle-Length Discourses), Vol. 1* (Berkeley: Bukkyo Dendo Kyokai America, 2013), 479. Cloves appear in very short list of other late fourth century or early fifth century Buddhist texts, e.g. T1464.897c10 and T309:1015c28.

[1575] See "Tao the Recluse's Efficacious Method for the Treatment of Foul Odor" (*Yinju xiaofang liao chouhu* 隱居效方療臭狐) in the *Emergency Prescriptions to Keep up your Sleeve*, DZ1306:6.29b–30a.

[1576] XXBC:12.313. The list of six aromatics includes aloeswood, frankincense, cloves, patchouli, elemi, and liquidambar.

oil, fragrant face cream, and an aromatic powder, the latter of which was simply made of crushed cloves.[1577] In the later medieval period, under their variant name Nail Aromatic [HC#11], cloves start appearing with greater regularity in Buddhist esoteric sources. This likely reflects an increased circulation in regional markets, both in China and in India, the latter where cloves were primarily known as *lavaṅga*, among several other names.[1578]

It is worth noting that *S. aromaticum* trees were not likely cultivated in medieval China (or what is today northern Vietnam), despite the numerous comments of medieval authors, such as we see in Hong Chu's entry above where the *Newly Revised Materia Medica* reports clove trees as growing in the Chinese far south. There is a general consensus in modern scholarship that *S. aromaticum* trees were never cultivated outside of the Moluccas until the modern colonial period. Consequently, Roderich Ptak suggests that true cloves were confused in China with dried cassia buds which have a similar smell.[1579]

It is also worth briefly remarking on the history of cloves in India since it has relevance to Indonesian maritime trade and the introduction of cloves into China. The term *lavaṅga* is often reported as occurring in works such as the *Rāmāyaṇa* and *Caraka Saṃhitā*, texts with long histories of recension, but which are nevertheless commonly cited as evidence for the early importation of Moluccan cloves into the Indian subcontinent sometime before

[1577] QMYS:52.111.1 ("Recipe for Blending Scented Lotion" 合香澤法), QMYS:52.121.1 ("Recipe for Blending Face Cream" 合面脂法), and QMYS:52.221.1 ("Recipe for Making Scented Powder" 作香粉法), respectively.
[1578] For discussion on the Sanskrit synonyms for cloves, see Thomas J. Zumbroich, "From Mouth Fresheners to Erotic Perfumes: The Evolving Socio-Cultural Significance of Nutmeg, Mace and Cloves in South Asia," *eJournal of Indian Medicine* 5 (2012): 48.
[1579] Roderich Ptak, "China and the Trade in Cloves, Circa 960–1435," *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 113, no. 1 (1993): 3; cf. Schafer, *Golden Peaches*, 171 (who thinks clove trees were cultivated in medieval Vietnam); cf. R. A. Donkin, *Between East and West: The Moluccas and the Traffic in Spices up to the Arrival of Europeans* (Philadelphia: American Philosophical Society, 2003), 53 (who thinks clove trees were cultivated in medieval India). For other Chinese references claiming cloves were produced in China, see HC#11b.

the common era.[1580] Consequently, it has become commonplace to claim that *lavaṅga* derived not from an early Dravidian or proto-Indo-Aryan term, but had origins in an Austro-Asiatic or Austronesian language and more specifically from early Malay trade jargon for the clove: **labaŋ*, "nail."[1581]

Yamada Kentarō, citing the earlier work of Okamoto Ryōchu, has taken a different view, suggesting that *lavaṅga* did not refer to cloves in the oldest Sanskrit sources, but to the similarly eugenol-scented flower buds of the native *Cinnamomum* "cinnamon" trees – the same conflation apparently made by the Chinese with native cassia buds.[1582] According to Yamada's theory, when early South Indians migrated across the Bay of Bengal into present-day Indonesia, they named the more potent Moluccan cloves after their native cinnamon blossoms.[1583] (Yamada offers a similar explanation for the early appearance of *karpūra*, camphor, in Sanskrit sources [HC#80]). On one hand, this theory finds minimal support in the fact that relevant terminology in Malay and some Dravidian languages of South India can refer to both cloves and cinnamon.[1584] Yet, on another hand, outside of Yamada's speculations, there is no unambiguous textual evidence showing that Sanskrit *lavaṅga* ever referred to the cinnamon tree or its products, nor do any of the Sanskrit synonyms for cinnamon also refer to cloves.[1585]

[1580] See Singh and Singh, "Impact of Historical Studies," 228; Madhi, "Some Austronesian Maverick Protoforms," 188; Hoogervorst , "Southeast Asia," 175, 178; Yamada, *Tōzai kōyaku shi*, 90. Notably, R.A. Donkin points to a problem in locating cloves in Vālmīki's *Rāmāyaṇa*, a point we will return to below, see Donkin, *Between East and* West, 73n.9.

[1581] See the summary of these issues in Zumbroich, "From Mouth Fresheners to Erotic Perfumes," 49–53; Donkin, *Between East and* West, 20–22, 54–55, 112–113 and sources cited therein.

[1582] Yamada believes the early *Rāmāyaṇa* citation in particular to refer to the flowers and fruit of the South Indian cinnamon tree, see Yamada, *Tōzai kōyaku shi*, 90–91.

[1583] Yamada, *Tōzai kōyaku shi*, 90–94; Yamada, *Tōa kōryō shi kenkyū*, 321, 426–27; see also the similar claims in Singh and Singh, "Impact of Historical Studies," 228–29.

[1584] Madhi, "Some Austronesian Maverick Protoforms," 194–95; Hoogervorst , "Southeast Asia," 178, 178n.48; Zumbroich, "From Mouth Fresheners to Erotic Perfumes," 51.

[1585] For comment on this latter point, see Zumbroich, "From Mouth Fresheners to Erotic Perfumes," 52n.62.

Based on more extensive historico-phonological evidence, Waruno Mahdi has reasserted that *lavaṅga* is most likely a foreign loan term deriving from **labaŋ* and reflecting the Malay *buŋa lawaŋ*, "flower nail."[1586] Such a view is also based on a more generous perspective of pre-historic Malay seamanship and early shipbuilding expertise, as well as a belief in an early and robust Malay-initiated maritime trade with India.

But how early are we to assume such trade in cloves occurred? Unfortunately, Mahdi partly bases his arguments on the faulty belief that cloves were assuredly known to the Chinese two or three centuries before the common era, thus laying the speculative foundation for an equally early trade with India centuries before the common era. Moreover, Mahdi presumes a reputed citation to *lavaṅga* in the *Rāmāyaṇa* can be reliably traced to "before the first century BC."[1587] What has gone unnoticed by Mahdi, as well as numerous other scholars including Yamada, is that *lavaṅga* does not appear in Vālmīki's *Rāmāyaṇa* or any of its Sanskrit recensions. Thomas Zumbroich has demonstrated that citations to cloves in the "*Rāmāyaṇa*" refer only to the Old Javanese *Rāmāyaṇa Kakawin*, dating to no earlier than the ninth century.[1588] The earliest Indic citations to *lavaṅga* now may fall to the *Caraka Saṃhitā*, a work that was originally compiled in the first or second centuries, but which shows clear signs of redaction through the fifth century.[1589] Consequently, these *Caraka Saṃhitā* passages may be roughly contemporaneous with the writings of Kālidāsa (fl. ca. 400), who

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[1586] Madhi, "Some Austronesian Maverick Protoforms," 188–89, 214n.87, 215n.92; see also Hoogervorst , "Southeast Asia," 174–180. An unknown intermediary Dravadian/Tamil term is also supposed. Mahdi argues that the application of the Malay word for cloves to cinnamon is due to a homophonous local word, *lawan*, meaning "skin, hide, bark," see Madhi, "Some Austronesian Maverick Protoforms," 193–95. This has led to the Malay compound *kulit lawaŋ*, "bark nail," which refers to the native *Cinnamomum culitlawan* and *C. iners*.
[1587] Madhi, "Some Austronesian Maverick Protoforms," 188; see also Hoogervorst , "Southeast Asia," 175.
[1588] Zumbroich, "From Mouth Fresheners to Erotic Perfumes," 49, 49n.46, 58n.74.
[1589] See comments in Wolters, *Indonesian Commerce*, 66; McHugh, *Sandalwood and Carrion*, 263n.52. The Bower manuscript, from the third or fourth century, predates the received *Caraka Saṃhitā* and in spite of an early mistranslation into English and misprint in the published index, this work contains no reference to cloves, see Zumbroich, "From Mouth Fresheners to Erotic Perfumes," 64, 64n.104.

claims *lavaṅga* originated overseas, from *dvīpāntara*, "the other islands."[1590] This detail clarifies the meaning of *lavaṅga* as Moluccan cloves while also shedding further doubt on Yamada's theory that the term originally referred to cinnamon blossoms. If we accept a later window in regards to the introduction of cloves into India, certainly after the start of the common era and possibly as late as the fourth or fifth century, we can also see why cloves are not found in early Chinese translations of Buddhist texts, appearing only around the turn of the fifth century, such as with Saṃghadeva's translation of the *Madhyamāgama*.

Moreover, it has been established that cloves are absent from the first century Greco-Roman merchant handbook known as the *Periplus Maris Erythraei*, suggesting that if they were imported into India they did not make the journey further westward with other Indian products such as gum guggul [HC#6], and saffron [HC#7], spikenard [HC#19], and costus root.[1591] Equally, the commonplace belief that the early Romans knew of the clove under the name *caryophyllon* is debated in some scholarly circles as the description offered by Pliny leaves room for doubt that he had the flower bud of the *S. aromaticum* in mind.[1592] Perhaps an all too conservative stance would argue that the first clear description of cloves in the West appears only with the Byzantine Greeks in the sixth century.[1593] Yet, Byzantine physicians seem to have been the first in the West to document Indonesian-sourced camphor,

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[1590] Wolters, *Indonesian Commerce*, 66.
[1591] To account for such an omission, it has been suggested cloves were included under the name *aromata*, see Donkin, *Between East and* West, 111–12; see also comments in Wolters *Indonesian Commerce*, 67–68, 281–82.n28.
[1592] For the curious description of the pepper-seed like *caryophyllum* said to *grow* in India, see Hoogervorst, "Southeast Asia," 175–76; Donkin, *Between East and* West, 111. In contrast, Thomas Zumbroich views Pliny's description as "overall compatible with actual cloves," Zumbroich, "From Mouth Fresheners to Erotic Perfumes," 53–54. Zumbroich's interpretation is partly guided by his view that *caryophyllum* derives from a Dravidian term reflecting Tamil *karāmpu* which, moreover, he sees as entirely of Dravidian origin. Tom Hoogervorst, on the other hand, believes that *karāmpu* and South Asian cognates do not predate the pre-colonial period and might be derived from the Portuguese *cravo*, "clove," Hoogervorst, "Southeast Asia," 176.
[1593] For comments pushing the arrival of the clove into the sixth and seventh centuries, see Wolters, *Indonesian Commerce*, 67–68, 281–82n.28; see also Donkin, *Between East and* West, 112.

thus it might be the case that cloves and camphor were relatively late articles of westward maritime commerce, possibly only arriving in sizable measure a few centuries into the common era.[1594]

All taken into consideration, textual citations to cloves may first appear in Chinese sources of the mid-to-late second century and early-to-mid third century, despite frequent claims they are attested earlier elsewhere. Regardless of speculating on a birds-eye-view of early clove trade, it should be underscored that Moluccan cloves and Mediterranean storax are two of the oldest identifiable supra-regional aromatics introduced into China, arguably in circulation during Eastern Han and possibly aided by the powerful Shi family of the far south.

[1594] Complicating this picture is the reputed archaeobotanical discovery of a clove in a Syrian Bronze Age site at Terqa, dated to the Khana period (1750–1550 BCE). There is considerable doubt this identification is correct or, moreover, that if it is correct how such an isolated, "maverick" finding could reliably inform us about early Indonesian maritime commerce, see comments in Hoogervorst, "Southeast Asia," 176; Zumbroich, "From Mouth Fresheners to Erotic Perfumes," 55, 55n.69.

9) Xunlu Aromatic (frankincense) 薰陸香[1595]

[9a] The *Treatise on the Guang Region*[1596] states, "It grows in the Southern Seas[1597]."

[1595] The origin of the earliest Chinese name for frankincense, *xunlu* 薰陸 (or *xun$_1$lu* 熏陸), has caused considerable debate. Friedrich Hirth argued *xunlu* was a transcription of the Arabic *kundru*, or possibly the Indian form *kunduru,* see Hirth and Rockhill, *Chau Ju-Kua*, 196n.1; repeated later by Schottenhammer, "Xiangyao," 130. This was subsequently rejected by Pelliot who claimed *xunlu* was a fully indigenous term that subtly referenced the native fragrant plant *xun*$_1$ 薰 (sweet basil), an argument later accepted by Laufer, see Pelliot, "Chau Ju-kua," 475–77; Laufer, *Sino-Iranica*, 470n.3. More recently, Haw has suggested that *xunlu* is a hybrid transcription for the Sanskrit *kundurūka*, where the final graph *lu*, Middle Chinese **ljuk* and Old Chinese **ruk*, approximated the final -k sound. While *xun*$_1$, which is also related to *xun*$_1$ 熏, "to smoke," reflected the meaning and use of *kundurūka* as a type of incense, see Haw, "Storax," 85–86. This analysis follows from Pelliot's older critique that *xun*, Middle Chinese **xjuən* and Old Chinese **hwən*, could not have reproduced the initial plosive k- sound of *kundru*/*kunduru*. It is worth noting the entire name Chinese name for frankincense can also be feasibly translated. Pelliot, by way of one example, suggested "parfum sec de [la plante] *xun*," giving us, "the dry scent of the *xun* plant," see Pelliot, "Chau Ju-kua," 477; cf. Wolters, *Indonesian Commerce*, 295n.69 (who notes Pelliot may have reassessed his view later). I would also note that *xun* (with the plant radical) and *xun*$_1$ (without the plant radical) were frequently substituted for one another, and thus one could also plausibly suggest "Scenting the Terrain Aromatic" as a translation. Offering a different perspective, Yamada Kentarō notes that Japanese Buddhists of the twelfth century who compiled works such as the *Digest of Aromatics Essentials* (*Kōyōshō* 香要抄) and the *Digest of Aromatic Medicine* (*Kōyakushō* 香薬抄) provided different transcriptions for frankincense, such as *kuntoro* 君杜噜 (Ch. *juntulu*). Yamada notes that both 薰 and 君 are pronounced as *kun* in Japanese, thus bearing a close similarity to *kunduru*. This leads Yamada to believe, *pace* Pelliot, that *xunlu* better reflected a transcription, see Yamada, *Tōa kōryō shi kenkyū*, 93–94. Not noted by Yamada, however, is that the term *juntulu* 君杜噜 has a *locus classicus* in the *Miscellaneous Collection of Dhāraṇī*, a work now dated to the first half of the sixth century, see T901:876b08. Importantly, an interlinear gloss for *juntulu* is provided as Xunlu Aromatic, proving that *xunlu* was viewed as a suitable native term to define a foreign word. Consequently, *xunlu* was *not* viewed as a transcription itself in the medieval period, but as a commonly understood term that could function as a gloss for a transcription. Finally, it should also be noted that *juntulu* was miscopied the mid-twelfth century Buddhist dictionary as *tulu* 杜噜, an error that was subsequently recorded in the *Systematic Materia Medica*, see T2131:1104c12 and BCGM:2.1954 [薰陸香/釋名]. This gave rise to much of the confusion, speculation, and debate between the scholars above, see Hirth and Rockhill, *Chau Ju-Kua*, 195; Pelliot, "Chau Ju-kua," 478; Laufer, *Sino-Iranica*, 470; Yamada, *Tōa kōryō shi kenkyū*, 90–92. Importantly, *tulu* should *not* be treated as a truncation of as *sudulujia* 窣堵魯迦, or *turuṣka*, as Pelliot cautiously proposed, see Pelliot, "Chau Ju-kua," 479.

[1596] The *Treatise on the Guang Region* (*Guang zhi* 廣志) is a lost two *juan* gazetteer written by Guo Yigong 郭義恭 (d.u.) of the Northern Wei. Widely cited in medieval encyclopedia, materia medica, and collectanea, this is among the earliest works describing the southern regions of Lingnan 嶺南 (also called Nanzhou 南州), comprising present-day Guangdong, Guangxi, Hainan, and northern Vietnam, see Hua, Buell, and Unschuld, *Dictionary of the Ben Cao Gang Mu*, 201, 203. Approximately two dozen imported aromatics can be identified among its passages preserved in various works, suggesting Guo Yigong was very attentive to the trade in aromatics in the early medieval period. Scholars since the Yuan have ascribed his work to the Jin (265–420), but Sugimoto Naojiro pushed the text's compilation between 420 and 520, see the acceptance of Sugimoto's work in Wolters, *Indonesian Commerce*, 87–88; Ma, "Nan-Fang Ts'ao-Mu Chuang," 230n.42; cf. Zheng et al., *Dictionary of the Ben Cao Gang Mu*, 157, 162 (placing the work in the Jin). More recently, Wang Lihua has refined these dates, placing the *Treatise on the Guang Region* between 420 and 480 and further arguing the author, Guo Yigong, lived in the north under the Northern Wei, see Wang Lihua, "Guang zhi chengshi niandai kao," *Gujin nongye* 3 (1995): 51–58.

[1597] Frankincense was not known to originate in the Southern Seas, but from the Western Regions. The *Imperial Readings of the Taiping Era* quotes this passage as saying frankincense grows in Jiaozhou, which is equally curious, see TPYL:8.982.861; see also my comments to this entry.

[9b] Furthermore, the *Annotations on the Methods of Seclusion*[1598] state, "This is *Luo* Aromatic[1599]."

[9c] The *Materia Medica of Overseas Drugs* states, "Its taste is uniform and warm. It is non-toxic. It is a treatment for clarifying humans and spirits[1600]. Another name for this aromatic tree is Horse Tail. The aromatic is the bark of the tree, which is scaly and segmented. If it is picked it will regrow."[1601]

[9d] The annotations to the *Tang Materia Medica* state, "It is exported from India and Chanyu[1602]. It resembles the resin of the liquidambar [HC#33]. It is yellowish white in color. The Indian kind is white while the Chanyu kind has green colored striations and its fragrance is not very strong. Its [nature] is slightly warm. It treats hidden corpse[1603] and malign *qi*. It cures poison swelling caused by winds and sweat and malign sores."

[9a] 廣志云：生南海。[1604]

[9b] 又僻方注曰：即羅香也。[1605]

[9c] 海藥本草云：味平溫，無毒，主清人神。其香樹一名馬尾，香是不[1606]皮鱗甲，採

[1598] I have been unable to identify this text.
[1599] I have been unable to identify this substance.
[1600] I have been unable to identify this condition.
[1601] The claim by the *Materia Medica of Overseas Drugs*, as cited in the sixteenth century *Systematic Materia Medica*, that frankincense was the bark of a tree is unique (if not simply a copyist error), see BCGM:2.1954 [薰陸香/釋名]. Frankincense is a naturally occurring resinous exudate that collects on top of the bark, a phenomenon that might give the appearance of scales of bark "regrowing."
[1602] Chanyu 單于 was principally known in medieval Chinese sources as the title for the leader, later known as the khan, of the Xiongnu confederacy. But this nomenclature was adopted for the name of a protectorate in the early Tang, located around present-day Ordos in Mongolia, Victor Cunrui Xiong, *Historical Dictionary of Medieval China*, 2nd ed. (New York: Rowman & Littlefield, 2017), 88–89.
[1603] Illness with heart pain and irregular panting over a prolonged duration, Zhang and Unschuld, *Dictionary of the Ben Cao Gang Mu*, 177.
[1604] Cf. TPYL:8.982.861; cf. BCGM:2.1954 [薰陸香/集解]; cf. Yamada, *Tōa kōryō shi kenkyū*, 88. In citing the *Treatise on the Guang Region*, the *Imperial Readings of the Taiping Era* cites a *jiliu* 寄六 (or *xunliu* 薰六), the former of which remains a *hapax legomenon*. (A similar variant, *xun₁liu* 熏六 is encountered at T1420: 968b12.)
[1605] I have been unable to identify a parallel for this passage.
[1606] Read 不 as 樹, following BCGM:2.1954 [薰陸香/集解]

之復生。[1607]

[9d] 又唐本草注云：出天竺國及邯鄲[1608]，似楓松脂[1609]，黃白色。天竺者多[1610]白，邯祁[1611]者夾綠色，香不甚烈。微溫。主伏尸，惡氣，療風水腫毒，惡瘡。[1612]

[COMMENTS] Frankincense, classically known in the West as olibanum, is a pale yellow or golden colored oleogum resin extracted from several species of the *Boswellia* tree that grow in parts of South Asia, the Arabian Peninsula, and eastern Africa.[1613] The *Boswellia sacra* (syn. *B. carteri*), native to the southern Arabian Peninsula (Hadhramaut), the *B. frereana*, native to Somaliland on the Horn of Africa, and the *B. papyrifera* native to the regions around Sudan are generally considered the principal sources for Biblical frankincense and the high-value products of later Roman commerce.[1614] The *B. serrata* (syns. *B. balsamifera*, *B. thurifera*, *B. glabra*), which grows in and around the Punjāb region, also produces "Indian frankincense," an oleogum resin typically known in Sanskrit as *kunduru* or *kundurūka*, and

[1607] Cf. BCGM:2.1954 [薰陸香/釋名, 集解, 氣味, 主治]. According to the *Systematic Materia Media*, the phrase "clarifying humans and spirits" does not belong under this entry; it falls under the treatments for aloeswood, see BCGM:2.1939 [沉香/主治].
[1608] Read 邯鄲 as 單于, following XXBC:12.314 and BCGM:2.1954 [薰陸香/集解].
[1609] Read 楓松脂 as 白膠, following XXBC:12.314 and BCGM:2.1954 [薰陸香/集解].
[1610] Read 多 as 色, following BCGM:2.1954 [薰陸香/集解].
[1611] Read 邯鄲 as 單于, following XXBC:12.314 and BCGM:2.1954 [薰陸香/集解].
[1612] Cf. XXBC:12.313–314, cf. BCGM:2.1954–1955 [薰陸香/集解, 氣味, 主治]. The received version of the *Newly Revised Materia Medica* does not distinguish between frankincense from India and Chanyu, but the relevant passage in the *Systematic Materia Medica* does make this distinction. Moreover, the received version of the *Newly Revised Materia Medica* and the relevant passage in the *Systematic Materia Media* do not mention malign sores.
[1613] The Latin *olibanum* is related to the Arabic (*al-*)*lubān* and the Hebrew *lebōnāh*, meaning "white." The English term frankincense derives from the Old French *franc encens*, meaning "pure incense."
[1614] The are several other *Boswellia* spp. that exude a fragrant resin, although these have traditionally held less commercial importance, see Howes, "Age-Old Resins," 312 and Groom, "The Frankincense Region." For a map depicting the medieval sources of frankincense known to the Chinese, see Wheatley, "Geographical Notes," 46.

possibly *turuṣka*, "the gum of the Türks."[1615] Frankincense has long been collected by using a notching method, or the process of slashing the tree's bark and causing it to release a thin milky fluid that thickens upon contact with the air.[1616] The semi-solid globules are called "tears," so named for their shape. Good quality frankincense has an odor that is almost saccharine sweet, with strong hints of lemon and pine.

In spite of the well-established trade of frankincense along the so-called Incense Routes spanning from the southern Arabian coast to Mediterranean and Indian ports, the earliest Chinese contacts with Central Asia and Western Asia do not report encountering frankincense.[1617] Nevertheless, one of the most tantalizing Chinese archaeobotanical discoveries attesting to early supra-regional trade in aromatics involves the potential recovery this famed aromatic resin. The tomb of King Zhao Mie 趙昧 of Nanyue (r. 137–122 BCE), discovered in 1983 in Guangzhou, revealed a stunning display of artifacts that not only spoke to the kingdom's close relationship with the indigenous peoples of the far south but also the Western Han empire to the north. It also provides evidence for contact with regions much further west. Among the finds in the Nanyue tomb include a round silver repoussé basin embellished with designs resembling those of Western Asia, five ivory tusks identified possibly as coming from African elephants, and a lacquered box containing twenty-six grams of a hard golden-colored substance identified as a tree resin.[1618] According to lead

[1615] For more on the alternate identity of *turuṣka* as storax, see my comments to *turuṣka* at HC#76. It is sometimes claimed Indian frankincense has a distinct odor from Arabian frankincense, closer to that of mastic, which was sometimes used as a substitute for frankincense, see Wolters, "Po-Ssŭ Pine Trees," 330–31; Wolters, *Indonesian Commerce*, 103.
[1616] Howes, "Age-Old Resins," 310–12; Gus W. Van Beek, "Frankincense and Myrrh," *The Biblical Archaeologist* 23, no. 3 (1960): 72.
[1617] The first century *Periplus Maris Erythraei* reports the exportation of frankincense from Somalia and the Arabian Peninsula, see Casson, *Periplus*, 16, 57, 67–73, 119, 122. 162.
[1618] Guangzhou shi wenwu guanli weiyuanhui, *Nanyue wang mo*, Vol. 1, 138–39 (elephant tusk; item C254-1); 141, (resin; item 223), 209–10 (silver basin; item D2). Based on size and shape, it is believed the tusks came from a male African elephant, with the largest measuring 126 cm in length, Guangzhou shi wenwu guanli

archaeologist Mai Yinghao 麥英豪 (1929–2016), the small pellets resembled tears of frankincense, but as he reports, scientific testing performed on the material proved inconclusive as to its identity.[1619] Regardless of the tempered stance by Mai, some reports on the tomb of the king of Nanyue flatly proclaim Arabian frankincense was discovered among its cache of ancient goods.[1620] Recent research on archaeologically recovered frankincense in other parts of the world have helped to develop more precise scientific techniques for testing chemical constituents of archaeobotanical remnants.[1621] As far as I am aware, these newer techniques have yet to be performed on the samples recovered from the Nanyue tomb.

The earliest Chinese textual evidence for frankincense comes in the third century, a few decades the fall of the Han (claims of a third century BCE attestation are in error).[1622] The first account is found in the mid-third century *Abridged Account of Wei* which lists

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weiyuanhui, 466–67. The excavation report notes, however, the tusks were splintered into many small fragments and had to be loosely reconstructed before taking measurements. Given the largest tusk is still within the approximate size range of Asian elephant tusks, as shown in the relevant discussion and analysis in the archaeological report, I believe the identification as "African ivory" should be treated as speculative. Moreover, the silver basin was originally reported as being a foreign import, but is now thought to be the work of Chinese craftsmen, albeit inspired by a foreign model, see Rawson, "Eternal Palaces of the Western Han," 27–28.

[1619] Mai Yinghao, "Xianggang Nanyue wang mo fanying de zhu wenti," *Lingnan wenshi* 2 (1987): 23–39; also noted in Milburn, "Aromas," 447. The official archaeological report provides the result of a Fourier transform infrared (FTIR) spectroscopy performed on the recovered material as well as on two modern samples of frankincense and pine resin. When compared, the spectrum profile of the recovered material appears more similar to modern frankincense than pine resin, but the profiles were not entirely symmetrical, see Guangzhou shi wenwu guanli weiyuanhui, *Nanyue wang mo*, Vol. 1, 473–75.

[1620] See, for example, Zhao, "Xiang pu," 48–49; Jao and Vandermeersch, "Les relations entre la Chine et le monde iranien," 228.

[1621] The testing involves an improved gas chromatography–mass spectrometry (GC–MS) method, see Carole Mathe et al., "Characterization of Archaeological Frankincense by Gas Chromatography–Mass Spectrometry," *Journal of Chromatography A* 1023, no. 2 (2004): 277–85. For specific comments on the limits of Fourier transform infrared (FTIR) spectroscopy and the successful application of gas chromatography–mass spectrometry (GC–MS) testing on frankincense recovered from a Song-era shipwreck, see Jiang Jianrong, "Quanzhou wan Song dai haichuan chutu bufen xiangliao de kexue yanjiu, " (Ph.D. dissertation, Beijing keji daxue, 2021), 9–10.

[1622] Peter Boodberg, without providing a reference, claims the term *xunlu* can be traced back to the third century BCE, see Peter A. Boodberg, "Some Proleptical Remarks on The Evolution of Archaic Chinese," *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 2, no. 3/4 (1937): 359n.60. This error has been repeated by later scholars, see e.g., Schafer, *Golden Peaches*, 170; Donkin, *Dragon's Brain*, 9.

frankincense as one of the many exports of the Roman empire.[1623] The *Treatise on the Guang Region*, a lost work that dates to the mid-fifth century, unexpectedly proclaims that frankincense is exported from Jiaozhou in the south, perhaps only referring to the transshipment from the provincial entrepôt, before retelling how the product first comes to market in Rome. The gazetteer explains that harvesters on the coasts of the old Roman empire collect the resin and exchange it with merchants for grain. On the chance no merchants arrive to engage in trade, the harvesters would reportedly eat the frankincense.[1624] As preserved in Daoshi's catalogue of aromatics, the *Prospect of the Plants and Products of the Southern Regions* (*Nanfang caowu zhuang* 南方草物狀), attributed to the unknown Xu Zhong 徐衷 (before 466), relates the following similar story:

> Frankincense is exported from the Roman empire. It is said that along the beaches a large tree naturally grows in the sand. During the summer, the tree resin flow out on top of the sand where foreigners collect it and sell it to other people.[1625]
> 薰陸香出大秦國。云在海邊。自有大樹生於沙中。盛夏時樹膠流出沙上。夷人採取賣與人。

Immediately following this citation, Daoshi notes this passage is similar to that of the *Treatise on Strange Things of the Southern Regions*, compiled by Wan Zhen in the mid-to-late third century, but adds the detail that frankincense resin resembles peach gum

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[1623] SGZ:30.861; also see T2122:573b13; TPYL:8.982.861.
[1624] 出交州。又大秦海邊人，彩與賈人易穀。若無賈人，取食之。TPYL:8.982.861. Yamada also suggests that Jiaozhou may be read as a regional entrepôt, see Yamada, *Tōa kōryō shi kenkyū*, 85. Wolters suggests the same, noting that Sri Lanka too was confused for a producer of frankincense, see Wolters, *Indonesian Commerce*, 99.
[1625] T2122:573b13–16; cf. TPYL:8.982.861 (which cites the text as the *Prospect of the Plants and Trees of the Southern Regions*); cf. trans. Li, *Fourth Century Flora*, 79–80. Ma Toi-Loi dates the composition of the *Prospect of the Plants and Products of the Southern Regions* between 281 and 466, see Ma, "Nan-Fang Ts'ao-Mu Chuang," 226.

(*taojiao*).[1626] Because of Daoshi's brief note, we know that Wan Zhen's account is the earliest Chinese source describing how frankincense is harvested.

These early descriptions match extraordinarily well with what Romans would have known about frankincense. For one, the commercial product was imported into the empire from coastal regions around the southern Arabian Peninsula and the Horn of Africa. And while *Boswellia* trees do not grow on coastal beaches, they do grow in arid rocky terrains with sparse vegetation. Furthermore, the description of resin flowing to the ground is appropriate to the use of a notching method that causes resin to secrete from the bark. Moreover, since rain was known to spoil the fragrant tree exudate, the collection of frankincense was conducted in the dry season, a period that started in the late spring and continued through summer, as is noted above.[1627] Lastly, in spite of the fact that the Chinese may have erroneously believed frankincense was produced around the Mediterranean, they were also clearly aware that Romans were middlemen who traded with local harvesters for the valuable resin which, like the gum from a peach tree, was a golden color. Yamada Kentarō has suggested the belief about eating frankincense was likely a conflation with a similarly scented material that was sometimes used as a frankincense substitute, mastic (*Pistacia lentiscus*), which was used as a breath freshener.[1628]

Very similar to storax [HC#5], knowledge of frankincense was also accompanied by more fanciful tales about its origin. In a passage claimed to have been taken from the fourth

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[1626] T2122:573b1.16. As noted by Ma Tai-Loi, since the *Imperial Readings of the Taiping Era* also cites this annotation by Daoshi, we can be certain the passage on frankincense was erroneously attributed to the *Prospect of the Plants and Trees of the Southern Regions*, see Ma, "Nan-Fang Ts'ao-Mu Chuang," 236–37. Yamada, who did not consult Buddhist sources, attributes the citation to the editors of the Song encyclopedia, see Yamada, *Tōa kōryō shi kenkyū*, 84. The origin of the note is also missed in Wolters, *Indonesian Commerce*, 293n.39.

[1627] Howes, "Age-Old Resins," 311; Van Beek, "Frankincense and Myrrh," 72.

[1628] Yamada, Tōa kōryō shi kenkyū, 85–86. Notably, the term mastic and the English word masticate are related.

century *Master who Embraces Simplicity* (*Baopuzi* 抱樸子; DZ1185) by Ge Hong, the frankincense collectors are also said to fight against a fierce *jie*-beast 猲 who proves almost impossible to injure or kill.[1629] Such stories of bravery, undoubtedly helped drive interest in the product and, perhaps, justify higher prices. These stories also bolstered beliefs about the esoteric power of the exotic item, which for some was connected to native Chinese beliefs about the miraculous powers of pine resin. Citing the *Canon of Methods* (*Dian shu* 典術), a work of the Liu Song, Daoshi relates how frankincense could be used in a similar way as to the "Method of Pine Resin" (*Songzhi fa* 松脂法) by Tao Hongjing, which when ingested over a long duration could allow a person to penetrate into the realm of the spirits.[1630] Moreover, frankincense is also noted in the "Leizichang's Method for Refining Sesame Paste" (*Leizichang lian huma gao fang* 樂子長鍊胡麻膏方) in the *Array of the Five Talisman Numinous Treasures of the Most High* (*Taishang lingbao wufu xu* 太上靈寶五符序; DZ388), a text compiled during the Eastern Jin in southeastern China.[1631] By mixing together sesame paste, water, frankincense, and aloeswood chips, and reducing this slurry down to a residue, one can ingest it with alcohol. After five hundred days, the person will be greeted by spirits and immortals. As with many secret recipes, the adept is warned against frivolously transmitting this method to others.[1632]

[1629] TPYL:8.982.861. This full passage is translated and discussed in Chapter 5, Section 7.
[1630] 如陶松脂法，長飲食之，令通神靈。T2122:573b1.16. The Method of Pine Resin is described at XXBC:12.302. This passage is noted in Wolters, *Indonesian Commerce*, 294n.51.
[1631] For more one this seminal work, see Schipper and Verellen, *The Taoist Canon*, 232–33 and Raz, *Emergence of Daoism*, 16, 148–65, and the numerous citations therein.
[1632] DZ388:2.24b–25a (reading *gao* 膏, "paste," as *humagao* 胡麻膏, "sesame paste," per the title of the method).

Despite the early circulation of stories about frankincense in China, and the proximity of frankincense producing trees in northern India, this famed resin appears rather infrequently in Chinese translations of Buddhist scriptures before the Sui Dynasty. The resin first appears in Dharmarakṣa's (230?–316) translation of the *Lotus Sutra of the True Dharma* (*Zhengfa hua jing* 正法華經; T263) from the tail end of the third century, using the same Chinese nomenclature for frankincense that was found in the *Abridged Account of Wei* and *Treatise on Strange Things of the Southern Regions*.[1633] It also appears in the *Great Dhāraṇī Spirit-Spell Spoken by the Seven Buddhas and Eight Bodhisattvas* (*Qi fo ba pusa suoshuo da tuoluoni shenzhou jing* 七佛八菩薩所說大陀羅尼神咒經; T1332), dated to the end of the fourth or early fifth century. Most curiously, this early esoteric work lists frankincense along with sandalwood [HC#4] and aloeswood [HC#3] as the "three types of famous incense" (*sanzhong mingxiang* 三種名香).[1634] Elsewhere, these three materials are treated as a group called "extraordinarily wonderful incense" (*shumiao xiang* 殊妙香).[1635] The old Buddhist pairing of sandalwood and aloeswood, appears to have been augmented through the addition of resinous frankincense.[1636] This triplet of frankincense, sandalwood, and aloeswood is also highlighted in the *Miscellaneous Collection of Dhāraṇī*, a text compiled in the first half of the sixth century.[1637] We might pause to wonder if such statements reflect a nascent growing

[1633] T263:120a15. It should be noted that the Zhi Qian's 支謙 (fl. 223–253) translation of the *Avadānaśataka* (*Zhuan ji baiyuan jin* 撰集百緣經; T200) in which frankincense appears is no longer ascribed to the early third century; for a list of texts now accepted as authentic Zhi Qian translations, see Nattier, *Guide*, 116–48, 177–78. For the citation of frankincense in the Chinese *Avadānaśataka*, see T200:204c09–11.
[1634] T1332:552b10 and 553b13–14. These three are also called "famous incense" at 552a08–09.
[1635] T1332:551c04.
[1636] Elsewhere, this text clearly preserves the older pairing, noting that one should burn black aloeswood with white sandalwood, see T1332:541a06, 543a29, and 545a19.
[1637] It appears many passages are copied over from the *Great Dhāraṇī Spirit-Spell Spoken by the Seven Buddhas and Eight Bodhisattvas*, see for example: T1336:593b24, 594b26–27, 593a22–23, and 592c18–19. Another passage describes how these three aromatics are to be burned in front of Buddhist images, see T1336:607b24.

Buddhist interest in frankincense during the fourth century, perhaps even "Indian frankincense" from the Punjāb region.

Notably, it is only in the early sixth century when frankincense starts appearing more frequently in surviving Chinese Buddhist translations. For example, in the *Sutra on the Names of Buddhas* (Foming jing 佛名經; T440) attributed to Bodhiruci (d. 527), we find frankincense mentioned along with sandalwood, aloeswood, *tagara* (valerian root?, HC#77), and *sujiantuo* 蘇犍陀 (*sugandha*?) as kinds of incense to be burned in front of a Buddha image during a rite of repentance.[1638] Furthermore, Jñānagupta's late sixth century *Sutra on the Spell of Five Thousand Five Hundred Buddha Names for Dispelling Obstructions and Extinguishing Sin* (*Wuqin wubai foming shenzhou chuzhang miezui jing* 五千五百佛名神呪除障滅罪經; T433) lists frankincense with aloeswood, *dulu* 妬路 (*turuṣka*? [HC#76]), gum guggul [HC#6], Ghost Armor Aromatic (*guijia xiang* 鬼甲香, onycha? [HC#35]), and several other ingredients for making an incense blend to burn in front of a *stūpa* for the *tathāgata*. After being dried in the sun and crushed into a powder, the ingredients are mixed with honey (and likely formed into pellets) and then rubbed with jasmine (*sumona* 酥摩那, S. *sumanā*) oil before being stored inside a stone vessel.[1639] Lastly, as a point of further comparison, while frankincense is listed as one of the nine ingredients for making the scented water used for the bathing the Buddha ceremony in the eight century, it is missing from the two earlier translations, one finished near the turn of the eight century (and possibly of older

[1638] T440.158c23–25.
[1639] T443.337c18–338a06. This process seems strikingly similar to the later medieval Chinese practice of cellaring blended incense compounds, see HC#145.

vintage), while the other dates sometime before the sixth century.[1640] Unlike gum guggul which was specifically prohibited for use by Buddhists in the *circa* third century *Bodhisattvabhūmi*, there is no readily apparent explanation as to why frankincense appears so infrequently in works previous to the sixth century, especially when it was regionally available. For whatever the case may be, it was soon adopted in works with an esoteric focus and incorporated into many blending recipes used for various religious rites.

In the early sixth century, Tao Hongjing reveals that frankincense was one among the six most prized ingredients for Chinese perfumers (contrast this to the exclusion of frankincense from Fan Ye's blending manual preface from the fifth century).[1641] As noted by Hong Chu [9d], by the seventh century, frankincense was known as an import from India and Chanyu, a protectorate in present-day Mongolia, which exported an inferior variety.[1642] We can speculate that the frankincense being supplied through India may have been from the *B. serrata* that grew around Punjāb, and which from the strict viewpoint of old Roman commerce would have been deemed a "false frankincense," but such considerations were apparently never concerns for the Chinese.[1643] When the pilgrim monk Xuanzang visited India in the seventh century, he reported seeing the tree that produces frankincense in the country of Aṭali, located about 2500 *li* (approx. 500 miles) north of the Arabian Sea, placing

[1640] T698.800b17. The later work, i.e. T697, is attributed to Maṇicinta (d. 721); the earliest, i.e. T696, has been attributed to Shengjian 聖堅 and Fajian 法堅 of the Western Qin, but which was considered an anonymous work in Sengyou's 僧祐 (445–518) catalogue of translated scriptures, see T2145:29a17.
[1641] XXBC:12.313. The list of six aromatics includes aloeswood, frankincense, cloves, patchouli, elemi, and liquidambar.
[1642] Frankincense is sometimes described as being greenish in color, thus the green kind from Chanyu need not be considered so abnormal, see Howes, "Age-Old Resins," 312; Van Beek, "Frankincense and Myrrh," 71; cf. Wolters, *Indonesian Commerce*, 296n.84 (who claims green is indictive of Indian frankincense). Of course, frankincense does not originate in Mongolia, so if we are to take this claim seriously the merchants of the north were re-exporting goods that, in all likelihood, originated in India.
[1643] For the potential adulteration and substitution with Indian frankincense and Indian myrrh (i.e. gum guggul), see Yamada, *Tōa kōryō shi kenkyū*, 89–90.

him squarely within the Punjāb region.[1644] The *Book of Sui*, however, notes frankincense as an export of the Persians, suggesting China was still receiving shipments of the Arabian or African variety.[1645]

Frankincense is included among the ingredients used in the balneotherapeutic ritual revealed by the goddess Sarasvatī in the *Sutra of Golden Light*, but it appears to have caused problems for both Chinese translations, one by Jñānagupta in the late sixth century and another by Yijing in the early eighth century. The current Sanskrit edition uses the term *śallakī* to indicate frankincense, which Yijing reasonably transcribes as *saluoji* 薩洛計, Middle Chinese **sa-lâk-kiei*, but then translates with the awkward Chi Resin (*chizhi* 叱脂), "shouting (?) resin."[1646] Outside of a copyist error, we might speculate that Yijing was envisioning the frankincense substitute, mastic, which could be chewed. It seems doubtful Jñānagupta attempted to render *śallakī*, but Catherine Ludvik has suggested he transcribed the underlying term as *aluosuo* 阿蘿娑, Middle Chinese **ʔâ-lâ-sâ*, and translated it as Decocted Aromatic (*jian xiang* 煎香), both of which make little sense as they stand now.[1647] Given that frankincense was known in both India and China at the time these two texts were

[1644] T2087.936b05, trans. Li, *Tang Dynasty Record*, 301.
[1645] SuiS:83.1857. Frankincense is listed with the aromatics saffron, storax, and costus root.
[1646] T665:435a06. For *śallakī*, see Monier-Williams, *A Sanskrit English Dictionary*, 1059. According to the dictionary entry, *śallakī* appears in the *Mahābhārata*, making the term relatively old. The variant *sallaki* also appears in Indic sources and sometimes it is presented as unsuitable for offering to the gods, see McHugh, *Sandalwood and Carrion*, 233–34.
[1647] T664:386c15 and Ludvik, *Sarasvatī*, 311. *Jian xiang* appears on several other occasions in the Chinese Buddhist canon, each time where its meaning is not readily apparent. One solution, although not seemingly suitable for above, is that *jian xiang* was an alternative for Jian Aromatic, a lesser quality of aloeswood [HC#22]; this substitution works, for example, at T946:173c16 (and is attested in Song records of tribute delegations, see e.g. Lin, *Songdai xiangyao*, 170). *Aluosuo* might be emended to *aluosuo* 阿羅娑 (S. *arasa*?) which is considered as a type of medicine (which is possibly decocted?), but I am unsure of the relationship to the *saluoji*/*śallakī*, see e.g., T278.778b16 and T2130.1052b14.

translated, *śallakī* may have been too obscure a terminology for the pair of medieval translators who may have been more accustomed to *kundurūka* or, possibly, *turuṣka*.[1648]

In contrast to its growing ritual use among medieval Buddhist, frankincense was one of the few exotic aromatics expressly forbidden by Daoist scripture. The *Scripture of the Moving Pearl* offers the following warning:

> The incense burned from foreign lands that is foul, poisonous, and acrid is called frankincense and onycha. These violate the prohibitions of the Dao. This incense is constantly used by the non-Perfected…Barbarian Incense is acrid and poisonous; the Perfected abhor it. Barbarian Incense is called frankincense.[1649]
> 燒異域穢臭毒惡辛烈之香，謂乳香，螺甲香。此犯道禁，非真人常修行之香也。…胡香辛烈毒惡，真人惡之。胡香謂乳香。

The passage begins by underscoring the anomalous nature of both frankincense and onycha [HC#35], casting them as foreign, foul and dangerous. While onycha is the product of marine mollusks and is often processed in special ways to reduce its foul odor before use in perfume blends, the Daoist proscription against frankincense more starkly reveals the social boundaries around smell. This point is reiterated when the text reports the alternative name of frankincense as Barbarian Incense, not only highlighting its foreign origin, but also making a claim about its denigrated status as non-Chinese, and therefore, non-Daoist. Similar points are raised in the *Materia Aromatica of Divine Immortals*:

> Common people often use frankincense to make offerings to Heaven. In regards to frankincense, some know it as Barbarian Incense while Shangdi and the Five Planetary Deities abhor its smell. Its scent is acrid, therefore it diffuses filth.[1650]
> 世人多以乳香供天，夫乳香者，一名胡香，上帝與五星惡聞者，蓋炁味辛烈，薰穢故也。

[1648] Elsewhere in Yijing's translation of the *Sutra of Golden Light*, a recipe for blended incense is listed with the ingredients gum guggul, sandalwood, camphor, *tagara*, and frankincense, the latter of which is translated as *xunlu*, see T665:430c17–18.
[1649] DZ839:11a.
[1650] DZ839:11b.

This passage also picks upon the rhetoric of the dangerous foreign incense, noting that Daoist stellar divinities are equally repulsed by the smell of frankincense. Indeed, the sharp, intense, and acrid smell of frankincense does not draw them near as fragrant incense should, but drives them away as the foul odor fills the air. Both of the above scriptural works are now lost and only short passages remain preserved in the *Various Accounts of the Essential Elements of the Three Caverns*.[1651] These passages are both listed under the heading of "Method for Penetrating to the Numinous Perfected with Incense" (*tong lingzhen xiang fa* 通靈真香法). Despite such clear warnings, frankincense does appear as an ingredient in some Daoist incense blends, including the "Recipe for Incense Beads that Merge with the Upper Prime" [HC#106].[1652]

In the late medieval period, frankincense emerged as one of the principal tribute items in state-level diplomatic relations with China. In the tenth and eleventh centuries, more than 7000 pounds of frankincense was delivered by tribute delegations from just Śrīvijaya and Champa, polities in maritime Southeast Asia which had to import frankincense from abroad.[1653] Khotan, located in the Tarim Basin, also offered regular tribute in frankincense, with one delegation reputedly bringing an astounding 130,000 pounds (100,000 *jin*) in November 1080. Unfortunately, due to an earlier imperial decree forbidding tributes of frankincense, the border officials had the envoy return home.[1654] A century later, the imperial

[1651] This text is traditionally treated as a product of the Tang, but I believe it was redacted up through the Song, see my comments concerning this issue at HC#1.
[1652] This prohibition against frankincense is sometimes restated elsewhere. For example, in a formula for making a decoction of five aromatics as listed in the *Great Lingbao Method of the Shangqing Heaven* (*Shangqing lingbao dafa* 上清靈寶大法; DZ1223), frankincense is forbidden, stating that it is "what Daoists avoid" 道家所忌。DZ1223:5.11b. For more on this work from the thirteenth century see, Schipper and Verellen, *The Taoist Canon*, 1024–28.
[1653] I am using the estimate provided by Bielenstein, *Diplomacy*, 96. For a list of the relevant delegations, see Bielenstein, 40–64; see also Lin, *Songdai xiangyao*, 168–86.
[1654] Bielenstein, *Diplomacy*, 311 (the decree was issued in January 1080); see also Lin, *Songdai xiangyao*, 187.

government attempted to sell its massive stockpiles of frankincense at set prices, thus triggering a so-called "Frankincense Rebellion" by southern merchants who saw the markets flooded with state goods.[1655] Consequently, tributes of the resin were irregularly suspended at the end of the twelfth century to help steady flagging markets.

In terms of nomenclature, starting around the eighth century the old name for frankincense, Xunlu Aromatic, was gradually replaced by Milky Aromatic [HC#13] in many Chinese sources (including, for example, the pair of Daoist scriptures discussed above). This was a rendering of the Arabic term for frankincense, (*al-*)*lubān*, "milk." This shift in nomenclature was mostly complete in non-religious sources by the thirteenth century, reflecting the growing dominance of Dashi Arab maritime trade in the eleventh and twelfth centuries. While a handful of Buddhist scriptures started to employ the new nomenclature in the late medieval period, there seems to have been an overwhelming preference for the older name that had been in use since the third century.

In time, a distinction emerged between Xunlu Aromatic, which might be read literally as "Scenting the Terrain Aromatic," and Milky Aromatic in Chinese medical sources. For example, in the *Classified Essentials of Materia Medica* from 1503, Milky Aromatic was defined as frankincense resin freshly secreted from tree wounds and clinging to the bark like dripping milk. In contrast, Xunlu Aromatic, possibly as a folk interpretation of the older nomenclature, is defined as frankincense resins that has fallen to the ground and has become mixed with the soil and gravel, i.e. the terrain, around the tree roots. This distinction is clearly depicted in the pair of accompanying illustrations: Milky Aromatic is shown as small clumps attached to the sides of the tree, while Xunlu Aromatic is shown through depicting a

[1655] For more on the "Frankincense Rebellion," see Sen, *Buddhism, Diplomacy, Trade*, 194–96 and sources cited therein.

frankincense collector with a hoe digging into the soil as the base of a tree and collection basket by his feet.[1656]

10) Zhan Sugar Aromatic (elemi) 詹糖香[1657]

The [*Tang*] *Materia Medica* states, "It is exported from Jin'an[1658], Cenzhou[1659], Jiao[zhou], Guang[zhou][1660] and further south. The tree resembles the orange [tree]. By decocting the branches and leaves one produces it [i.e., elemi]. It resembles sugar and is black. One often finds it mixed with bark and woodworm dirt. It is difficult to obtain the genuine and proper kind; only that which is pliable is good quality.

本草云：出晉安，岑州，及交，廣以南，樹似橘，煎枝葉為之，似糖而黑。多以其皮及蠹[1661]糞雜之，不[1662]得淳正[1663]者。惟軟乃[1664]佳。[1665]

[1656] The relevant text and images are available as part of the online digital collection of the Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin. The relevant items are found in Vol. 17, pp. 2321 (Xunlu Aromatic illustration: https://digital.staatsbibliothek-berlin.de/werkansicht?PPN=PPN3346157326&PHYSID=PHYS_2321&view=overview-toc&DMDID=DMDLOG_0031), 2325 (Milky Aromatic illustration: https://digital.staatsbibliothek-berlin.de/werkansicht?PPN=PPN3346157326&PHYSID=PHYS_2325&view=overview-toc&DMDID=DMDLOG_0031), and 2326 (textual description: https://digital.staatsbibliothek-berlin.de/werkansicht?PPN=PPN3346157326&PHYSID=PHYS_2326&view=overview-toc&DMDID=DMDLOG_0031).

[1657] The Chinese name combines the old northern Vietnamese name for the *Canarium* tree, *zhan* 詹, Middle Chinese **tśjäm*, and sugar, due to the aromatic's granular appearance, see BCGM:2.1963 [詹糖香/釋名]. Sometimes this name is written with the variant orthography *zhangtang* 詹唐.

[1658] A county in present-day Fujian, not far from the eastern coastline, see Hua, Buell, and Unschuld, *Dictionary of the Ben Cao Gang Mu*, 165.

[1659] An unknown region in China, Hua, Buell, and Unschuld, *Dictionary of the Ben Cao Gang Mu*, 70.

[1660] An administrative region covering present-day Guangdong and Guangxi, see Hua, Buell, and Unschuld, *Dictionary of the Ben Cao Gang Mu*, 118, 163.

[1661] Read 蠹 as 蠹蟲, following XXBC:12.314 and BCGM:2.1964 [詹糖香/集解].

[1662] Read 不 as 難, following XXBC:12.314 and BCGM:2.1964 [詹糖香/集解].

[1663] Read 正 as 澤, following XXBC:12.314.

[1664] Read 乃 as 為, following XXBC:12.314 and BCGM:2.1964 [詹糖香/集解].

[1665] Cf. XXBC:12.313–314; cf. BCGM:2.1964 [詹糖香/集解]. Tao Hongjing claims elemi was exported from Jin'an and Cenzhou, while the editors to the *Newly Revised Materia Medica* claim it was exported from Jiaozhou, Guangzhou, and further south. In addition, the *Newly Revised Materia Medica*, as preserved in the *Systematic Materia Medica*, claims that elemi trees grew in Jin'an.

[COMMENTS] Elemi is a generic term for a pale-yellow oleoresin from several genera in the Burseraceae "torchwood" family, but is particularly associated with the tropical evergreen *Canarium* genus that occurs throughout Asia.[1666] As noted in Hong Chu's entry above, the primary source of medieval elemi was the Chinese far south, including present-day Guangdong, Guangxi, Hainan, and northern Vietnam, regions where the *Canarium album, Canarium pimela*, and other species have partly overlapping distributions. In contrast to many of the other hardened resins discussed in *Materia Aromatica*, when fresh and of a good quality, elemi is soft and granular in texture, giving rise to its Chinese name as Zhan Sugar Aromatic (*zhantang xiang* 詹糖香). Elemi is also notable for its strong scent of turpentine and lemon.

The early history of elemi in China is unclear. It is more common for early medieval sources to highlight the *Canarium* tree as producing the Chinese olive (*ganlan* 橄欖) than as a source for a valuable oleoresin. For example, the *Treatise on the Guang Region*, the *Prospect of the Plants and Products of the Southern Regions*, the *Treatise on Nanyue*, and the *Treatise on Strange Sea and Land Creatures of Linhai* (*Linhai shuitu yiwu zhi* 臨海水土異物志), all cited in the *Essential Techniques for All People* of the early sixth century, discuss the *Canarium* tree and its edible fruit, but make no mention of its pliable, scented resin.[1667] In contrast, in what might be the earliest citation to elemi in Chinese sources, Fan Ye describes "Zhang Sugar" as "sticky and moist" in the surviving preface to his lost

[1666] In its most narrow sense, elemi refers to the oleoresin of the *Canarium luzonicum*, native to the Philippines; for more on the class of elemi oleoresins, see Howes, *Vegetable Gums and Resins*, 141–44; Langenheim, *Plant Resins*, 356–62.
[1667] QMYS:10.92.41.1–4. As description of the *Canarium* tree can also be found in the received *Prospect of the Plants and Trees of the Southern Regions*, see Li, *Fourth Century Flora*, 120–22.

blending manual of the mid-fifth century.[1668] Moreover, Tao Hongjing claims the pale-yellow oleoresin was recognized as one of the six most prized aromatics used by Chinese perfumers in the early sixth century.[1669] In the same period, the *History of the South* (*Nanshi* 南史) lists elemi as a tribute from the state of Panpan, located on the isthmus of the Malay Peninsula, in 532 along with Buddhist relics, images of *stūpas*, and leaves from the bodhi tree.[1670] Despite such accolades as a perfume and use as a state-level tribute gift, elemi is not often mentioned in Chinese historical sources previous to the seventh century.

The extraction of elemi from the *Canarium* tree is first described in the *Newly Revised Materia Medica* as cited by Hong Chu above. There are two perplexing issues with this passage, however. First, it is unexpected that this aromatic oleoresin, yellow in color, would be described as black. Second, this passage apparently describes a difficult decoction and reduction process to manufacture the elemi, yet a far simpler notching method would have been perfectly suitable, as is common with trees in the *Burseraceae* family that also produce frankincense and myrrh.[1671]

I believe these two claims may be related and viewing them as such can point us in the direction of a possible resolution. According to Edward Schafer, oleoresins from the *Canarium* species were prepared in Tang China as a varnish and for calking boats.[1672] In a description of this process from around the turn of the twentieth century, George A. Stuart

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[1668] SShu:69.1829; see also the Preface to Aromatics at HC#84.
[1669] XXBC:12.313. The list of six aromatics includes aloeswood, frankincense, cloves, patchouli, elemi, and liquidambar. Tao Hongjing claims that poor quality elemi was mixed with bits of bark and the excrement of insects. While he may have envisioned this as an adulteration by dishonest merchants or elemi collectors, the use of the notching method often involves the involuntary gathering of bark and detritus that become attached to the sticky oleoresin. Only a diligent cleansing process will yield a pure oleoresin product.
[1670] NS:78.68.1958; TPYL:7.787.338. For more on Panpan, see relevant footnote at HC#4b.
[1671] Cf. Schafer, *Golden Peaches*, 166 (who accepts this decoction process); cf. Bretschneider, *Botanican Sinicum*, Part 3, 467 (who mistakenly renders this passage from the *Newly Revised Materia Medica* as burning the twigs and leaves as incense).
[1672] Schafer, *Golden Peaches*, 165.

and Frederick P. Smith report that a lacquering varnish is prepared by mixing elemi with the leaves and bark of the tree, "producing a tarry mass." This was called *lantang* 欖糖, or Sugar of the Chinese Olive Tree.[1673] It appears this passage from the *Newly Revised Materia Medica* may be describing a very similar process for producing varnish by boiling the branches and leaves to render a black tacky substance.[1674] The best evidence for this is found in the *Records of the Strange from Lingbiao* (*Lingbiao luyi* 岭表錄異), compiled by the official Liu Xun 劉恂 (858–921). Importantly, this work notes the *Canarium* tree produces a "resin like peach gum," thus indicating its natural yellow color. Liu Xun then reports, "the people of the south collect [the resin] and mix it with bark and leaves to decoct them into a liquid and simmering it until it is like a black syrup; they call this Sugar of the Chinese Olive Tree and use it to plaster holes in boats."[1675]

It remains uncertain from these directions if elemi, when used as incense, was processed in the same manner that rendered a "black syrup" for sealing boat hulls. The illustration for Zhan Sugar Aromatic in the *Classified Essentials of Materia Medica* of the early sixteenth century clearly depicts two men gathering leaves from the top branches of a tree and filling a basin set atop a blazing furnace.[1676] There is no indication of tree resin being collected from incisions in the bark, giving the impression the aromatic was made just from the leaves and branches of the tree. This matches the description given in the *Newly Revised*

[1673] Stuart and Smith, *Chinese Materia Medica*, 90.
[1674] Edward Schafer offers a different explanation, He reports that while elemi is at first a white granular substance, it is turned black when made into incense by the addition of carbon, see Schafer, *Golden Peaches*, 166. This treats the passage not as a describing the extraction process, but also as part of a rendering process.
[1675] 有脂膏如桃膠，南人采取和皮葉煎汁，熬如黑餳。謂曰欖糖，用泥船隙。BCGM.
[1676] The image is available as part of the online digital collection of the Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin found here: https://digital.staatsbibliothek-berlin.de/werkansicht?PPN=PPN3346157326&PHYSID=PHYS_2334&view=overview-toc&DMDID=DMDLOG_0031. The image is found in Vol. 17, p. 2334.

Materia Medica and, subsequently, ignores the more detailed account in the *Records of the Strange from Lingbiao*.

Overall, judging from the extant textual records, elemi was not one of the more widely used aromatics, especially as incense.[1677] It is not, for example, cited as an ingredient in any of Hong Chu's blending recipes at the end of the *Materia Aromatica*. Nevertheless, a recent analysis of an archaeobotanical sample recovered from the Famen Temple pagoda crypt, last closed at the end of the ninth century, revealed the remains of *Canarium* resin.[1678] The powdered remnants were found in the outermost surviving container of the nested boxes holding the famous finger relic of the Buddha. The initial archaeological reports presumed the golden-yellow powder was frankincense [HC#9].[1679] The authors of this new analysis highlight the rarity of elemi in medieval textual sources, but their claim that "there is no exact record regarding elemi in the Tang dynasty up to the present," is incorrect.[1680] Elemi appears, for example, in the Tang-era Daoist perfume recipe known as Nine Blend Incense [HC#66] as well as the Daoist recipe for Incense Beads [HC#106].

[1677] Both Edward Schafer and Joseph Needham have claimed elemi was copiously burned in temples in both northern and southern China, but this is not fully supported by surviving textual documentation, see Schafer, *Golden Peaches*, 166 and Needham and Lu, *Science and Civilisation in China,* Vol. 5, Part 2*,* 140.
[1678] Meng Ren et al., "Characterization of the Incense Sacrificed to the Sarira of Sakyamuni from Famen Royal Temple during the Ninth Century in China," *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* 119, no. 21 (2022).
[1679] Shaanxi sheng wenwu kaogu yanjiusuo, *Famen si kaogu fajue baogao*, Vol. 1, 274, 328. The outermost box of the original eight-nested boxes was made of wood and already degraded when the crypt was opened. The yellow powder was found inside the seventh nesting box made of gilt-silver (item FD5: 011–2). Frankincense was found mixed with aloeswood powder in a different flower-shaper silver container (item FD5: 094), see Meng Ren et al., "Characterization of the Incense Sacrificed to the Sarira of Sakyamuni," 2, 4–5, 7–8.
[1680] Meng Ren et al., "Characterization of the Incense Sacrificed to the Sarira of Sakyamuni," 6.

11) Nail Aromatic (clove) 丁香[1681]

[11a] The *Guideways through Mountains and Seas*[1682] states, "It grows in the Eastern Seas[1683] and Kunlun. In the second and third months the flowers bloom and in the seventh month it bears fruit.

[11b] The annotations to the *Materia Medica of the Kaibao Era*[1684] state, "It grows in Guangzhou. The tree is more than a *zhang* in height and when approaching winter its [leaves] do not wither. Its leaves resemble the oak and its flowers are ovate, delicate, and yellow in color. Its fruit are like nails which are four or five *fen* in length and purple in color. The middle [of the fruit] is bulky and is about a *cun* in length. [The fruit] is commonly called Mother Nail Aromatic.[1685] If you snap [the stem] and then follow the grain you can break it off [the tree]. Its taste is pungent. It treats the poison caused by winds and all types of swelling. It is able to emit all types of aromas and halts dry cholera[1686] and vomiting. Each has been verified.

[1681] Nail Aromatic (*ding xiang* 丁香 or *dinxzi xiang* 丁子香) describes the appearance of the dried clove bud; this shape also motivates the English clove, from the Latin *clāvus*, "nail."

[1682] The *Guideway through Mountains and Seas* (*Shanhai jing* 山海經) is an anonymous compilation of cosmographic and geographical lore from the Warring States period through the Western Han (and possibly into the Six Dynasties), see Loewe, *Early Chinese Texts*, 357–67; Campany, *Strange Writing*, 34–36; and Zheng et al., *Dictionary of the Ben Cao Gang Mu*, 385. Organized spatially, each division describes the distinctive topographical features of a region along with its resident spirits, *fauna*, and *flora*.

[1683] Traditionally, this is an ancient designation for the present-day Yellow Sea and East China Sea, see Hua, Buell, and Unschuld, *Dictionary of the Ben Cao Gang Mu*, 89. In the context of this passage, however, it would appear it refers to the South China Sea, east of the Bay of Bengal, and home to the clove-producing Moluccas.

[1684] The *Materia Medica of the Kaibao Era* (*Kaibao bencao* 開寶本草) is a lost materia medica compiled by Liu Han 劉翰 (919–990), Ma Zhi 馬志 (fl. 973–974), and a team of nine additional scholars, see Zheng et al., *Dictionary of the Ben Cao Gang Mu*, 244. It was first completed in 973 and revised a year later in 974. The finished product was the result of consulting and comparing several earlier materia medica works and adding new material.

[1685] If I understand these last three sentences correctly, *zi* 子 is referring to the flower buds which grow into oblong shaped fruits that have a dark purple color. The passage as preserved in the *Systematic Materia Medica* describes the fruit as the size of the sour mountain date (*shanzhuyu* 山茱萸), see BCGM:2.1940 [丁香/集解]. This fully grown fruit, which is reputed to have that faint smell of cloves, is called Nail Aromatic Mother (*dingxiang mu* 丁香母); see also the comments in Ptak, "Cloves," 3.

[1686] Cholera without vomiting, see Zhang and Unschuld, *Dictionary of the Ben Cao Gang Mu*, 182.

[11a] 山海經曰：生東海及崑崙國，二，三月花開，七月方結實。[1687]

[11b] 開寶本草注云：生廣州，樹高丈余，凌冬不凋，葉似櫟，而花圓細，色黃。子如丁[1688]，長四五分，紫色中有粗大長寸許者，俗呼為母丁香。擊之則順理而折。味辛。主風毒諸腫，能發諸香，及止乾霍亂，嘔吐，各驗。[1689]

[COMMENTS] Hong Chu's entry for Nail Aromatic makes it appear as if this substance had an ancient history in China, but the citation to the ancient *Guideways through Mountains and Seas* is certainly in error. All of the information is drawn from the *Materia Medica of Overseas Drugs*, a work that dates to the tenth century.[1690]

Unlike most other nomenclature for aromatics, we have a firm understanding of the origin for Nail Aromatic. In the mid-sixth century, the Northern Wei official and agronomist Jia Sixie 賈思勰 (fl. ca. 530–544) compiled the *Essential Techniques for All People*, preserving a vast amount of medieval Chinese knowledge about horticulture and other related topics. In an interlinear comment on Chicken Tongue Aromatic, the original nomenclature for cloves [HC#8], Jia Sixie offers this simple explanation: "Common people think this looks like a nail, thus they call it Nail Aromatic."[1691] This is the first indication of the new name for the Moluccan flower buds, a luxury aromatic that had been imported from the maritime south

[1687] Cf. HYBC:3.42.56. The *Systematic Materia Medica* attributes this passage to the *Materia Medica of Overseas Drugs*, not the *Guideway to Mountains and Seas*, see BCGM:2.1940 [丁香/集解].
[1688] Read 丁 as 釘, following BCGM:2.1940 [丁香/集解].
[1689] Cf. BCGM:2.1940–1942 [丁香/集解, 氣味, 主治]. The *Materia Medica of the Kaibao Era* as preserved in the *Systematic Materia Medica* also claims that cloves grow in Jiaozhou and foreign countries to the south. In addition, the treatment for vomiting is not included.
[1690] Further complicating this is the fact that the *Materia Medica of Overseas Drugs* cites the *Guideways through Mountains and Seas*, but this is certainly a fabrication by Li Xun or gross copyist mistake, see HYBC:3.42.56. As the modern editors note, this passage is not in the received version of the *Guideways through Mountains and Seas*.
[1691] 俗人以其似丁子，故為丁子香也。QMYS:5.52.111.1.

since the Eastern Han. This new term would also slowly overtake the older name of Chicken Tongue Aromatic by the end of the medieval period.

The appearance of Nail Aromatic as a name for cloves appears to have taken some authorities by surprise. For example, the *Newly Revised Materia Medica* of the mid-seventh century describes Nail Aromatic Root (*dingxiang gen* 丁香根) as having leaves like oak that do not wither in winter, before ultimately stating that this is "not Chicken Tongue [Aromatic]."[1692] A century later, the *Supplement to the Materia Medica* is careful to reassess this claim, stating that "Chicken Tongue Aromatic and Nail Aromatic are of the same kind."[1693] This would not be the end of the confusion however, as cloves would elsewhere be described as the flowers of the aloeswood tree, as an alternative name for frankincense, and the pit of the Persian date.[1694]

One of the recurring points of confusion in the medieval period was the relationship between trues cloves and dried cassia buds, both of which have a similar aroma. Moreover, it was common in the medieval period for the Chinese to imagine several luxury aromatics deriving from a single chimerical tree, thus it was conceivable for extraordinarily fragrant flowers and potently scented bark to come from the same plant.[1695] As noted by Roderich Ptak, "cinnamon [i.e. cassia] was often wrongly identified with the bark of the clove tree."[1696] Consequently, the appearance of the odd term Nail Aromatic Bark (*dingxiang pi* 丁香皮), or "the bark of cloves," found in several of the recipes catalogued by Hong Chu likely might refer to the bark of the native cassia tree (*Cinnamomum cassia*). A similar conflation is also

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[1692] 非雞舌也。XXBC:12.314.
[1693] 雞舌香與丁香同種。BCGM:2.1940 [丁香/解名]; also see Schafer, *Golden Peaches*, 318n.167.
[1694] Ptak, "Cloves," 4. Schafer claims Nail Aromatic originally referred to lilac flowers, see Schafer, *Golden Peaches*, 171; also see R. A. Donkin, *Between East and West*, 20.
[1695] See my comments to *Jian* Aromatic at HC#22.
[1696] Ptak, "Cloves," 2–3.

expressed in Jñānagupta's late sixth century translation of the balneotherapeutic rite in the *Sutra of Golden Light*. In rendering Sanskrit *tvac*, or South Asian cinnamon (*Cinnamomum verum*, syn. *C. zeylanicum*), Jñānagupta uses the awkward "Cassia Bark Clove Aromatic" (*guipi dingxiang* 桂皮丁香).[1697]

12) Aromatic from Barus (camphor oil) 波律香

[12a] The *Supplement to the Materia Medica* states, "Exported from Barus, it is the clear [viscid] resin of the same tree as Dragon Brain [Aromatic]. It dispels malign *qi* and extirpates worm attachment-illness."

[12b] See Dragon Brain Aromatic [HC#1], this is the Ointment of Barus.

[12a] 本草拾遺曰：出波律國，與龍腦同樹之清脂也。除惡氣，殺蟲疰。[1698]

[12b] 見龍腦香，即波律膏也。

[COMMENTS] Before the oleoresin of the *Dryobalanops aromatica* tree solidifies into camphor crystals, a tapping method can be employed to drain the fluid exudate held inside cavities of the tree.[1699] Unlike other aromatic tree exudates such as frankincense and myrrh, where notching the bark will cause the tree to slowly secrete oleoresin, the *D. aromatica* can form internal reservoirs of camphor oil that are released in "gushes." In allusion to this, the ninth century *Miscellaneous Morsels from Youyang* claims that harvesters will "cut the tree

[1697] T664:386c14, see also Ludvik, *Sarasvatī*, 311.
[1698] Cf. XXBC:13.338–339, cf. BCGM:2. [龍腦香/集解; 婆律香膏/主治]. The received *Newly Revised Materia Medica* does not address worm attachment-illness.
[1699] Wheatley, "Geographical Notes," 103; Yamada, *Tōa kōryō shi kenkyū*, 39–40; Donkin, *Dragon's Brain*, 40–42.

and make a pit [by the roots] to collect it [i.e. the oil]."[1700] Yamada Kentarō reports that even if the camphoraceous viscid is left out to dry, it will not form the crystalline structure of its more valued counterpart.[1701]

As we have discussed earlier [HC#1], the first appearance of camphor in imperial Chinese sources comes in the *Book of Liang* where the aromatic from "Polü" 婆律 (or Bolü 波律, as in Hong Chu's entry above) is noted as a product of the kingdom of Langkasuka on the eastern coast of the Malay Peninsula.[1702] Importantly, however, Chinese authors never located the toponym Polü within peninsular Southeast Asia, but seemingly placed it on the northern end of Sumatra. This suggests that early medieval trade jargon for camphor and camphor oil reflected the fact that such goods were closely associated with Sumatra and Polü in particular. We find evidence for this in the *Newly Revised Materia Medica*, published in 659, which explains that "in the past it was said [camphor] was exported from Polü, thus this drug took the state as its name."[1703] Notably, Sumatra was among the most famous worldwide sources for camphor up through the pre-modern period, with large forests of *D. aromatica* covering almost half of the island.[1704] The precise location of Polü has stirred debate among scholars, but there is general agreement that it is equivalent with the famous port of Barus on the northwestern coast of Sumatra.[1705] Ultimately, the Ointment of Barus emerged as a trans-

[1700] 斫樹作坎而承之。YYZZ:18.1326.
[1701] Yamada, *Tōa kōryō shi kenkyū*, 40; see also Donkin, *Dragon's Brain*, 42n.27.
[1702] LS:54.48.795, trans. Wheatley, "Langkasuka," 390–91.
[1703] 舊云出婆律國，藥以國為名也。XXBC:13.339.
[1704] Wolters, *Indonesian Commerce*, 121–122; Jane Drakard, "An Indian Ocean Port: Sources for the Earlier History of Barus," *Archipel* 37, no. 1 (1989): 55; Donkin, *Dragon's Brain*, 127–32, 172.
[1705] The principal contention is as to whether Polü (and other similar medieval Chinese toponyms) should be more appropriately located on the eastern or northern coast of Sumatra, directly on the Straits of Malacca, as well as this region's relationship to Binsu 賓窣 (Fansūr), also sometimes identified as Barus; see the early summary of this debate in Pelliot, "Deux itinéraires," 340–42. O.W. Wolters has argued that Polü may have originally referred to a larger area of northern Sumatra, now known as Aceh, and thus was not coterminous with the present-day port of Barus on the western coast, see Wolters, *Indonesian Commerce*, 178–92, 220. A more recent survey on the identity of Polü, Barus, and Fansūr, with a focus on the disagreements between Chinese

regional commercial name for the viscous camphor oleoresin regardless of its origination in the forests of Barus or elsewhere.

Rather curiously, we find the Ointment of Barus, not the more prized camphor, included among the ingredients of the balneotherapy revealed by the goddess Sarasvatī in the *Sutra of Golden Light*. Equally notable, it is found only in the eight-century translation of Yijing, not the earlier sixth century translation of Jñānagupta. Yijing's transcription as *jieluosuo* 揭羅娑, Middle Chinese *k^hjäi-lâ-sâ, is unexpected and, as noted by Paul Pelliot, "quite disconcerting."[1706] It does not appear to approximate the most common Sanskrit term for camphor, *karpūra*, nor suggest an attempt at transcribing Barus. In terms of a possible solution, Pelliot suggests that *jieluosuo* may represent a haplographic form of *kar*[*pūra*]*rasa*, or the "liquid of camphor."[1707] Johannes Nobel suggested a more complex solution, involving both a transposition (*luo* 羅 with *suo* 娑) and orthographic error (*suo* for *po* 婆), thus speculating on an original *jiepoluo* 揭婆羅, Middle Chinese *k^hjäi-bwâ-lâ, which may have transcribed *karpūra*.[1708]

Apart from Yingjing's translation, the Ointment of Barus is rarely encountered in Buddhist or Daoist scriptures. One prominent exception is the Tang-era *Extensive Collection of Dhāraṇīs of the Great Buddha Uṣṇīṣa* where we find it included among a "Recipe for

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and Arab sources, can be found in Drakard, "Indian Ocean Port." The main argument against the identity of Polü as Barus rests on the belief that ships passing through the Straits of Malacca would not subsequently turn southward, possibly against monsoon winds, to accomplish the "Barus *détour*" (in the phrasing of Wolters) before turning north again to cross the Indian Ocean. This route presumes, of course, that the Straits of Malacca were the main waterway passage, but the Sunda Strait was also viable, if not preferable, in the early medieval period, meaning ships could travel with the winds up the west coast of Sumatra, see discussion in Haw, "The Maritime Routes Between China and the Indian Ocean," 53–81.

[1706] Pelliot, "Chau Ju-kua," 474–75. For Yijing's transcription, see T665:435a05.

[1707] Pelliot, "Chau Ju-kua," 475. As Pelliot noted later, *karpūrarasa* was also known as mixture (*rasa*) with camphor as its basis, see Pelliot, *Marco Polo*, Vol. 2, 666.

[1708] See citation in Ludvik, *Sarasvatī*, 315n.25. Citing a similar form that appears in later medical literature, Pelliot discredits this formulation, claiming that it could only reflect **karpāra*, a word that does not exist, see Pelliot, *Marco Polo*, Vol. 2, 665–66.

Incense" (*shaoxiang fang* 燒香方). The twelve ingredients are as follows: [*tamāla*]*pattra* [Indian bay leaf; HC#38], frankincense [HC#9], sandalwood [HC#4], storax [HC#5], aloeswood [HC#3], *guggulu* [gum guggul; HC#6], Anshan Aromatic (*anshan xiang* 安膳香; unknown), Ointment of Barus, onycha [HC#35], camphor [HC#1], musk [HC#2], and *kuṅkuma* [saffron; HC#7].[1709] As before, however, the transcription for the Ointment of Barus is rather unexpected: *saruoluopo* 薩若羅婆, Middle Chinese **sa-ńźjak-lâ-bwâ*. This term is strikingly similar to *sazheluopo* 薩折羅婆, or *sarjarasa*, known primarily as sal dammar [HC#33].

13) Milky Aromatic (frankincense) 乳香[1710]

[13a] The *Treatise on the Guang Region* states, "This is the resin of pine trees from the

[1709] T946:173a26.

[1710] There have been several proposed explanations for this nomenclature for frankincense, mostly divided around the ambiguity of the term *ru* 乳 meaning both milk and breast. On one hand, some claim tears of frankincense resemble, both in color and shape, droplets of milk, see e.g., Hirth and Rockhill, *Chau Ju-Kua*, 196n.1. On another hand, others suggest the name refers to the milky white dust that gathers on the exterior of frankincense tears when they rub against one another, see Schottenhammer, "Xiangyao," 130. Lastly, it has been suggested the mammillary shape of the resin tears gave rise to its name as "Teat Aromatic," see e.g., Schafer, *Golden Peaches*, 170. One late medieval Chinese belief followed along this latter line of explanation. In the twelfth century, Kou Zongshi acknowledged that Xunlu Aromatic [HC#9] was the general name for frankincense, but when it formed the shape of a nipple (*rutou* 乳頭), it was properly called Teat Aromatic, see BCGM:2.1954 [薰陸香/釋名]. In spite of these speculations, it seems most likely the Chinese name derived from the Arabic term for frankincense, (*al-*)*lubān*, which means "white," and by extension, "milk."

country of the Bosi[1711] of the Southern Seas[1712]. It is purplish-red [like] the Chinese sour cherry. It is called Milky Aromatic.

[13b] It falls under the classification of frankincense.

[13c] The methods of the immortals often use it to avoid grains. Its nature is warm. It cures deafness, wind stroke[1713], clenched jaw[1714], and blood wind in women[1715]. It is able to expel alcohol, treat wind cold[1716], halt the outflow and flush of the large intestine[1717], heal all sorts of sores with pimples[1718], and cause an interior reduction[1719].

[1711] While medieval Bosi typically referred to Sassanian Persia and its people [HC#1a], a "Bosi of the Southern Seas" appears to have referred to a group of people in maritime Southeast Asia who were deeply engaged in trade with China. Broadly categorized, three perspectives have been advanced in regards to the "Malayan Persia puzzle": 1) a poorly documented Southeast Asian state, 2) Sumatran Malay merchants using the name "Persian", or 3) members of a Persian diaspora community. The issue of a "Malayan Bosi" as distinct from an "Iranian Bosi" was first studied in detail by Berthold Laufer who was a proponent of the first view, see Laufer, *Sino-Iranica*, 468–87. Laufer concluded the best available evidence was for the period of the Tang and situated the Malayan Bosi, which he envisioned as a polity, "somewhere coterminous with Burma," see Laufer, 468. He also acknowledges the Bosi may have migrated to Sumatra during the Song, Laufer, 474. O.W. Wolters later argued against the claims of Laufer, stating that "[Bosi] never meant a place or people in South East Asia; it merely meant 'Persia' or 'Persian'…The context in which these writers used the term was that of valuable trade, 'the Persian trade," see Wolters, *Indonesian Commerce*, 129–158, esp. 143. Through his analysis Wolters shows that Persian ships never made the long trip to southern China in the fifth and sixth centuries (noting that Sassanid envoys opted for the overland route to China) and that sea-faring Sumatran Malay middlemen were responsible for the transshipment of Persian and other western goods into Chinese hands, Wolters, 150–51. The name Bosi, or "Persian," according to Wolters, was a nickname associated with the Sumatran traders, and neither referred to Persian merchants nor a hitherto unknown Persian colony in Southeast Asia. The third perspective on this issue affirms the latter position rejected by Wolters, namely that the "Bosi of the Southern Seas" referred to Persian diaspora communities spread across the Indian Ocean region, see comments in Schottenhammer, "Xiangyao," 124–25. For a summary of past speculations regarding the identity of the "Malayan Bosi," see Needham and Lu, *Science and Civilisation in China,* Vol. 5, Part 2*,* 143n.a.

[1712] In its most restricted sense, the toponym Nanhai 南海 referred to a commandery under the Qin that administered the southern coastal regions of present-day Guangdong and Guangxi. This name was based upon a more general usage of the "Southern Sea" (*nan hai*) to denote the southernmost body of water that comprised the Four Seas (*si hai* 四海), the mytho-geographical boundaries of pre-imperial China. By the early medieval period, the Southern Sea (or Southern Seas) broadly referred to maritime Southeast Asia, including the present-day South China Sea (including the Gulf of Tonkin and Gulf of Thailand) and, at times, the Java Sea, Andaman Sea, and parts of the Indian Ocean. Furthermore, the term not only referred to the waterways of Southeast Asia, but landmasses, polities, and peoples of the region. For a map of the maritime trade routes of the Southern Seas in the third century, see Wolters, *Indonesian Commerce*, n.p. (Map 2).

[1713] Zhang and Unschuld, *Dictionary of the Ben Cao Gang Mu*, 683.

[1714] Zhang and Unschuld, 285.

[1715] Zhang and Unschuld, 594.

[1716] Zhang and Unschuld, 164.

[1717] Zhang and Unschuld, 370–71, 570.

[1718] Zhang and Unschuld, 98.

[1719] I am unable to identify this treatment.

[13d] Nowadays, the translucent kind [of frankincense] is superior. As for a listing [of other varieties] there what is called Dripping Milk. The next [quality] is called Gathered Aromatic followed by Bottle Aromatic. These often naturally mix to form big clumps. They have the appearance of bitumen. Furthermore, the fine [powdered] kind is called Aromatic Scatterings.[1720]

[13a] 廣志云：即南海波斯國松樹脂，有紫赤櫻桃者，名乳香。[1721]

[13b] 蓋薰陸之類也。[1722]

[13c] 仙方多用辟邪[1723]，其性溫，療耳聾，中風，口噤，婦人血風，能發酒，治風冷，止大腸泄僻[1724]，療諸瘡癰，令內消。[1725]

[13d] 今以通明者為勝。目曰的[1726]乳，其次曰揀香，又次曰瓶香，然多夾雜成大塊，如瀝青之狀。又其細者，謂之香纏。[1727]

[COMMENTS] In the thirteenth century Milky Aromatic (*ru xiang* 乳香) was understood by most Chinese authorities to be frankincense from the Arabian Peninsula, home to the

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[1720] My reading of this passage is tentative. A better discussion of these grades of frankincense is noted in Zhao Rukuo's *Treatise on the Barbarians*, see Hirth and Rockhill, *Chau Ju-Kua*, 196–97. There we find the superior kind of incense called Gathered Aromatic. It is so-called because it is picked directly off the tree and was about the size of the tip of a finger. Another name for this grade of frankincense is called Dripping Milk. The next quality is called Bottle Aromatic because it is collected in bottles. Zhao Rukuo also describes Scattered Powder (*chanmo* 纏末) as the product of passing broken pieces of frankincense through a sieve.

[1721] Cf. BCGM:2.1954 [薰陸香/集解]. The relevant passage in the *Systematic Materia Medica*, as cited by the *Materia Medica of Overseas Drugs*, is moderately reworded. See my comments to this entry for an analysis of this passage.

[1722] This statement appears to paraphrase the *Supplement to the Materia Medica*, see BCGM:2.1954 [薰陸香/集解].

[1723] Read 邪 as 谷, following BCGM:2.1955 [薰陸香/主治].

[1724] Read 僻 as 澼.

[1725] A mix of unattributed, paraphrased quotes from the *Materia Medica of Overseas Drugs* and the *Supplement to the Materia Medica*, cf. BCGM:2.1955 [薰陸香/主治].

[1726] Read 的 as 滴, following BCGM:2.1954 [薰陸香/集解]. I remain unsure of this emendation.

[1727] I understand this passage as a personal observation of Hong Chu.

frankincense of ancient Mediterranean commerce. For example, Zhao Rukuo's *Treatise on the Barbarians* reports that frankincense came to China from four regions: Suquṭrā (an island off the Yemen coast), Mirbāṭ (southwestern Oman), al-Shiḥr (eastern Yemen), and Ẓufār (southwestern Oman). The goods were first gathered by Dashi Arab merchants who traded them with Śrīvijaya middlemen who then exchanged them with Chinese merchants.[1728] The intercession of the Sumatran traders of Śrīvijaya, Zhao Rukuo asserts, is the reason why some erroneously believed frankincense originated in Śrīvijaya.

While this report on the maritime movement of frankincense is fairly straightforward, the identity of Milky Aromatic in the earlier medieval period has been the cause for much modern debate. In particular, one historical passage has confounded historians of frankincense in China more than any other. It involves a statement attested in the *Treatise on the Guang Region*, a regional gazetteer that is likely dated to the mid-fifth century and which is cited by Hong Chu above [13a]. The description of Milky Aromatic is very different from what one might expect for frankincense: it derives from a pine tree, it originates in Southeast Asia, and it is purplish-red like cherries.

Struggling to make sense of such claims, Yamada Kentarō concedes to the possibility that maritime Persian merchants who he believed controlled the commercial flow of frankincense to China in the fifth and sixth centuries adulterated or substituted their product with goods from India on their way eastward, using things such as "false frankincense" (Indian frankincense from the *Boswellia serrata*), myrrh, and "false myrrh" (gum guggul or bdellium) to enhance their profits.[1729] Such a belief seems supported by eleventh century

[1728] Hirth and Rockhill, *Chau Ju-Kua*, 61, 116, 130, 195–97.
[1729] Yamada, *Tōa kōryō shi kenkyū*, 94.

Chinese materia medica texts which proclaimed frankincense from India was yellowish-white, while that arriving through southern maritime trade was dark red.[1730]

O.W. Wolters proposed a different solution based on a more complex set of initial questions. According to Wolters, because the *Treatise on the Guang Region* elsewhere describes Xunlu Aromatic, the older Chinese name for frankincense attested since the mid-third century [HC#9], then it should be doubtful that Milky Aromatic originally referred to frankincense, regardless of its presumed identity much later in the thirteenth century. (It should be noted that Wolters dates the *Treatise on the Guang Region* to latter half of the fifth century.[1731]) To support this hypothesis, Wolters points to other medieval works that fail to provide overlapping descriptions for both Xunlu Aromatic and Milky Aromatic, concluding that these substances could only be "different resins from different parts of the world."[1732] Ultimately, by focusing on the claim that the unknown resin derived from pine trees, Wolters argues that Milky Aromatic was simply a kind of Southeast Asian pine resin.[1733] This conclusion is secondary, however, to his main concern regarding the reputed "Persian" (Bosi 波斯) traders of the Southern Seas who traded these goods. Consequently, based on his identification of pine resin, Wolters argues that these merchants were not Persians at all, but Sumatran Malay middlemen who substituted locally produced goods, like pine resin, for luxury items that entered their coastal ports in order to turn a tidy profit. Because Wolters

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[1730] Yamada, 94–95.
[1731] Wolters, *Indonesian Commerce*, 87–89.
[1732] Wolters, 101.
[1733] Wolters, "Po-Ssŭ Pine Trees," 331; Wolters, *Indonesian Commerce*, 95–110, esp. 101–02. An interested reader should turn to the whole of Wolter's argument in his later monograph, I offer only a brief outline. Perhaps as a bit of scholarly legerdemain, Wolters regularly omits the reference to Milky Aromatic being purplish-red, a characteristic that does not accord with the color of pine resin, see e.g., Wolters, "Po-Ssŭ Pine Trees," 329; Wolters, *Indonesian Commerce*, 95, 101. When Wolters finally addressed this issue, he dismisses it by claiming "not too much weight should be given to the descriptions of color," see Wolters, 104. Wolter's argument echoes an earlier statement by Laufer identifying the southern resin as a pine product, but again without consideration of its peculiar color, see Laufer, *Sino-Iranica*, 471.

dates the *Treatise on the Guang Region* to the end of the fifth century, he affirms that such substitutions were ongoing well before the Tang.[1734]

Even though both Yamada's and Wolters' arguments have their merits, I am unconvinced fully by either account. Often lost in these discussions are serious problems regarding textual transmission and fidelity. For one, the *Treatise on the Guang Region* is no longer extant and only brief fragments can be found scattered throughout much later works.[1735] Furthermore, the particular passage under consideration is seemingly reported in only a single work, the *Materia Medica of Overseas Drugs*, which dates to the tenth century – no earlier Chinese compendia cite the relevant *Treatise on the Guang Region* passage concerning Milky Aromatic. This is further complicated by the fact that the *Materia Medica of Overseas Drugs* is also no longer extant and only appears piecemeal in later materia medica.[1736] Wolters appropriately considered these concerns of textual fidelity and sought to identify other works that he thought could independently verify the *Treatise on the Guang Region* passage as cited in the *Materia Medica of Overseas Drugs*.[1737] The earliest such work Wolters cites is the present text, Hong Chu's *Materia Aromatica*, which dates to the early

[1734] While a part of Wolter's argument rests on the idea that Sumatran traders substituted inexpensive local aromatics for foreign exotica, including frankincense, gum guggul, and myrrh (and more expensive local camphor), as early as the fifth century, a chronology I strongly believe needs to be reassessed (see below), the overall stance that Indonesian emporiums may have been conflated with "Persian" origins appears plausible. In other words, while I might dispute the "botanical" evidence of Wolter's argument, his "geographical" and "diplomatic" evidence regarding the fifth century appear, to me, well-founded, see specifically the comments in Wolters, "Po-Ssŭ Pine Trees," 344–45.

[1735] Because the *Imperial Readings of the Taiping Era*, completed in 983, cites the *Treatise on the Guang Region*, Wolters believes the gazetteer was still available at the end of the tenth century, see Wolters, *Indonesian Commerce*, 89–90.

[1736] Wolters, 87, 90–91, 290n.23.

[1737] It should be noted that Wolter's main concern was not the use of the term Milky Aromatic, but the potential interpolation of the term Bosi into "vintage sources" by the compiler of the *Materia Medica of Overseas Drugs*, Li Xun, a charge that was levied by Berthold Laufer, see for example Wolters, 93, 290–91n.35.

twelfth century.[1738] Unlike Wolters, however, I find no reason to believe Hong Chu possessed independent copies of early medieval gazetteers such as the *Treatise on the Guang Region*. In fact, it is likely he copied older citations from compendia such as *Materia Medica of Overseas Drugs* without giving proper credit to the sources he examined. Hong Chu's frequent anonymization of secondary (or even tertiary) sources in his catalogue is either due to the corruption of the present edition of the *Materia Aromatica* or to his adopted citation practice that recorded only the titles of primary texts (an increasingly common practice during the Song).

Until further research is undertaken on the matter, I remain skeptical of the fidelity of citations to early medieval works in preserved portions of the *Materia Medica of Overseas Drugs*. My initial hesitancy was born due to the many citations of early medieval works that find no parallels elsewhere in sources previous to end of the tenth century. For example, the *Imperial Readings of the Taiping Era* cites the *Treatise on the Guang Region* in describing Xunlu Aromatic, but it makes no mention of an entry for Milky Aromatic as the *Materia Medica of Overseas Drugs* portrays.[1739] A full study of this issue will have to await another time, but many of the pressures of questionable chronology and irregular historical development are relieved if we read quotations of early medieval sources, such as the *Treatise on the Guang Region*, in the *Materia Medica of Overseas Drugs* as anachronistic fabrications or corrupt citations.[1740]

[1738] Wolters, 92. Laufer also presumed the *Materia Aromatica* as an independent witness to the *Treatise on the Guang Region*, see Laufer, *Sino-Iranica*, 470; as does Angela Schottenhammer, see Schottenhammer, "Xiangyao," 130.
[1739] TPYL:8.982.861, see also my comments to frankincense at HC#9.
[1740] For one example of clear anachronism in the *Materia Medica of Overseas Drugs*, see my comments to lemongrass at HC#36. I also raise suspicion as to the authenticity of the citations in the *Materia Medica of Overseas Drugs* in my comments to gum guggul at HC#6 and lakawood at HC#18.

For example, if we bracket the citation to Milky Aromatic in the *Treatise on the Guang Region*, we fail to find this peculiar substance mentioned in any other early medieval work, including treatises that placed a special focus on cataloguing aromatics. This includes the *Abridged Account of Wei* as well as numerous gazetteers, such as the *Treatise on Strange Things of Funan, Traditions of Foreign Lands during the Wu,* the *Treatise on Strange Things of the Southern Region,* and the *Prospect of the Plants and Products of the Southern Regions*. Moreover, Milky Aromatic is not noted in Fan Ye's fifth century blending manual preface, nor is it found in Daoshi's catalogue of aromatics of 668. Previous to the eighth century, Milky Aromatic is not found in any Buddhist or Daoist scriptural works or in Chinese medical literature.[1741]

Milky Aromatic first appears in Chinese materia medica in the eighth century with the publication of the *Supplement to the Materia Medica* in 739. The relevant passage simply states, "Milky Aromatic is the same as frankincense."[1742] Ultimately, I see no reason to doubt this assertion. Moreover, the confusing description of Milky Aromatic as dark red does not appear in pharmacological literature until the eleventh century. Critically, this is *after* the *Materia Medica of Overseas Drugs* was published with its spurious (or misquoted) citation of the *Treatise on the Guang Region*.[1743] As to why the *Materia Medica of Overseas Drugs* claims that Milky Aromatic is purplish-red remains unknown, but perhaps it accurately describes the situation of maritime commerce in the tenth century with various forms of

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[1741] Wolters himself is suspicious of a sixteenth century quote attributing knowledge of Milky Aromatic to Tao Hongjing in the sixth century, see Wolters, *Indonesian Commerce*, 92, 101, 295n.57. In one fifth century Buddhist text, *ru xiang* literally means the fresh "fragrance of milk," see T376:888a26. In another fifth century work, *ru xiang* refers to milk that is "fragrant" and thus suitable for consumption, see T1435:96c08. At one point, Wolters attempts to justify the silence of Chinese medical works on Milky Aromatic by claiming the compilers were unfamiliar with imports from the south, see Wolters, *Indonesian Commerce*, 119.

[1742] 乳香即薰陸之類也。BCGM:2.1954 [薰陸香/集解]; see also HC#13b.

[1743] See relevant citation in Laufer, *Sino-Iranica*, 470–71.

"false" frankincense circulating, thus thrusting a version of Yamada's argument back into focus (albeit set within a much later timeframe).

Further research will have to be done on this issue, but it appears the term Milky Aromatic started appearing in Chinese works in the mid-eighth century as a variant name for frankincense. The reason for adopting a new name seems straightforward: it offered an alternative to the antiquated nomenclature of Xunlu Aromatic and more transparently rendered the Arabic term for frankincense, (*al-*)*lubān*, also related to olibanum, which means "white," and by extension, "milk." It is possible, though far from certain, this terminology was preferred by those looking to distinguish between a darker-colored "false" frankincense and the "true" light-colored frankincense from the southern Arabian Peninsula and African coast.

As we see with Hong Chu's personal observation above [13d], by the twelfth century, several different commercial grades of frankincense were starting to appear, and by the publication of the *Treatise on the Barbarians* in the following century, the number of classifications totaled thirteen.[1744]

14) Dark Cassia Aromatic (aloeswood) 青桂香

The *Supplement to the Materia Medica* states, "It is the delicate branches of the same tree [that produces] aloeswood. These are firm and solid, and not yet rotten."

本草拾遺曰：即沈香同樹細枝，緊實未爛者。[1745]

[1744] Hirth and Rockhill, *Chau Ju-Kua*, 195–97.
[1745] Cf. BCGM:2.1937 [沈香/集解].

[COMMENTS] Despite its name, Dark Cassia Aromatic was not a type of cassia, but a commercial category of aloeswood [HC#3a]. This designation was originally determined by the location on the tree from where the aloeswood piece was harvested. In this case, Dark Cassia Aromatic constituted the finer branches and twigs which are hard, unbroken, and not yet decayed. This classification was first noted in the *Newly Revised Materia Medica*, published in 659.[1746]

15) Chicken Bone Aromatic (aloeswood) 雞骨香

The annotations to the *Supplement to the Materia Medica* state, "This is also [grouped] with Jian Aromatic [HC#22]. Its appearance resembles chicken bones."

本草拾遺記曰：亦葴香中，形似雞骨者。[1747]

[COMMENTS] Unrelated to Chicken Tongue Aromatic, which referred to cloves [HC#8], Chicken Bone Aromatic was an old designation for a lesser grade of aloeswood [HC#3a]. Similar to the traditional definition of Jian Aromatic [HC#22], it was typically distinguished by its relatively low oleoresin saturation, thus allowing it to float when set in water. This was in contrast to the premier tier of aloeswood known as Sinking Aromatic.[1748] Chicken Bone Aromatic was further distinguished by visual criteria, appearing similar to chicken bones.[1749]

[1746] For more on the different types of aloeswood products, see my comments to HC#22.
[1747] Cf. BCGM:2.1937 [沈香/集解].
[1748] For more on the different types of aloeswood products, see my comments to HC#22.
[1749] When Ding Wei reconceptualized the aloeswood grading system in the eleventh century, he classified Chicken Bone Aromatic as a sub-type of Sinking Aromatic. This followed the system of the Li ethnic group who harvested aloeswood on Hainan and who distinguished between Chicken Head (*jitou* 雞頭), Chicken Leg (*jitui* 雞腿), and Chicken Bone varieties, see SKQS:844.334b02.

16) Wood Aromatic (aloeswood / unknown Yunnan root plant? / costus root / unknown Chinese root plant(s) / unknown import root plant(s) / *tagara*) 木香

[16a] The [*Tang*] *Materia Medica* states, "Another name is Honey Aromatic. It arrives from foreign countries aboard ships. Its leaves resemble those of the Chinese yam[1750] but are longer and larger. Its flowers are purple in color.[1751] Its meritorious effects are extremely many. Its taste is pungent, [its nature] is warm, and it is non-toxic. It is a treatment for warding off poison pestilence[1752] and warmth ghosts[1753]. It cures *qi* shortage and *qi* deficiency. It eliminates poison and extirpates *gu* poison."

[16b] Nowadays, it resembles chicken bones that are firm and solid. The kind that sticks to the teeth when gnawed is superior. Furthermore, there is Horse's Bell Aromatic Root[1754] which has been called Dark Wood Aromatic, but this is an incorrect designation. Some say there are two types [of Wood Aromatic], but I am also afraid this is simply incorrect. Another name [for Horse's Bell Aromatic Root] is called the Root of Yunnan.[1755]

[1750] *Dioscorea oppositifolia*, syn. *D. opposite* (Chinese yam), Hua, Buell, and Unschuld, *Dictionary of the Ben Cao Gang Mu*, 426 (#1105). The received *Newly Revised Materia Medica* claims the leaves resemble *yangti* 羊蹄, or Goat Hoof, see XXBC:6.172, BCGM:1.855 [木香/集解]. Goat Hoof has been identified as *Rumex japonicus,* see Hua, Buell, and Unschuld, *Dictionary of the Ben Cao Gang Mu*, 433 (#1346).

[1751] The received *Newly Revised Materia Medica* claims the flowers are like chrysanthemums (*juhua* 菊花), see XXBC:6.172 and BCGM:1.855 [木香/集解].

[1752] Zhang and Unschuld, *Dictionary of the Ben Cao Gang Mu*, 135.

[1753] Zhang and Unschuld, 532.

[1754] *Aristolochia* spp., possibly *A. contorta* (birthwort), Hua, Buell, and Unschuld, *Dictionary of the Ben Cao Gang Mu*, 414 (#730). The name Horse's Bell is derived from the shape of the leaves of the plant which resemble a bell tied to a horse's neck.

[1755] The translation of this passage remains tentative. I have not been able to find suitable parallels for this passage in surviving materia medica and presume this section is the commentary of Hong Chu. In the sixteenth century, according to Li Shizhen, Horse's Bell Aromatic Root was a name for Dark Wood Aromatic after the Jin, an equation that appears to have been rejected by Hong Chu several centuries earlier, see BCGM:1.855 [木香/釋名]. I suspect that Hong Chu was relying on the information originally provided in the *Newly Revised Materia Medica* under the entry of Duxing Root (*duxing gen* 獨行根) which claimed an alternative name for the root was *douling gen* 兜零根, now often read as *madouling gen* 馬兜苓根, or Horse's Bell Root. Moreover, we are told another variant name for Duxing Root was Native Dark Wood Aromatic (*tu qingmu xiang* 土青木香), strikingly similar to our Dark Wood Aromatic, see XXBC:11. My suspicion is that Hong Chu was afraid the equation of Horse's Bell Aromatic Root to Native Dark Wood Aromatic was being conflated with an unwarranted equation to Dark Wood Aromatic, thus his assertion that such a designation was inappropriate. If

[16a] 本草云：一名蜜香，從外國舶上來。葉似薯蕷而根[1756]大，花紫色，功效極多。味辛，溫而無毒。主辟溫[1757]，療氣劣，氣不足，消毒，殺蟲[1758]毒。[1759]

[16b] 今以如雞骨堅實，齧之粘齒者為上。復有馬兜苓[1760]根，謂之青木香，非此之謂也。或云有二種，亦恐非耳。一謂之雲南根。[1761]

[COMMENTS] Costus root, also known as putchuck (from Bengali *pachak*), is most often identified as the fragrant root of the *Dolomiaea costus* (syns. *Saussurea costus*, *S. lappa*, *Aucklandia costus, A. lappa*), a flowering thistle that grows in the Western Ghats and subalpine Himalayas, including Jammu and Kaśmīra in the northwest and Sikkim in the northeast.[1762] Known in Sanskrit as *kuṣṭha*, costus was highly valued in ancient Vedic sources as a pungent aromatic and effective medicine, especially for dispelling fever.[1763] It has a goaty and animalistic (wet-hair) scent, but also carries a faint floral smell.

A diverse range of Chinese names and conflicting information has led to much confusion regarding the history of costus root in East Asia. Yijing's eighth century

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my reading is correct, Hong Chu concludes by offering the appropriate regional equivalent for Horse's Bell Aromatic Root, namely the Root of Yunnan. This equivalence between Horse's Bell Aromatic Root and Root of Yunnan is supported by the late eleventh century *Illustrated Classic of Materia Medica*, see DZ768:18.64a. Hong Chu's rejection of there being "two types" of Wood Aromatic may be a different concern. The editors of the *Newly Revised Materia Medica* claimed a superior grade of Wood Aromatic came from the Indochinese Peninsula and that an inferior grade was imported from further west; see my comments to this entry. It appears Hong Chu disagreed with this assessment, but we are not provided with his rationale.

[1756] Read 根 as 長, following XXBC:6.172.

[1757] Read 溫 as 毒疫溫鬼, following XXBC:6.172.

[1758] Read 蟲 as 蠱, following XXBC:6.172.

[1759] Cf. XXBC:6.172, cf. BCGM:1.855–856 [木香/集解, 氣味, 主治]. This passage is a blend of information taken from the *Classic of Materia Medica of the Divine Husband*, the comments of Tao Hongjing, and the editorial comments of the *Newly Revised Materia Medica*.

[1760] Read 苓 ("tuber") as 鈴 ("bell"), following BCGM:1.855 [木香/釋名].

[1761] I understand this passage as a personal observation of Hong Chu.

[1762] James McHugh notes the cultivation of costus in Sikkim, but medieval Chinese authorities knew it as a product of northwest India, see McHugh, *Sandalwood and Carrion*, 67.

[1763] McHugh, *Sandalwood and Carrion*, 67–68.

translation of the *Sutra of Golden Light* transcribes *kuṣṭha* as *jusecha* 矩瑟侘, Middle Chinese *kju-ʂjɛt-ʈʰa*, and provides the translation Dark Wood Aromatic (*qingmu xiang* 青木香).[1764] This translation was also used in the late sixth century rendition of the same text, but provides no transcription.[1765] Earlier in the sixth century, Tao Hongjing claimed Dark Wood Aromatic was as an alternate name for Wood Aromatic (*muxiang* 木香), which was listed in the *Classic of Materia Medica of the Divine Husbandman*, a work compiled in antiquity but edited up through the Eastern Han.[1766] Based on this explicit synonymy with Dark Wood Aromatic as established by Tao Hongjing, I have translated Wood Aromatic as costus, but it is clear this was not the only referent for Wood Aromatic throughout the long medieval period and many uncertainties remain regarding its identity.

Tao Hongjing provides two places of origin for this aromatic plant. On one hand, he states that the plant was imported aboard ships from foreign countries, adding that some claimed the scented root originated in the old Roman Empire. According to the first century *Periplus Maris Erythraei*, a handbook for Greco-Roman merchants, north Indian costus (Greek *kostos*) was known to have been brought to Roman ports and widely used as an ingredient in topical ointments.[1767] Similar to early Chinese reports describing Arabian and African frankincense as a Roman product [HC#9], the distinction between native producer and redistributor was often a point of confusion for imported exotica. Regardless of the reputed role of Roman merchants, we can conclude that Dark Wood Aromatic – if

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[1764] T665:435a08.
[1765] T664:386c16. The Buddhist use of Dark Wood Aromatic can be traced to at least the early fifth century in the translation of the *Mahāparinirvāṇa Sutra* by Dharmakṣema. The Buddha tells a story of a past life living in the Himalayas where various fragrant root plants grow, including lotus root, Sweet Root (*gangen* 甘根, licorice root? / spikenard?), and Dark Wood Aromatic root (i.e., costus root), see T374.449b17.
[1766] XXBC:6.172–173; BCGM:1.854–855 [木香/釋名].
[1767] Casson, *Periplus*, 75, 81, 191–92.

understood as Himalayan costus – was appropriately known as a foreign import by Tao Hongjing in the early sixth century.[1768] The earliest Chinese reference to Dark Wood Aromatic is Wan Zhen's *Treatise on Strange Things of the Southern Regions* of the mid-to-late third century, where it is portrayed as an export of India and similar in appearance to licorice (*gancao* 甘草), a plant that also produces a strongly scented root.[1769] This confirms that one of the principle early referents of Dark Wood Aromatic was indeed costus root.

On the other hand, Tao Hongjing unexpectedly reports the same plant once came as tribute from Yongchang 永昌, part of present-day western Yunnan, where it was said to grow according to the *Supplementary Record by Famous Physicians*.[1770] It is difficult to assess this claim. Notably, Yongchang was a critical stop along the southwestern trade route that connected China to Upper Myanmar, Assam, and Sikkim.[1771] The latter locale was a producer of costus. In the mid-third century, the *Abridged Account of Wei* informs us that Yongchang was a known exporter of strange goods (*yiwu* 異物) and that the overland routes through this region were less known than the highly traversed maritime trade routes.[1772] This leads to the possibility that some early medieval Chinese authorities may have confused foreign imports arriving overland, such as costus, with the native products of Yongchang, a region on the furthest fringes of the old Han empire.

[1768] Berthold Laufer believes Tao Hongjing was referring to a true export of the old Roman Empire, possibly the unknown "costus" from the Arabian Peninsula or Syria as described by Dioscorides, see Laufer, 463–64; see also Casson, *Periplus*, 191.

[1769] 青木香出天竺，是草根状如甘草。T2122:573b22–23; TPYL:8.982.862. A similar passage is found in Xu Zhong's *Prospect of the Plants and Products of the Southern Regions*, but claiming the plant's appearance was unknown, see T2122:573b21–22; TPYL:8.982.862; cf. Laufer, *Sino-Iranica*, 464 (citing the *Prospect of the Plants and Trees of the Southern Regions* in error).

[1770] XXBC:6.172.

[1771] For an overarching history of the "Southwest Silk Road" and discussion of its principal commodities, see Yang, "Yunnan in Global Perspective," 281–322.

[1772] SGZ:30.861.

It is also possible to take the *Supplementary Record by Famous Physicians* at face value and surmise that Wood Aromatic originally referred to a now unknown local aromatic root plant that had very similar properties and appearance to costus (enough similarity, at least, to confuse Tao Hongjing). This view is corroborated by the Tang-era *Treatise on the Southern Barbarians* (*Nanyi zhi* 南夷志) which claims that Dark Wood Aromatic is an export of Yongchang, and moreover that a so-called Dark Wood Mountain is three months journey south of the region.[1773] Ultimately, dozens of taproot species falling under the *Dolomiaea* and *Saussurea* genera, as well as the rhizomatous plants of the *Inula* genus and woody vines of the *Aristolochia* genus populate the high mountains of southwest China, making a confirmatory identification impossible.

It seems that confusion between root plants was common in the medieval period. For example, as we see in the above entry [16b], Hong Chu warns against conflating Dark Wood Aromatic (i.e., costus root) with Horse's Bell Root (*madouling gen* 馬兜鈴根), a plant that appears to have also been called the Root of Yunnan (*Yunan gen* 雲南根). Hong Chu may have had insight into these issues as costus is recorded in two recipes at the end of the *Materia Aromatica* [HC#140, HC#144]. Moreover, although not of the magnitude of frankincense or aloeswood [HC#3] tributes, foreign diplomatic missions brought gifts of costus to the Chinese imperial court in the eleventh century, suggesting the Chinese were actively importing the Himalayan aromatic.[1774] Despite Hong Chu's warning, these three above names are all considered synonymous in modern Chinese medical dictionaries,

[1773] 永昌所出。其山名青木山，在永昌南三月日程。TPYL:8.982.861. Laufer cites the same work under the variant name, *Book of Man Barbarians* (*Manshu* 蠻書), see Laufer, *Sino-Iranica*, 463. He apparently emends the text to a more reasonable three days journey. I have been unable to confirm the existence of this mountain.
[1774] Bielenstein, *Diplomacy*, 45, 57, 78, 310.

referring to either *Aristolochia debilis* or *Aristolochia contorta* (the latter a northern species).[1775] Critically, however, neither of these *Aristolochia* species occur in the Chinese southwest and thus cannot be the reputed objects of tribute from Yunnan. There are other kinds of *Aristolochia* that grow in Yunnan, such as the aptly named *A. yunnanensis*, but we cannot confirm this species, or even this genus, was the original referent for the Wood Aromatic from Yunnan.

A further complicating factor in identifying Wood Aromatic is that fact that it was also explicitly equated with Honey Aromatic (*mixiang* 蜜香) in medieval medical literature [16a], nomenclature that is more commonly viewed – with good evidence – as an early Chinese name for aloeswood. Furthermore, Wood Aromatic is clearly described as aloeswood from Vietnam in the *Treatise on Strange Things of the Southern Regions* of the mid-to-late third century, but outside of this text Wood Aromatic is described in no other surviving works as aloeswood [HC#42].

In addition to these complexities, it seems the name Wood Aromatic and Dark Wood Aromatic came to be applied to more than one fragrant root reputedly growing in China, Southeast Asia, Iran, and the Arabian Peninsula. For example, we find the mid-fifth century *Treatise on the Guang Region* claiming that Dark Wood Aromatic was exported from Jiaozhou in far southern China as well as India.[1776] While Jiaozhou is also erroneously cited as an exporter of frankincense in the same work, this claim holds more weight since Wood Aromatic was also considered native to China in older medical works. *A. debilis* does occur

[1775] Nanjing zhongyiyao daxue, *Zhongyao da cidian*, (#2252); see also Hua, Buell, and Unschuld, *Dictionary of the Ben Cao Gang Mu*, 414 (#730; Horse's Bell Root as *Aristolochia contorta*), cf. 417 (#799; Wood Aromatic as *Dolomiaea costus*).
[1776] 青木出交州天竺。TPYL:8.982.862. Daoshi's citation of this same work only claims costus came from Jiaozhou, see T2122:573b21.

in the Chinese tropical south, making the claim of the *Treatise on the Guang Region* plausible. By the publication of the *Newly Revised Materia Medica* in 659 we are explicitly told there are two types of Wood Aromatic: an inferior quality specimen reportedly sent by the Western barbarians (*xihu* 西胡), presumably costus root, and a superior specimen imported from Kunlun, a term that broadly covered maritime Southeast Asia.[1777] The existence of a Kunlun variety is supported by the *Treatise on the Southern Barbarians*.[1778] It remains unclear if the Southeast Asian variety was believed to be related to the one reputedly from Jiaozhou, which extended to cover part of present-day northern Vietnam.

In addition, medieval imperial histories such as the *Book of Sui* claim Dark Wood (*qingmu* 青木) as a native product of Sassanid Persia, along with the aromatics frankincense, saffron [HC#7], and storax [HC#5].[1779] Despite claims of indigenous production, Dark Wood likely refers here to Himalayan costus, as both frankincense and storax were also necessarily re-exported by Persian merchants. If we leap ahead to the thirteenth century, Zhao Rukuo claims that Wood Aromatic was imported into China from northwest India, presumably costus, as well as from Mirbāṭ, al-Shiḥr, and Ẓufār, all on the Ḥaḍramūt coast of the southern Arabian Peninsula.[1780] There is little insight into what this Arabian variety might be, but it is worth nothing that Dioscorides in the first century also reported an Arabian costus (as well as a Syrian costus), possibly pointing us to the same plant, still unknown.[1781]

[1777] XXBC:6.172; cf. BCGM:1.855 [木香/集解]. Laufer presumably reads the uncorrected *Systematic Materia Medica* entry (he provides no citation) which claims Wood Aromatic comes from West Lake (*xihu* 西湖) in Hangzhou, see Laufer, *Sino-Iranica*, 464.
[1778] TPYL:8.982.861; see also Laufer, *Sino-Iranica*, 463–64.
[1779] SuiS:83.1857; see also Laufer, *Sino-Iranica*, 463.
[1780] Hirth and Rockhill, *Chau Ju-Kua*, 221; elsewhere it is described as from southern India and eastern Africa, see Hirth and Rockhill, 98 and 128.
[1781] Casson, *Periplus*, 191. Zhao Rukuo's description of Wood Aromatic is deeply suspicious, asserting that it resembles the *Luffa cylindrica* (*sigua* 絲瓜), a gourd from southern China, which he then also compares to cardamom (*baitoukou* 白豆蔻), two plants that bear little resemblance to *S. costus*, see Hirth and Rockhill,

Ultimately, such diverse places of origin make clear and uniform identification of Wood Aromatic impossible. Paul Wheatley has claimed Wood Aromatic remains one of the most difficult aromatics to identify and Berthold Laufer has concluded the identification of this plant "cannot be decided with certainty."[1782] If we speculate on a chronology of terms, it appears Wood Aromatic was known in the early Six Dynasties as a product of Yongchang, either as an unknown native Yunnan root plant or possibly imported costus root from Northeast India (making it among the earliest supra-regional aromatic imports into China). By the mid-to-late third century, a Dark Wood Aromatic was known to the Chinese and certainly referred to Indian costus root, but by the fifth century this name may have been applied to another unknown root plant native to the far south around Jiaozhi (possibly *A. debilis*, but there are many other possibilities, including simply being redistributed costus). Also by the fifth century, the terminology of Dark Wood Aromatic was adopted by medieval Buddhist translators to identify *kuṣṭha* and a century later Tao Hongjing explicitly connects the old nomenclature of Wood Aromatic to Dark Wood Aromatic. This was not long before Wood Aromatic also starts referring to other non-native plants, first from maritime Southeast Asia and later from the Arabian Peninsula. In both cases the botanical referent remains unknown.

In addition to these already complex issues, it is necessary to point to a rich Daoist tradition involving Dark Wood Aromatic as a powerful therapeutic drug. These beliefs originate with the *Classic of Materia Medica of the Divine Husbandman* where Wood Aromatic, when ingested over a long period, could halt nightmares, lighten the body, and

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Chau Ju-Kua, 221; see also the analysis in Laufer, *Sino-Iranica*, 463; Wheatley, "Geographical Notes," 34, 62. Laufer speculates that Zhao Rukuo may be describing the unknown plant from the Arabian coast, not costus.
[1782] See Wheatley, "Geographical Notes," 62 and Laufer, *Sino-Iranica*, 464, respectively.

allow one to contact spirits and immortals.[1783] The seventh century *Pearl Satchel of the Three Caverns* (*Sandong zhunang* 三洞珠囊; DZ1139) treats Dark Wood Aromatic as an alternative name for a plant otherwise known as Fivefold Aromatic (*wuxiang* 五香) or sometimes the Fivefold Tree (*wumu* 五木). The plant is described as having a recursive anatomy, with five stems of five leaves with five segments, and so forth [HC#74]. It is certainly a product of the imagination, but adds a layer of the mysterious and arcane to an otherwise mundane aromatic. Dark Wood Aromatic is commonly seen in recipes scattered throughout Daoist scriptures and is often encountered in medieval medical formularies. It appears, for example, as an ingredient in a Daoist ritual wash for dispelling the Three Corpses in the *Scripture of the Forty-Four Methods on Yellow Silk* (*Huangsu sishi si fangjing* 黃素四十四方經; DZ1380).[1784] The directions call for only two ingredients, wild angelica root [HC#30] and Dark Wood Aromatic, both of which are to be decocted in water drawn from an eastward flowing river. The directions further make clear that if Dark Wood Aromatic is not available, the adept can simply use wild angelica.[1785] The substitution and elimination of ingredients in Daoist recipes was not uncommon, especially if certain items were expensive or difficult to obtain. These directions consequently suggest Dark Wood Aromatic was more rare than wild angelica, a plant with a far older history in China spanning into the Warring States period. It also appears that Tao Hongjing was familiar with the *Scripture of the Forty-Four Methods on Yellow Silk*, and possibly this very recipe.[1786] Thus,

[1783] 久服不夢寤魘寐。輕身致神仙。XXBC:6.172
[1784] I translate and discuss the relevant passage in my comments to wild angelica at HC#30. For more on this text, see Schipper and Verellen, *The Taoist Canon*, 179.
[1785] DZ1380:18b; the recipe is also repeated at DZ1138:50.3a and DZ1032:41.8b–9a.
[1786] For the citation of this text in the *Declarations of the Perfected* by Tao Hongjing, see Schipper and Verellen, *The Taoist Canon*, 179.

based on Tao Hongjing's comments above concerning Dark Wood Aromatic arriving aboard foreign ships, the plant in the recipe above almost certainly refers to foreign costus. Of course, the ambiguity in botanical referents would also strategically allow for the substitution of more easily accessible native roots traded under "Dark Wood Aromatic," or even the chimerical Fivefold Aromatic, when necessary.[1787]

On a final point, it is worthy to note that Huilin's Buddhist dictionary of the early ninth century identifies Wood Aromatic as *tagara* (*duojialou* 多伽婁), which is often understood as valerian root [HC#77].[1788] Huilin's gloss relies upon Kumārajīva's fifth century *Treatise on Great Wisdom* (*Da zhidu lun* 大智度論; T1509), where an interlinear notes explains that *tagara* is to be understood as Wood Aromatic Tree (*muxiang shu* 木香樹).[1789] It is difficult to know if Kumārajīva intended to call upon the longstanding Chinese medical tradition of Wood Aromatic in making his clarification, thus revealing the Chinese nomencalture, at least in one of its many manifestations, to indicate valerian root, but at the very least it suggests that Wood Aromatic was chiefly viewed as a root – costus or otherwise – and a thus suitable botanical analogue to *tagara*.

17) Aromatic that Draws Down the Perfected (unidentified plant → Daoist blend → Indonesian lakawood / unknown red wood(s)? / fragrant rosewood) 降真香

[1787] We may also wonder if the association with India and Buddhism more broadly motivated Daoists to use the term Fivefold Aromatic in lieu of Dark Wood Aromatic. In either regard this plant remained an important substance in the Daoist repertoire of medical items.
[1788] T2128:472c13; T2128:592b05 (using the variant *duojialiu* 多伽留).
[1789] T1509.134a26. This passage lists three aromatic trees (*xiang shu* 香樹): *agaru* (*ajialou* 阿伽樓), glossed as Honey Aromatic Tree (*mixiang shu* 蜜香樹), or aloeswood [HC#3], *tagara*, and sandalwood. Since the *Treatise on Great Wisdom* cites aloeswood, this might explain Huilin's otherwise curious note that *tagara* does not sink (*bu mie* 不沒), thus contrasting it with premium quality aloeswood that sinks in water, see T2128:472c13.

[17a] The *Records of Nanzhou*[1790] states, "It grows in the mountains of the Southern Seas." It also states, "It grows in the Roman empire."

[17b] The *Materia Medica of Overseas Drugs* states, "Its taste is warm and uniform. It is non-toxic. It treats seasonal *qi* sent by Heaven[1791] and the anomalous [affairs] in the home. It is also efficacious when it is burned."

[17c] The *Biographies of Immortals*[1792] state, "Burning this will sympathetically affect and draw down cranes. When worshipping the stars and asterisms, burning this incense is the best."

[17d] "When children wear this [on a belt-sash] it is able to ward off evil *qi*.

[17e] Its fragrance is like sappanwood[1793]. When it is initially burned it is not very fragrant, but if you take all sorts of aromatics and blend them, then it is especially fine."

[17a] 南州記曰：生南海諸山。又云：生大秦國。[1794]

[17b] 海藥本草曰：味溫平，無毒。主天行時氣，宅舍怪異，並燒之有驗。[1795]

[1790] The *Records of Nanzhou* (*Nanzhou ji* 南州記) is presumably a lost gazetteer attributed to an unknown Xu Biao 徐表 (d.u.). It is uncertain if the lost *Records of the Southern Regions* (*Nanfang ji* 南方記), attributed to an author with a similar name, Xu Zhong 徐衷 (before 466), should be considered the same work under a variant title, see Zheng et al., *Dictionary of the Ben Cao Gang Mu*, 340, 547. Ultimately, Ma Toi-Loi believes the *Records of Nanzhou* and the *Records of the Southern Regions* are "two separate works by authors from different periods," Ma, "Nan-Fang Ts'ao-Mu Chuang," 226n.32 (a similar view is taken in Yamada, *Tōa kōryō shi kenkyū*, 220). Notably, it is also sometimes believed that the *Records of the Southern Regions* is the shortened name for the *Prospect of the Plants and Products of the Southern Regions* (*Nanfang caowu zhuang* 南方草物狀), a lost work also attributed to Xu Zhong, see Ma, "Nan-Fang Ts'ao-Mu Chuang," 227. In either regard, the *Records of Nanzhou* is first cited in the early eight century and seemingly not again until the publication of the *Materia Medica of Overseas Drugs* where it is cited on multiple occasions, see Ma, "Nan-Fang Ts'ao-Mu Chuang," 227 (Table 1). Based on their titles and surviving contents, the gazetteers above covered the products and plants of the far southern regions of China, including present-day Guangdong, Guangxi, Hainan, and northern Vietnam, see Hua, Buell, and Unschuld, *Dictionary of the Ben Cao Gang Mu*, 230.

[1791] Zhang and Unschuld, *Dictionary of the Ben Cao Gang Mu*, 453, 504.

[1792] I have been unable to verify this source, see my comments to this entry.

[1793] *Biancaea sappan* (syn. *Cesalpinia sappan*), Hua, Buell, and Unschuld, *Dictionary of the Ben Cao Gang Mu*, 426 (#1123).

[1794] Cf. HYBC:3.43.57; cf. BCGM:2.1945 [降真香/集解]. According to the *Systematic Materia Medica*, the *Materia Medica of Overseas Drugs* originally cited this information.

[1795] Cf. HYBC:3.43.57; cf. BCGM:2.1946 [降真香/氣味, 主治].

[17c] 仙傳云：燒之感引鶴降。醮星辰，燒此香甚為第一。[1796]

[17d] 小兒帶之能辟邪氣。[1797]

[17e] 其香如蘇方木。然之初不甚香，得諸香和之，則特美。[1798]

[COMMENTS] Lakawood, derived from the Malay *kayu laka*, refers to the crimson-colored scented heartwood and root wood of the *Dalbergia parviflora*, a type of liana native to the Malay Peninsula and parts of the Indochinese Peninsula and Indonesian Archipelago.[1799] The common English name lakawood is at times mistakenly applied to the officinal *Acronychia pedunculata* (syn. *A. laurifolia*), a small tree that grows in dense thickets in the Chinese tropical south as well as the Indochinese Peninsula, Malay Peninsula, Indonesian Archipelago, and southern India.[1800] When necessary, to maintain a clear distinction between

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[1796] Cf. HYBC:3.43.57; cf. BCGM:2.1945 [降真香/集解]. According to the *Systematic Materia Medica*, the *Materia Medica of Overseas Drugs* originally cited this text.

[1797] Unattributed, paraphrased quote from the *Materia Medica of Overseas Drugs*; cf. HYBC:3.43.57; cf. BCGM:2.1945–1946 [降真香/集解, 主治].

[1798] While attested in the *Systematic Materia Medica*, Yamada believes this passage has been added by Hong Chu or someone else since it does not appear in older materia medica from which the *Materia Medica of Overseas Drugs* can be reconstructed, see Yamada, *Tōa kōryō shi kenkyū*, 220; HYBC:3.43.57n.3; cf. Schafer, *Golden Peaches*, 165 (who cites this passage as authentic to Li Xun).

[1799] For a map of medieval sources of Indonesian lakawood, see Wheatley, "Geographical Notes," 118; Derek Heng Thiam Soon, "The Trade in Lakawood Products between South China and the Malay World from the Twelfth to Fifteenth Centuries AD," *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies* 32, no. 2 (2001): 135.

[1800] The identification of *A. pedunculata* with the English nomenclature "lakawood" is provided in Lin, *Songdai xiangyao*, 49 and Li, *Fourth Century Flora*, 103–04; both cite the nineteenth century work of Augustine Henry as authority. The same identification and nomenclature is also found in Bernard E. Read, *Chinese Medicinal Plants from the Pan Ts'ao Kang Mu A.D. 1596* (Beijing: Peking Natural History Bulletin, 1936), 100 (#342); Read also cites Henry as main authority. Subsequently, both Li and Read are commonly cited in scholarship to support the *A. pedunculata* = lakawood theory. I suspect Henry was in error in the application of the term lakawood to *A. pedunculata*, but in fact, the issue revolves around the Chinese name for *D. parviflora*, the Aromatic that Draws Down the Perfected. There is little doubt this Chinese name was used to translate the Malay *kayu laka*, "wood of red dye," by the late medieval period. We know this due to an entry in the handbook of Chinese-Malay words and phrases known as the *Translated Words of Malacca* (*Manlajia guo yiyu* 滿剌加國譯語) compiled in the fifteenth century, see Edwards and Blagden, "A Chinese Vocabulary of Malacca Malay Words and Phrases," 725 (#136). While *kayu laka* may refer to several *flora* used for incense stick manufacturing (or as red dye), *D. parviflora* is generally accepted as a chief referent. I am aware of no authority that identifies *kayu laka* as *A. pedunculata*, however, nor any evidence that *A. pedunculata* is used in incense preparation, nor as a dye. Henry, I believe, conflated the foreign Aromatic that Draws Down the Perfected, i.e. *kayu laka*/lakawood, with a native Chinese plant also called the Aromatic that Draws Down the Perfected,

these two kinds of "lakawood," I will refer to the former as Indonesian lakawood and the latter as Chinese acronychia, even though the geographic distribution for both is far more extensive. The medieval Chinese name that refers to both Indonesian lakawood and (presumptuously) Chinese acronychia is the Aromatic that Draws Down the Perfected (*jiangzhen xiang* 降真香). This nomenclature has its origins in the early medieval Daoist Shangqing tradition in regards to a class of numinous beings known as the Perfected (*zhen* 真). In distinction to the above *flora*, this evocative botanical name appears to have first referred to yet a different, unknown root plant as well as to a special blend of aromatics used in Daoist liturgy. Moreover, the modern Chinese referent for the Aromatic that Draws Down the Perfected, shortened to the Drawing-Down Aromatic (*jiang xiang* 降香), is the *Dalbergia odorifera*, or fragrant rosewood, a tree that grows only in Fujian, Zhejiang, and parts of Hainan.[1801] Being of the same genus, wood taken from the *D. odorifera* shares qualities with that of the *D. parviflora* including a pleasing scent and deep crimson color. The discussion below will attempt to outline the complex medieval history of the Aromatic that Draws

which he (perhaps erroneously) identified as *A. pedunculata*, and then incorrectly applied the name lakawood to this latter plant. Issues of terminology do not end on this note. Lakawood has also been identified as the obscure *Tanarius major*, see Stuart and Smith, *Chinese Materia Medica*, 428–29. Stuart and Smith cite the work of Samuel Wells Williams who claims *T. major* was imported into China from Sumatra and used for dye, see Samuel Wells Williams, *The Chinese Commercial Guide, Containing Treaties, Tariffs, Regulations, Tables, Etc*., 5th ed. (Hong Kong: A. Shortrede & Company, 1863), 105–06. The identity of lakawood as *T. major*, now considered synonymous with *Schizomeria serrata*, was subsequently rejected by David Hooper. Moreover, in the late 1920s, Hooper analyzed samples from Chinese pharmacies operating in Malaysia and found the drug sold as Drawing-Down Aromatic (*jiangxiang* 降香) to be a species of *Dalbergia* used for making incense sticks and used as a dye, see David Hooper, "On Chinese Medicine: Drugs of Chinese Pharmacies in Malaya," *The Gardens' Bulletin, Straits Settlements* 6, no. 1–5 (1929): 46 (#133). In sum, in spite of seeming widespread acceptance, there is no sound reason to treat *Acronychia pedunculata* or *Schizomeria serrata* as "varieties" of lakawood, a term which should be reserved for the *D. parviflora* and perhaps a few Southeast Asia commercial substitutes (as of yet poorly understood) used for making incense or as a red dye.

[1801] Hua, Buell, and Unschuld, *Dictionary of the Ben Cao Gang Mu*, 408 (#511); Nanjing zhongyiyao daxue, *Zhongyao da cidian*, (#3118). This tree is known as Drawing-Down Aromatic.

Down the Perfected, its various aliases, and its numerous referents, but many blind spots have yet to be resolved.

As with a handful of other aromatics, the early medieval history of the Aromatic that Draws Down the Perfected is often predicated upon questionable claims in the *Prospect of the Plants and Trees of the Southern Regions* (*Nanfang caomu zhuang* 南方草木狀). This is an early botanical work attributed to the Western Jin official Ji Han (or Xi Han) 嵇含 (263–306). Specific to our interests, Ji Han reports that a native Chinese tree with white flowers known as Purple Vine (*ziteng* 紫藤), postulated as the *A. pedunculata*, or Chinese acronychia, was burned as a "purple incense" (*zi xiang* 紫香) with power to cause the spirits to descend (*jiang shen* 降神).[1802] This purported early fourth century account is subsequently read in companion with Zhao Rukuo's *Treatise on the Barbarians* of the early thirteenth century.[1803] This latter work contains an entry for the Aromatic that Draws Down the Perfected, alternatively known to Zhao Rukuo as Purple Vine Aromatic (*ziteng xiang* 紫藤香). It is described as a scented wood exported from the Malay Peninsula and Indonesian Archipelago as well as from Guangdong and Guangxi.[1804] Based on the similarities in statements from these two sources, specifically regarding the shared nomenclature of "purple vine," the proclaimed effect in causing the descent of spiritual beings, and their overlapping

[1802] Li, *Fourth Century Flora*, 103–04, 143. Purple Vine (*ziteng*) is today most often identified as *Wisteria sinensis*, a vine with cascading purple blossoms, see Hua, Buell, and Unschuld, *Dictionary of the Ben Cao Gang Mu*, 438 (#1522), Nanjing zhongyiyao daxue, *Zhongyao da cidian*, (#4982). As noted by Huilin Li, however, because wisteria is scentless, the identification of *A. pedunculata* is preferable in the above context in spite of the fact that it is not a vine.

[1803] Such a comparison is motivated by the *Systematic Materia Medica* which cites Ji Han's plant as Purple Vine Aromatic, the precise name used by Zhao Rukuo, BCGM:2.1945 [降真香/集解]. Li Shizhen, however, questions the validity of the comparison between the two plants, to which Schafer responds that he himself "is not convinced" with Li Shenzhen's objection, Schafer, "Rosewood," 134n.51. As we will see, Li Shizhen was correct in his suspicion, but for different reasons than he postulates.

[1804] Hirth and Rockhill, *Chau Ju-Kua*, 211; Soon, "Trade in Lakawood," 136.

distribution throughout the tropics, it has been presumed that Chinese acronychia was burned as incense in the early Six Dynasties period before eventually taking the name the Aromatic that Draws Down the Perfected at an unknown later time.[1805] Additionally, it has been argued that around the late tenth century, imported *D. parviflora,* or Indonesian lakawood, started to supplant native sources of Chinese acronychia.[1806] Consequently, by the time *Treatise on the Barbarians* was compiled, it is thought the Aromatic that Draws Down the Perfected referred to both native Chinese acronychia and Indonesian lakawood, but the latter was already in the process of overtaking the former as the most preferred kind of "lakawood" incense in China.

The popularity of the Aromatic that Draws Down the Perfected during the Song is well attested. According to the *Treatise on the Barbarians*, this aromatic was so commonplace in Quanzhou 泉州, in present-day Fujian, that even the poorest families could celebrate the Lunar New Year with incense in the manner of a costly imperial sacrifice.[1807] Further evidence might be found in the Quanzhou harbor shipwreck, discovered in 1973 and dated to the end of the Southern Song. The ship capsized while returning to port with a large cargo of wood. Initial scientific analysis demonstrated that some of the recovered wood was foreign lakawood mixed in with aloeswood [HC#3] and sandalwood [HC#4].[1808] More recent analysis, however, has shown that of ten samples retested, none were determined to be

[1805] This view is most clearly articulated in Li, *Fourth Century Flora*, 103. Li's stance has been accepted by Derek Hung, see Soon, "Trade in Lakawood," 137 and Heng, "Chinese Material Culture," 222–23. It is worth nothing that Li never seems to consider that the *Treatise on the Barbarians* was primarily, if not solely, talking about an imported aromatic, not a native Chinese plant.
[1806] Heng, "Chinese Material Culture," 223–24. Schafer appears to assume that by the Tang, Purple Vine Aromatic (or in his translation, "purple liana aromatic") had already come to refer to the Indonesian import *D. parviflora*, see Schafer, *Golden Peaches*, 165.
[1807] Hirth and Rockhill, *Chau Ju-Kua*, 211; Wheatley, "Geographical Notes," 119. One might also speculate that fragrant rosewood, *D. odorifera*, which grows in Fujian, may have also been identified as the Aromatic that Draws Down the Perfected at this time, just as it is today.
[1808] Jiang, "Quanzhou wan Song dai haichuan," 27–28; Soon, "Trade in Lakawood," 136; Heng, "Chinese Material Culture," 225,

lakawood, aloeswood, or sandalwood.[1809] Regardless of the Quanzhou ship cargo, lakawood was widely available and relatively inexpensive during the Song and Yuan periods.[1810] Consequently, Yamada Kentarō speculates lakawood emerged as a natural candidate for adoption into the mass production of incense sticks.[1811]

Separated by the span of close to a millennium, the information provided by the *Prospect of the Plants and Trees of the Southern Regions* and the *Treatise on the Barbarians* appears to attest to the long-standing importance of "lakawood" (originally *A. pedunculata* and later *D. parviflora*) to Chinese olfactory culture and perfuming arts. Yet, there remains a curious silence regarding the attested names for this material (or materials) in many of our most important medieval sources regarding aromatics. For example, Purple Vine Aromatic, Purple Incense, and the Aromatic that Draws Down the Perfected are all missing from Daoshi's seventh century catalogue of flowers and aromatics, as well as from the sections on aromatics in the tenth century encyclopedia, the *Imperial Readings of the Taiping Era*. All of these names are also missing from the preface to Fan Ye's fifth century blending manual and are not listed among the most prized aromatics as noted in the early sixth century by Tao Hongjing. Moreover, Purple Incense is entirely absent from surviving medieval works in the Buddhist and Daoist canon, despite Ji Han's claim of divine attraction.[1812] Lastly, none of the

[1809] Jiang, "Quanzhou wan Song dai haichuan," 98–104, 112–19. Due to their immersion underwater and general degradation, proper testing could not be performed on the aromatic chemical compounds, thus wood slices were taken and analyzed for characteristic microstructure features. Eight different tree types, all relatively uncommon, were identified through this method: *Exbucklandia populnea*, *Metadina trichotoma*, *Cratoxylum cochinchinense*, *Homalium cochinchinense*, *Styrax japonicus*, *Pinaceae Lindl.*, *Memecylon ligustrifolium*, and *Pterospermum heterophyllum*. It should be added that microscopic wood analysis, even with optimal samples, requires significant human interpretation and the results should by no means be treated as irrefutable.
[1810] Heng, "Chinese Material Culture," 223.
[1811] Yamada, *Tōa kōryō shi kenkyū*, 222.
[1812] Purple Incense appears in a Sui-Tang Daoist text named the *Scripture of the Most High from the Dongxuan Lingbao Canon Regarding Retribution and Karmic Causes* (*Taishang dongxuan lingbao yebao yinyuan jing* 太上洞玄靈寶業報因緣經), see DZ336:9.5b. It is found, however, amid a long list of purple-colored items (pearls, jade, gold, etc.), which itself is part of a register of items that all have different colors (red, green, black,

nomenclature cited above appear in surviving materia medica literature until Li Xun's 李珣 (855?–930?) tenth century *Materia Medica of Overseas Drugs* and subsequently in Tang Shenwei's 唐慎微 (ca. 11th cent.) late eleventh century *Verified and Classified Materia Medica* (*Zhenglei bencao* 證類本草).[1813]

Critically, the authenticity of the *Prospect of the Plants and Trees of the Southern Regions* has come under scrutiny and following the persuasive arguments of Ma Tai-loi many now consider this work a forgery of the twelfth century.[1814] Consequently, the purported use of tropical Chinese acronychia (*A. pedunculata*) as a source for "Purple Incense" during the Six Dynasties should be rejected. Outside of the *Prospect of the Plants and Trees of the Southern Regions*, no other surviving early medieval source attests to a plant with the description afforded by "Ji Han" under the name of Purple Vine, Purple Incense, or, for that matter, the Aromatic that Draws Down the Perfected.

It would appear the weight of evidence for the early medieval use of the Aromatic that Draws Down the Perfected now falls to the *Records of Nanzhou* and the *Biographies of Immortals*, both of which are cited by Hong Chu and often treated as products of the Six Dynasties [17a, 17c]. Hong Chu's citations are not without issue. It would be impossible to tell from the entry as it stands now, but Hong Chu did not consult either of these works as independently circulating manuscripts. All of the information provided above is derived from a single source, the *Materia Medica of Overseas Drugs*, which itself cites this pair of texts.

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etc.). There is no reason to believe this citation to Purple Incense, one member of a comprehensive list of differently colored objects, was in reference to Ji Han's Purple Incense.

[1813] The *Systematic Materia Medica* erroneously claims that Drawing-Down Aromatic (*jiang xiang*) does not appear in Chinese medical literature until the *Verified and Classified Materia Medica* of Tang Shenwei, BCGM:2.1946 [降真香/發明].

[1814] Ma, "Nan-Fang Ts'ao-Mu Chuang." See also the relevant footnote at HC#41a. Yamada also expresses doubt in the authenticity of this work regarding its presentation of lakawood, see Yamada, *Tōa kōryō shi kenkyū*, 220.

This would not be of much further concern, as the omission of titles of secondary works that preserved primary sources was increasingly common during the Song, yet we are met with additional issues worthy of attention. Importantly, the *Records of Nanzhou* has an opaque textual history and the proclamation that the Aromatic that Draws Down the Perfected grows (*sheng* 生) in the Roman empire is unexpected [17a].[1815] In fact, this latter claim has been largely ignored by scholars who have examined the history of lakawood in China, presumably because there is no easy solution to its curious proclamation.[1816] Additionally, outside of the citation in Li Xun's *Materia Medica of Overseas Drugs*, there is no other source which confirms this passage attributed to the *Records of Nanzhou*. Equally, I have not been able to locate parallels to the passage from the so-called *Biographies of Immortals* in the Ming-era Daoist canon.[1817] These issues, along with problematic passages elsewhere, have caused me to call into question the authenticity of citations within the *Materia Medica of Overseas Drugs*, especially regarding texts that are presumably traceable to the early

[1815] The *Records of Nanzhou* is often cited in the *Materia Medica of Overseas Drugs*, yet there is little evidence of its existence earlier in the medieval period, see Zheng et al., *Dictionary of the Ben Cao Gang Mu*, 340. Laufer erroneously claims the *Records of Nanzhou* is cited in the sixth century *Essential Techniques for All People*, while Wolters erroneously claims it is cited in the seventh century *Classified Collection of Literary Arts* (*Yiwen leiju* 藝文類聚), see Laufer, *Sino-Iranica*, 247n.7 (who provides no reference) and Wolters, *Indonesian Commerce*, 88 (who apparently cites Xu Zhong's *Records of the Southern Regions*; see relevant footnote at HC#17a), respectively. According to Ma Tai-Loi, the *Records of Nanzhou* is first cited, one time, in the early eight century and seemingly not again until the publication of the *Materia Medica of Overseas Drugs* where it is cited extensively, see Ma, "Nan-Fang Ts'ao-Mu Chuang," 227 (Table 1).

[1816] Among those who pass over this passage in silence: Schafer, "Rosewood," 134; Schafer, *Golden Peaches*, 165, Li, *Fourth Century Flora*, 103–104; Soon, "Trade in Lakawood"; and Heng, "Chinese Material Culture". Yamada suggests that instead of interpreting the country as the Roman Empire in the far west, it should be understood as a place like present-day Myanmar, see Yamada, *Tōa kōryō shi kenkyū*, 220. I, on the other hand, simply believe the statement to be a fabrication by Li Xun, the compiler of the *Materia Medica of Overseas Drugs*. Yamada instead sees the problem as the proper identification of the *Records of Nanzhou*, but he nevertheless comes to believe that the Aromatic that Draws Down the Perfected was not known in China until the Tang, a stance that I modify below.

[1817] The loss of the original *Biographies of Divine Immortals* (*Shenxian zhuan* 神仙傳) may account for this failure. For a discussion on the textual history of this lost work, including its reconstitution in the late sixteenth century, see Campany, *Strange Writing*, 40–41 and especially Campany, *Heaven and Earth*, 118–28.

medieval period.[1818] Consequently, save further information coming to light, I believe all descriptions of the Aromatic that Draws Down the Perfected in this medical treatise should be dated to no earlier than the tenth century, when the *Materia Medica of Overseas Drugs* was compiled. In spite of this historical reframing, Li Xun's text (and its citations) remains the earliest source providing descriptions for the aromatic material under review.

Turning to more reliable records, Derek Heng was the first to direct attention to the appearance of the Aromatic that Draws Down the Perfected as one of the thirty-seven foreign products allowed to be traded freely by Song Chinese merchants. These items appear in a government list compiled in 982 that were set in contrast to other articles remaining under state monopoly.[1819] While this is not the earliest attestation to this aromatic in Chinese records (we will return to this below), it is clear the Aromatic that Draws Down the Perfected was considered an exotic import in the tenth century. This also aligns with the *Materia Medica of Overseas Drugs* in regard to the aromatic's origin, i.e. in the Southern Seas, per the citation of the *Records of Nanzhou* [17a] (the reference to Rome should be, I believe, treated as spurious).

We have further textual evidence supporting the late medieval importation of Indonesian lakawood (*D. parviflora*). For example, in what might be the earliest description of harvesting the Aromatic that Draws Down the Perfected (using, as we will see, a short-hand name), the *Records of Khmer* (*Zhenla ji* 真臘記), compiled at the end of the thirteenth century, provides the following note:

> Drawing-Down Aromatic grows deep in the forests. Foreigners expend much effort cutting and chopping to retrieve the heartwood of the tree. The white outer layers [i.e. sapwood] are

[1818] I also address the reliability of the *Materia Medica of Overseas Drugs* in my comments to gum guggul at HC#6, Milky Aromatic at HC#13, and lemongrass at HC#36.
[1819] Heng, "Chinese Material Culture," 223.

> eight or nine *cun* [thick], or [at least] five or six *cun* [thick]. When burned the scent is strong and projective.[1820]
> 降香生叢林中，番人頗費砍斫之功，乃樹心也。其外白皮，濃八，九寸，或五，六寸。焚之氣勁而遠。

In spite of the above passage referring to Drawing-Down Aromatic (*jiang xiang*) as a tree (*shu* 樹), it is reasonable to interpret this description as the harvesting of richly-scented Indonesian lakawood, which is cut from thick, woody lianas that reach high into the forest canopy.[1821] For further evidence, we can turn to the alternate name Purple Vine Aromatic, recorded earlier in the thirteenth century by the *Treatise on the Barbarians*, which best fits the appearance of the lakawood liana with its deep rubicund coloring. In fact, this alternate name underscoring the wood's coloration also matches better with the Malay term *kayu laka*, "wood of red dye." Moreover, the comparison of lakawood to sappanwood (*Biancaea sappan*) in Hong Chu's entry above [17e] not only makes sense on the account of sappanwood's fragrance, but also the latter's use as a red dye due to its high content of brazilin.[1822] Lastly, we find conclusive pictorial evidence for the identity Aromatic that Draws Down the Perfected in the *Classified Essentials of Materia Medica* from the early sixteenth century. An illustration depicts a non-Chinese foreigner holding a crimson-colored wood billet stripped of its bark and light-colored sapwood. This clearly shows harvested Indonesian lakawood prepared for commercial trade.[1823]

[1820] BCGM:2.1945 [降真香/集解]. This work also circulated under the name *Records of Local Customs of Khmer* (*Zhenla fengtu ji* 真臘風土記).
[1821] We are not told where such harvesting was done, but *D. parviflora* occurs on the northern parts of the Malay Peninsula. When the *Records of Khmer* were compiled, however, the Khmer Empire had lost control of most of this region in the advance of the Sukhothai Kingdom. It is possible this account conflates lakawood with sappanwood, a tree that occurs across the Indochinese Peninsula; see discussion below.
[1822] The Chinese knew sappanwood as a dye since the seventh century, see XXBC:14.356; for more on sappanwood and other Chinese imported timbers at this time, see Heng, "Chinese Material Culture," 228–33.
[1823] The image is depicted in Ming Chen, "Fanciful Images from Abroad," 306. Ming incorrectly identifies the material as *A. pedunculata*. The image is also available as part of the online digital collection of the Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin found here: https://digital.staatsbibliothek-

Ultimately, there is some debate as to whether Indonesian lakawood furnished a dye used in Southeast Asia at this time, as the *Phyllanthus emblica* (syn. *Emblica officinalis*), or the Malacca tree, seems to have been the preferred medieval source in Indonesia.[1824] Consequently, the Chinese may have inadvertently grouped several red-colored woods imported from maritime Southeast Asia under the nomenclature of the Aromatic that Draws Down the Perfected (arguably the same thing occurred in Colonial British India under the English import name laka or lakawood[1825]). This might not only account for the potentially confused description in the *Records of Khmer* of a "lakawood tree," but also the emerging mercantile distinction between the Aromatic that Draws Down the Perfected and the oddly named product called "Drawing-Down the Perfected" (*jiang zhen* 降真). Heng has analyzed the materials regarding this latter item and suggests it was possibly an unknown timber valued for its use as a brownish-red dye as opposed to its use as incense, a primary use of the lakawood vine.[1826]

This leads us to the separate issue regarding the identification of a native Chinese plant also known as the Aromatic that Draws Down the Perfected. The existence of such *flora* seems to be indicated by pharmacologist Tang Shenwei, editor of the *Verified and Classified Materia Medica,* who notes that the Aromatic that Draws Down the Perfected was exported from Qiannan 黔南, in present-day Guangxi.[1827] As we saw earlier, the *Treatise on*

berlin.de/werkansicht?PPN=PPN3346157326&PHYSID=PHYS_2340&view=overview-toc&DMDID=DMDLOG_0031. The image is found in Vol. 17, p. 2340.

[1824] Heng, "Chinese Material Culture," 227.

[1825] This is a complex issues that will have to be addressed elsewhere. Importantly, there seems to be a connection between Malay *laka*, "red dye," and Sanskrit *lākśā*, also "red dye." The latter term is most often viewed as the insect-derived red dye known as lac, but it may have had several references, as with the former term; see discussion of lac in Laufer, *Sino-Iranica*, 475–78.

[1826] This latter item is discussed in Soon, "Trade in Lakawood," 142–47.

[1827] BCGM:2.1945 [降真香/集解]; BCGM:2.1946 [降真香/發明]; see also Schafer, "Rosewood,"134.

the Barbarians also claimed this material was exported from Guangdong and Guangxi. Bracketing the question if these are merely references to the re-exportation of Indonesian lakawood, we are left with scant clues as to the plant's identity.[1828] We might refer to the *Prospect of the Plants and Trees of the Southern Regions* and consider its flowering Purple Vine that can be turned into Purple Incense to call upon the spirits. If framed as a work compiled in the twelfth century, however, the description now seems suspiciously close to that of imported lakawood, a product that was part of maritime commerce for more than a century at that point. The previous importance of Purple Vine as described in the *Prospect of the Plants and Trees of the Southern Regions* to scholars of Chinese botanical and olfactory history was its strikingly similar description and utility to that of Indonesian lakawood. Consequently, these similarities were seen as hastening the adoption of the latter as an exotic substitute for the native plant. This presumption, in fact, goes against the general trend of developing more local or regional sources of aromatics so as to become less dependent on distant, and generally more expensive, supra-regional exotica. On one hand, what was once seen as a serendipitous historical confluence of two similar plants might actually be a carefully written description devised to call to mind Indonesian lakawood. At the very least, on the other hand, one could argue the circulation of foreign lakawood motivated the Chinese

[1828] Both views of re-exportation and native production have been expressed by Derek Heng, see Soon, "Trade in Lakawood," 136 and Heng, "Chinese Material Culture," 224, respectively. Ultimately, the question rests on one's view of the term *chu* 出, "to send out," which I have chosen to translate as "export" (to maintain some ambiguity), but is perhaps more commonly read as "produce." Chinese chroniclers sometimes used other terms to more clearly indicate native manufacturing, such as "grow" (*sheng*) and "locally produce" (*tuchan* 土產). Furthermore, if one always chooses to read *chu* as "native production," it is certain that Chinese chroniclers were often wrong in their assertions, see e.g. my comments to gum guggul at HC#6 and frankincense at HC#9. Nevertheless, the redistribution of these aromatic resins took place in foreign countries, it seems less likely a foreign product would be conflated for a native one within Chinese ports, especially in the late medieval period when many record keepers were more savvy about local and international commerce.

to find a local substitute that was consequently named Purple Vine, whose identity remains uncertain.[1829]

In either regard, it is worth remembering that the *Prospect of the Plants and Trees of the Southern Regions* never refers to Purple Vine as the Aromatic that Draws Down the Perfected; the (questionable) association of the former to the latter is primarily made on the basis of Zhao Ruguo's citation of Purple Vine Aromatic. As noted above, this appears to be an alternative Chinese name for Indonesian lakawood, not a reference to a native Chinese plant. In fact, Zhao Ruguo introduces the name only after mentioning the superior type of lakawood produced in Śrīvijaya and thus perhaps Purple Vine Aromatic might only refer to that higher quality good.[1830]

Treating the identity of Purple Vine in *Prospect of the Plants and Trees of the Southern Regions* as uncertain, we can turn to earlier Chinese references regarding an aromatic substance that "draws down the Perfected" appearing in works before 982. Most notable is the "Recipe for Incense Beads to Draw Down the Perfected (*jiangzhen xiangzhu fa* 降真香珠法) preserved within the *Various Accounts of the Essential Elements of the Three Caverns*. This work that has been described as a "scrapbook of a [Daoist] amateur of the

[1829] As to whether Purple Vine should consequently be identified as Chinese acronychia remains uncertain; see account of various past speculations in Li, *Fourth Century Flora*, 103. Heng notes that in the mid-twelfth century lakawood and Purple Vine (*ziteng*) were considered separate products, but a century later were "essentially only one product, even if they may have been obtained from different sources." Heng, "Chinese Material Culture," 224. The implication here is that native Purple Vine, once a distinct product, was inextricably conflated with Indonesian lakawood. But based on Heng's own statements, Purple Vine was only listed as a foreign import in government manifests, Heng, 224. It would seem that import records shortened foreign Purple Vine Aromatic to Purple Vine, both of which may have referred to a superior variety of lakawood from Śrīvijaya (see below).
[1830] Hirth and Rockhill, *Chau Ju-Kua*, 211

Tang dynasty."[1831] It describes the instructions for making incense pellets that are burned on Daoist altars. This method includes gathering the following twelve ingredients:

> Use aloeswood (three *jin*), frankincense (two *jin*), costus root (nine *liang*), cloves (five *liang*), figwort (three *liang*), nutsedge (six *liang*), wild angelica (two *liang*), *campaka* flowers/elemi[1832] (two *liang*), sandalwood (two *liang*), mugwort (three *liang*), gum guggul (four *liang*), and Mulan magnolia flowers (three *liang*).[1833]
> 以沈水香三斤，薰木[1834]香二斤，青木香九兩，雞舌香五兩，烏參[1835]三兩，雀頭香六兩，香白芷二兩，詹匐香二兩，白檀二兩，艾香三兩，安息香四兩，木蘭三兩。

According to the directions, after crushing and sifting these items separately to make a uniform fine powder, the ingredients are mixed with ten *liang* of dried jujube paste and stirred with a pestle thirty-thousand times before being steamed inside a white porcelain vessel for a day. This mixture is then blended with three *jin* of pale honey and warmed so it can be formed into pellets the size of a chicken head. Finally, these pellets are strung together using a dark green cord and dried under the sun. When these beads are burned the scent will reportedly "ascend through the Nine Heavens and be smelled by the Heavenly Perfected and Jade Maidens who will descend and be seen in the sky."[1836]

As is evident from this description, the Aromatic that Draws Down the Perfected also referred to a Daoist blend of incense. This finds further evidence in the full citation from the *Materia Medica of Overseas Drugs* (not quoted by Hong Chu), again purportedly quoting from the *Biographies of Immortals*. It reports the aromatic is comprised of "all sorts of

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[1831] Schipper and Verellen, *The Taoist Canon*, 355. There is evidence this work was redacted through the twelfth century, however.
[1832] Given that there is no evidence for a sizable medieval trade in *campaka* flowers (*zhanpu* 詹匐, or 薝蔔, 占匐), it is possible this is an error for elemi, known as *zhantang* 詹糖 [HC#10].
[1833] DZ839:11b–12a.
[1834] Read 薰木 as 薰陸.
[1835] Read 烏參 as 玄參.
[1836] 上徹九天，天真玉女聞之，降鑒於虛空之中。DZ839:11b–12a. An alternative name for this recipe is given as the Triple Perfected Nine Blend Incense Bead Pellets (*sanzhen jiuhe xiang zhuwan* 三真九和香珠丸). A different version of this recipe is discussed in Liu, *Songdai Xiangpu*, 312–13.

blended aromatics."[1837] Even if this statement cannot be traced to an extant Daoist scripture, it is indicative of a view that was circulating in the late medieval period regarding the composite nature of this aromatic substance.

In addition, there is also evidence the Aromatic that Draws Down the Perfected was an aromatic plant now unknown to us. For example, elsewhere in the *Various Accounts of the Essential Elements of the Three Caverns*, we find the Aromatic that Draws Down the Perfected cited as an individual ingredient in other blending recipes.[1838] It also appears in the now lost *Materia Aromatica of Divine Immortals*, the sole surviving passage of which is preserved in the *Various Accounts of the Essential Elements of the Three Caverns*, as one of the kinds of incense that ascends forty *li* into the heavens, along with aloeswood, sandalwood, storax, and costus [HC#16].[1839] The earliest citation to the Aromatic that Draws Down the Perfected appears in the late sixth century Daoist compendia, the *Essence of the Supreme Secrets* (*Wushang biyao* 無上祕要; DZ1138). Notably, it appears in a five ingredient recipe with cinnabar and three other plants that all have substantial root structures: licorice root, costus root, and foxglove root (*gan dihuang* 干地黃; *Rehmannia glutinosa*).[1840]

[1837] 拌和諸香。BCGM:2.1945 [降真香/釋名]. This statement is only traced to the *Systematic Materia Medica* citation of the *Materia Medica of Overseas Drugs*, see HYBC:3.43.57n7. Admittedly, this claim contrasts with the later statement that aromatic is not fragrant when first burned and must be mixed with other aromatics to have a strong smell [17e]. It appears the Aromatic that Draws Down the Perfected was envisioned both as a blend and an individual ingredient (see comments below).

[1838] DZ839:13a and DZ839:13b. Both recipes appear at the very end of the document and may represent a later addition.

[1839] 沈香，篋香，降真香，白檀香，蘇合香，青木香，此香上衝四十里。DZ839:11b. This passage likely dates from the Song. The reference to ascending forty *li* into the heavens point to the description of incense use in the *Grotto Perfection Mystery Scripture of the Secret Books on Great Cinnabar of the Grotto Perfection Supreme One and Lord Emperor*, see my discussion of this passage in Chapter 5, Section 7.

[1840] DZ1138.57.2a.

Thus, the context suggests our aromatic in question may have originally been a plant with a taproot or rhizome.[1841]

Curiously, elsewhere in the *Essence of the Supreme Secrets* we also find a very similar recipe for incense beads as described above, but this time given under the title "Recipe for Incense Beads that Merge with the Upper Prime" [HC#106]. Thus, according to the best evidence we have at our disposal, the Aromatic that Draws Down the Perfected originated in Daoist sources in reference to an individual plant, as seen in the *Essence of the Supreme Secrets*, but was later adopted as an alternative name for a blend of twelve ingredients, such as we see preserved in the *Various Accounts of the Essential Elements of the Three Caverns*. As to whether the Aromatic that Draws Down the Perfected that appears as an individual ingredient in other blending recipes in the *Various Accounts of the Essential Elements of the Three Caverns* refers to a singular substance or a complex blend is impossible to determine.[1842]

There are many questions that cannot be answered at this point. Perhaps most pressing is why a patently Daoist name came to be applied to a foreign import such as Indonesian lakawood. It has been suggested that Daoists found lakawood particularly appealing and bestowed upon it an illustrious name, but such speculation is offered without evidence.[1843] One might search for a connection between the unknown root plant of the

[1841] Edward Schafer also points to a Tang era poem which cites the Aromatic that Draws Down the Perfected, but we are again left with little evidence as to its identity, see Schafer, *Golden Peaches*, 165. Notably, this special incense is paired with "the wine which extends life," hinting that neither phrase referred to real materials, but were poetic illustrations highlighting the perceived function of both wine and incense in Daoist ritual contexts.
[1842] As we see elsewhere in the Daoist canon, incense beads – themselves a twelve-ingredient blend – are used as one of five ingredients for a scented lamp oil, see my comments to Incense Beads at HC#106.
[1843] Needham and Lu, *Science and Civilisation in China,* Vol. 5, Part 2, 141n.h.

Essence of the Supreme Secrets and the Indonesian import made of thick woody vines, but unless more information is uncovered, little of value can be said at the moment. Furthermore, the relationship between Purple Vine (from the *Prospect of the Plants and Trees of the Southern Regions*) and Purple Vine Aromatic (from the *Treatise on the Barbarians*) remains uncertain as does the identity of the presumably native Aromatic that Draws Down the Perfected which was exported from the Chinese tropical south in the eleventh through thirteenth centuries. The longstanding claim that Chinese acronychia (*A. pedunculata*) might be one of these native Chinese "lakawoods" holds no merit. Lastly, it remains unknown when the name Drawing-Down Aromatic came to refer to the fragrant rosewood, but the popularity of lakawood incense in Fujian in the early thirteenth century might indicate an early substitution with this scented crimson-colored wood.

In review, the Aromatic that Draws Down the Perfected first appears in the Daoist *Essence of the Supreme Secrets* of the late sixth century as an ingredient in a recipe alongside three other root plants. We may speculate that it too referred to an unidentified plant with scented root. Then, possibly during the Tang, this name was applied to an older blending recipe for making Daoist incense beads before being used to refer to a foreign import aromatic by the late tenth century, most likely Indonesian lakawood (*D. parviflora*). The foreign nature of this aromatic is supported by governmental records and the *Records of Nanzhou*, while its composite nature is suggested by the *Biographies of Immortals*, the latter two of which should be treated as representative of views no earlier than the tenth century when the *Materia Medica of Overseas Drugs* was compiled. In the next three centuries, several more names appear that seem related to the trade of Indonesian lakawood, but which may refer to different materials, including Purple Vine, Purple Vine Aromatic, Drawing-

Down Aromatic (*jiang xiang*), and Drawing-Down the Perfected (*jiang zhen*). Lastly, at a point in time not yet well-established, the name Drawing-Down Aromatic was used to refer to native Chinese fragrant rosewood (*D. odorifera*).

18) Aina Aromatic (tree moss / Indian dill? → ngai camphor) 艾納香

[18a] The *Treatise on the Guang Region* states, "Exported from the Western countries."

[18b] It resembles delicate mugwort. Furthermore, there is a green coating on pine tree bark that is also called *aina*. It can be blended with all sorts of aromatics. When burned, it is able to condense smoke with a greenish white [hue] that does not disperse."

[18c] The *Supplement to the Materia Medica* states, "Its taste is warm. It is non-toxic. It treats malign *qi* and is an insecticide. It treats abdominal cold[1844] and outflow with free-flux illness[1845].

[18a] 廣志云：出西國。[1846]

[1844] Zhang and Unschuld, *Dictionary of the Ben Cao Gang Mu*, 175.
[1845] Zhang and Unschuld, 571.
[1846] Cf. TPYL:8.982.862, cf. T2122:573c04. Both of these sources replace "Western countries" with the "states of the Piao" in present-day Myanmar, see my comments to this entry; cf. BCGM:1.898 [艾納香/集解]. The relevant passage in the *Systematic Materia Medica*, as cited by *Materia Medica of the Kaibao Era*, contains "Western countries."

[18b] 似細艾。又云[1847]松樹皮[1848]綠衣，亦名艾納。可以合諸香，燒之能聚其煙，青白不散。[1849]

[18c] 本草拾遺曰：味溫無毒。[1850]

[18d] 主惡氣，殺蛀[1851]蟲，主腹冷，泄痢。[1852]

[COMMENTS] Ngai camphor, also commonly known as blumea camphor, is extracted from the woody *Blumea balsamifera* shrub that grows widely across Southeast Asia, including coastal China, Taiwan, the Indochinese Peninsula, Malay Peninsula, Indonesia Archipelago, Philippine Islands (where it is known as *sambong*), northeastern India, and Nepal.[1853] Unlike the natural "free" deposits of crystalline camphor found in the trunk of the *Dryobalanops aromatica* tree [HC#1], ngai camphor is necessarily obtained through more laborious extraction methods. Modern techniques involve decocting the uppermost leaves and branches of the *B. balsamifera* and distilling the aqueous solution to obtain the camphoraceous essential oil. It is also possible to collect a small amount of crystalline grains after cooling the liquid or increasing the yield through additional sublimation.[1854] Bruised leaves and broken

[1847] Read 云 as 有, following BCGM:1.898 [艾納香/集解].
[1848] Read 樹皮 as 樹皮上, following BCGM:1.898 [艾納香/集解].
[1849] Unattributed, paraphrased quote from the *Newly Revised Materia Medica*; cf. XXBC:12.302. According to the *Systematic Materia Medica*, this passage was also cited in the *Materia Medica of the Kaibao* along with the quote from the *Treatise on the Guang Region* [18a], see BCGM:1.898 [艾納香/集解]. Critically, the *Materia Medica of the Kaibao* states the description from the *Newly Revised Materia Medica* and the plant noted in the *Treatise on the Guang Region* are *not* referring to the same plant, a critical point obscured by Hong Chu's citation. See also my commentary to this entry.
[1850] Cf. BCGM:1.898 [艾納香/氣味].
[1851] Omit 蛀, following BCGM:1.899 [艾納香/主治].
[1852] Unattributed, paraphrased quote from the *Materia Medica of the Kaibao Era*; cf. BCGM:1.899 [艾納香/主治].
[1853] For clarity, I will only refer to the extracted camphor product as ngai camphor, but this name is also used as common nomenclature for the *B. balsamifera* plant. For a map showing the geographic distribution of this plant, see Donkin, *Dragon's Brain*, 52; also consult Donkin, 76–78, 86–87, 167.
[1854] Wheatley, "Geographical Notes," 103–05; Donkin, *Dragon's Brain*, 42–43 and sources cited therein.

twigs of the *B. balsamifera* give off a strong smell of camphor, undoubtedly leading to early experimentation with various extraction techniques. While Aina Aromatic (*aina xiang* 艾蒳香) and *aina* 艾蒳 (or 艾納) are both sometimes identified as ngai camphor, in the early medieval period the latter was identified as a different aromatic plant, most likely a type of lichenized tree fungus or possibly Indian dill.

Let us turn first to ngai camphor and the early evidence for camphor extraction more broadly. In general, the origins of camphor distillation and sublimation remain a mystery. It is unknown when or where camphor was first extracted or how the knowledge was transmitted. Among the earliest to discuss camphor refinement through sublimation was the ninth century Arab perfumer al-Kindī (fl. 866).[1855] Furthermore, Ibn Māsawayh, a slightly older contemporary of al-Kindī, also mentions a refined camphor sublimate made from cruder camphor varieties.[1856] Notably, both figures do not discuss extraction techniques from raw materials, only methods to purify commercially traded products. In addition, late medieval Sanskrit sources make a distinction between *pakva karpūra*, "heated camphor," and *apakva karpūra*, "unheated camphor," terminology that aligns with contemporaneous Chinese distinctions between "heated" (sublimated) and "fresh" (free) camphor. A provisional search of Indic sources, however, suggests this terminology appeared only after Chinese texts were already reporting on camphor sublimation in maritime Southeast Asia.[1857]

[1855] Needham et al., *Science and Civilisation,* Vol. 5, Part 4, 49; cf. Donkin, *Dragon's Brain*, 43 (citing al-Kindī in preparation of a synthetic camphor); see also Yamada, *Tōa kōryō shi kenkyū*, 58 (citing the work of Ibn Serapion).

[1856] Levey, "Ibn Māsawaih," 402. The term *muṣ"ad* refers to heating with fire and most likely points to a sublimation method.

[1857] Donkin claims these Indic distinctions between *pakva* and *apakve* camphor appear "by at least the 7th century," but provides no further citations, Donkin, *Dragon's Brain*, 96. I have been unable to locate such early references. The twelfth century poem *Rājataraṅgiṇī* contains a reference to "uncooked camphor," treating it as a logical impossibility like the "horns of a hare," see Sternbach, "Camphor in India," 457. The relevant passage speaks to the absurdity of a vow reputedly held by the famed king Harṣa who ruled northern India in the seventh century. It seems Donkin treated this twelfth century text as faithfully preserving seventh century history, a

Consequently, Chinese sources appear to be the earliest to preserve evidence for camphor extraction methods. Interestingly, while sublimation techniques were well known to Chinese alchemists since the Han, if not much earlier, we find no discussion about the extraction of camphor, nor any essential oils from plants, until after the fall of the Tang.[1858]

The earliest Chinese report on camphor extraction I have located comes two centuries after the discussion on camphor refinement in the treatises by al-Kindī and Ibn Māsawayh. It is found in Su Song's 蘇頌 (1020–1101) *Illustrated Classic of Materia Medica* published in 1062. The text provides the following descriptive note:

> Nowadays, the Dragon Brain South of the Seas[1859] is often [made] by using fire to dry out [i.e. sublimate] and create the flakes. These are further mixed with adulterants and used in medicine. The only valuable kind is fresh [i.e. harvested directly from the tree]; that with the appearance of plum blossom petals is most outstanding.[1860]
> 今海南龍腦多用火煿成片。其中亦容雜偽入藥。惟貴生者，狀若梅花瓣甚佳也。

This passage clearly distinguishes between a natural camphor crystals harvested from the *D. aromatica* and a kind of camphor manufactured by "drying with fire" (*bi* 煿), a term which I understand as sublimation. Because this camphor product is cited as originating "South of the Seas," an imprecise name for the distant lands south of the Gulf of Tonkin, we can be sure did this not refer to common camphor extracted from the indigenous Chinese *Cinnamomum camphora*. Moreover, as we saw earlier in the *Materia Aromatica*, Hong Chu was aware of a sublimation technique to procure a lesser-quality of camphor known as Heated Dragon Brain

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view that I do not share. Paul Wheatley speaks of *pakva karpūra* being traded in the twelfth century but offers no citation, Wheatley, "Geographical Notes," 101; see also Ptak, "Camphor," 146.

[1858] For discussion of early Chinese sublimation apparatus, see Needham et al., *Science and Civilisation,* Vol. 5, Part 4, 44–55.

[1859] As noted in the entry for sandalwood at HC#4a, *hainan* 海南 in this case most likely does not refer to the tropical Chinese island of Hainan. As described by Schafer, "South of the Seas" (*hainan*) was used through the Tang in into the Song to describe distant locations among the Indochinese Peninsula and Indonesian Archipelago, see Schafer, *Shore of Pearls*, 9.

[1860] BCGM:2.1965 [龍腦香/集解]; this passage is discussed in Yamada, *Tōa kōryō shi kenkyū*, 58.

that was contrasted against Fresh Dragon Brain [HC#1e]. Indeed, Heated Dragon Brain is first recorded as part of a tribute from the kingdom of Champa (Zhancheng 占城, "the city of Chams"), located in present-day central and southern Vietnam, in 1011. It thus likely reflects a camphor sublimate created by the technique explained in the *Illustrated Classic of Materia Medica* half a century later.[1861] It is impossible to know, however, if this tribute refers to locally produced ngai camphor or re-exported camphor extracted from the wood of the *D. aromatica* (see below).

One of the more detailed descriptions of camphor sublimation appears in Ye Tinggui's *Record of Aromatics of the Southern Barbarians* (*Nanfan xiang lu* 南蕃香錄), dating to approximately 1151. Following a description of different grades of naturally formed camphor crystals, we are given the following directions:

> After the camphor crystals are cleared, the fir-like[1862] boards are called camphorwood planks. These are broken into fragments and mixed together with sawdust. This [mixture] is then placed inside porcelain basins, covered with lids, and the seams are sealed. When [the basins] are baked in hot ash, the [camphor] vapor sublimates, condensing into clumps [on the lids]. This is called Heated Dragon [Brain].[1863]
> 取腦已淨，其杉板謂之腦本[1864]，與鋸屑同搗碎和，置甕盆內，以笠覆之，封其縫，熱灰煨煴，其氣飛上凝結而成塊，謂之熟腦。

This passage was copied, with minor changes, into Zhao Rukuo's *Treatise on the Barbarians* in the early thirteenth century.[1865] The description explains how camphorwood, once cleared

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[1861] Heated Dragon Brain is recorded among the preserved documents known as the *Collection of Institutional Matters of the Song* (*Song huiyao* 宋會要), see Lin, *Songdai xiangyao*, 179; see also Liu, *Songdai Xiangpu*, 127. For a brief discussion of this genre, see Heng, "Digital Age," 34–36.

[1862] The reference to the Chinese fir tree is due to the fact that medieval Chinese materia medica literature considered the *D. aromatica* to smell and look like the fir tree, see XXBC:13.338–339; see also HC#1b. Earlier in the passage, Ye Tinggui refers to *D. aromatica* trees as thousand-year-old fir trees, see SKQS:844.242b.

[1863] SKQS:844.243a03–05; see also Liu, *Songdai Xiangpu*, 481. The preface to this work is dated to year 21 of *shaoxing* 紹興, i.e. 1151, see SKQS:844.579b10.

[1864] Read 本 as 木札, following Liu, *Songdai Xiangpu*, 481.

[1865] Hirth and Rockhill, *Chau Ju-Kua*, 193–94 (see also Donkin, *Dragon's Brain*, 173–74); see also comparison of passages in Yamada, *Tōa kōryō shi kenkyū*, 37–38.

of scented crystals, is fragmented into chips and heated inside sealed porcelain vessels, thus creating a vapor that condensates into camphor flakes. There are three important points raised by this passage. First, this passage, as with the *Illustrated Classic of Materia Medica*, does not describe a practice among the Chinese, but one used by unnamed local peoples of maritime Southeast Asia.[1866] Secondly, we can be more assured this sublimation process was applied to the broken wood chips of the *D. aromatica* since the text describes the wood as first being cleared of camphor crystals. Third, this method was clearly applied to extract camphor from raw materials, not to refine a crude product. In the subsequent passage, Ye Tinggui also mentions camphor oil (*naoyou* 腦油), which may indicate the viscid oleoresin of *D. aromatica* or, perhaps, the camphoraceous distillate from the leaves and branches of the *B. balsamifera* – yet it should be understood the description above does not directly indicate this latter process.[1867]

Chinese records of foreign tributes arriving during the Song might point to an expanded manufacturing capacity of camphor in Southeast Asia in this period. In the analysis of these governmental records, Derek Heng has shown that camphor was a regular tributary gift from the kingdom of Champa, Boni 渤泥 (Borneo), and Java for several decades in the tenth century. After 1011, however, foreign camphor tributes cease for a generation until mysteriously reappearing again in 1070 as part of a diplomatic mission from the Dashi

[1866] Ye Tinggui claims that camphor was produced in Borneo and Śrīvijaya, while Zhao Rukuo reports that Śrīvijaya was only a regional entrepôt, and that Barus (Fansūr), on Sumatra, was a producer, see SKQS:844.242b and Hirth and Rockhill, *Chau Ju-Kua*, 193, respectively.
[1867] Wheatley hints at this latter interpretation, see Wheatley, "Geographical Notes," 103. Donkin remarks that distillation (read sublimation) "was of minor importance in the archipelago," but provides no rationale for such a claim, Donkin, *Dragon's Brain*, 174. As we will see, records suggest camphor sublimation was ongoing since the late tenth century.

Arabs.[1868] Notably, after 1070, Śrīvijaya also emerges as a new supplier for camphor in their diplomatic outreach to China. This includes a mission sent in 1078 offering the Aromatic from Barus [HC#12], a name originally referring to the oleoresin tapped from the *D. aromatica*. Heng interprets this geographical shift in camphor production as potential evidence for the recent adoption of distillation techniques for the *B. balsamifera* and thus the Aromatic of Barus is best understood here, according to Heng, as distilled oil, not the natural exudate from the *D. aromatica*.[1869] Since the traditional harvesting of camphor required the felling of many *D. aromatica* trees in search of the elusive oleoresin, we may speculate this possible shift to the *B. balsamifera* could have been also motivated by the deforestation of older harvesting areas around northern Sumatra and the southern Malay Peninsula. It could also be the case that the sublimation methods described above were applied to any remaining stockpiles of *D. aromatica* wood and Śrīvijaya was merely (re-)exporting the camphor that was extracted.[1870]

A more precise understanding of these events eludes us. It is worth repeating that just as camphor tributes temporarily ceased (for reasons that are not clear), Champa sent a tribute of sublimated camphor to China in 1011. Moreover, in 986, Champa had sent Fresh Dragon Brain to the Chinese court, suggesting an alternative "extracted" variety was already manufactured at the time, but at it happened was not sent with this delegation.[1871] The

[1868] While the trend noted by Heng is generally accurate, Śrīvijaya did send a tribute of camphor crystals in 1017, see Lin, *Songdai xiangyao*, 181.
[1869] Heng, "Chinese Material Culture," 217–21; Heng, "Digital Age," 38, 41; for the listing of relevant camphor tributes after 1070, see Lin, *Songdai xiangyao*, 185–86.
[1870] Zhao Rukuo reports that Śrīvijaya was mistaken as a producer of camphor when it was only a regional redistributor, Hirth and Rockhill, *Chau Ju-Kua*, 193; such a claim relies on the presumption that Śrīvijayan political control did not extend to Barus in the north, see Ptak, "Camphor," 149.
[1871] Lin, *Songdai xiangyao*, 174. In 966, Champa also sent Azure Dragon Brain to China, see Lin, *Songdai xiangyao*, 170. Paul Pelliot has suggested this may refer to the camphor known as *azraq*, "blue camphor," in Arabic, see Pelliot, *Marco Polo*, Vol. 2, 668–69. Later Arabic sources claim this camphor was sublimated from wood, see Levey, "Ibn Māsawaih," 402n.58.

emergence of Champa in the late tenth century as a source for sublimated or distilled camphor might be related to the influence of Arab perfumery. For example, the Cham monarch Indravarman III (r. 918–960) sent an ambassador to the Later Zhou (951–960) court in 958 with the name Pu Hasan 莆訶散, or Abū al-Ḥasan, according to Chinese records.[1872] Importantly, this mission carried a tribute of fifteen bottles of rose water (*qiangwei shui* 薔薇水) which originated in the Western Regions.[1873] For context, a century before this, al-Kindī was already experimenting with distillation stills for the creation of rose water, thus we might safely assume the tribute from Champa was the sweet-smelling distillate of rose petals.[1874] The received Cham delegation of 958 is the earliest Chinese report of such an item. Since King Indravarman's mission predates the earliest Chinese tributary records of extracted camphor, it is possible Arab distillation or sublimation techniques were passed to the Chams in the mid-to-late tenth century. If extraction techniques were not already performed by 986 when Fresh Dragon Brain was presented, then they were certainly used by 1011 when Heated Dragon Brain was sent.

While the surviving tributary records points us to Champa, there is no reason to believe a similar exchange of ideas was not occurring elsewhere in Southeast Asia, especially on Sumatra where there was a consistent Arab presence and camphor harvesting was a major industry.[1875] Related to our concerns here, if camphor was indeed manufactured in Champa,

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[1872] SongS:489.14079. For speculation on the envoy's name, see Hirth and Rockhill, *Chau Ju-Kua*, 203; Schafer, *Golden Peaches*, 173.
[1873] Schafer, *Vermilion Bird*, 175; Bielenstein, *Diplomacy and Trade*, 40–41.
[1874] For more on early rose water distillation, see Aḥmad Yūsuf Ḥasan, *Islamic Technology: An Illustrated History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 138–44; see also remarks regarding rose water in relation to China in Hirth and Rockhill, *Chau Ju-Kua*, 203–04; Schafer, *Golden Peaches*, 173–74; Needham et al., *Science and Civilisation,* Vol. 5, Part 4, 158–62.
[1875] For example, fourteen years after Champa's delegation, Śrīvijaya sent rose water to the Chinese court in 974, see Lin, *Songdai xiangyao*, 171. A comparison with contemporary Arabic sources may also be helpful, as Ibn Khurdādhbih (9th cent.), Ibn Sinā (980–1037), Ibn Jazla (11th cent.), and Ibn Serapion (12th cent.) all wrote

and not merely trans-shipped through the region, it would necessarily be made from the *B. balsamifera* using distillation.[1876] It is of course also possible the Chams were redistributing sublimated camphor imported from Sumatra or elsewhere. Whatever the case may be, it appears these new extraction techniques opened a fresh avenue for camphor production in East Asia, specifically with the Chinese production of common camphor from the *C. camphora*, for which the earliest evidence appears in the mid-to-late eleventh century.[1877]

Ultimately, this leads us to the question of when ngai camphor distillate is first explicitly cited in historical sources, as the previous discussion relies on inference and speculation. This is surprisingly difficult to ascertain. The term Aina Aromatic, now widely understood to refer to the *B. balsamifera* from which ngai camphor derives first appears in Chinese materia medica literature of the late tenth century, specifically with the compilation of the *Materia Medica of the Kaibao Era* published in its final form in 974.[1878] This appearance would roughly correspond to the presumed rise in importance of ngai camphor as a manufactured product as suggested by the Champa tributes discussed above. Yet, the relevant passage in the *Materia Medica of the Kaibao Era*, most of which is copied and anonymized by Hong Chu [18b], does not discuss distillation or camphor extraction of any

about different types of camphor, with Ibn Sinā and Ibn Jazla reportedly describing *asfarnak* or *azrak*, "blue camphor," as being sublimated from wood, see citations in Levey, "Ibn Māsawaih," 402n.58; Donkin, *Dragon's Brain*, 119. For further discussion of *azraq* and its possible connection to Azure Dragon Brain, see Pelliot, *Marco Polo*, Vol. 2, 668–69.

[1876] Donkin speculates that the Cham wealthy used imported camphor while the masses depended on locally produced supplies, see Donkin, *Dragon's Brain*, 170.

[1877] See my comments to camphor at HC#1.

[1878] It appears the *Materia Medica of the Kaibao Era* copied a portion of the entry on pine resin from *Newly Revised Materia Medica* regarding *aina* (recorded as a substance growing on pine trees) and gave it its own individual entry under the new headword Aina Aromatic. Critically, however, the editors copied this passage to expressly state that its description did *not* correspond to the *aina* noted in the *Treatise on the Guang Region* [18a], see BCGM:1.898 [艾納香/集解], BCGM:1.1414 [桑花 /附錄] [sic]. This critical passage is not copied into Hong Chu's entry.

kind.[1879] Moreover, in spite of claims to the contrary, I have found no description in Chinese materia medica literature up through the end of the sixteenth century that describes the manufacturing of ngai camphor.[1880]

Consequently, it cannot be excluded from consideration that ngai camphor distillation is, in fact, a relatively modern industry that was unknown to the Chams or other nations in the Southern Seas during the tenth century.[1881] For one, it has long been thought that ngai camphor was never imported into Western markets, leaving only the *D. aromatica* and *C. camphora* as the principal botanical sources for camphor worldwide. Furthermore, the Western discovery of ngai camphor production comes only in the mid-nineteenth century, when the tropical island of Hainan was recorded as producing a crude camphor distillate that was sent to Guangdong for further refinement.[1882] As to when camphor distillation on Hainan began remains unknown, but it should be noted that the island was a hub of Arab mercantile activity, some say piracy, since the Tang.[1883]

[1879] Several *Blumea* species grow wild in India, especially in the north east and in present-day Myanmar. Sanskrit works refer to these plants as *kukundara* or *kukudru*, see Donkin, *Dragon's Brain*, 87. I have found no clear evidence this plant was distilled for camphor prior to the modern period.

[1880] It has been claimed that ngai camphor manufacturing is first described in the *Systematic Materia Medica* of the late sixteenth century, but I have located no such passage in this text, cf. Wheatley, "Geographical Notes," 103 (who provides no citation); see also Donkin, *Dragon's Brain*, 78n.246 (citing Wheatley), 218n.54 (citing Burkhill).

[1881] We are stymied in our search by the fact that there is apparently no pre-modern Chinese, Sanskrit, or Arabic term that singularly points to camphor distilled from *B. balsamifera*. G.E. Gerini was fairly confident in identifying the Sanskrit term *pāṁsūra* [sic], or similar variant, as such a distillate, subsequently claiming that, "camphor was long centuries ago produced in considerable quantities in India – a fact which I have never seen brought forward as yet in any publication – and that it was, almost beyond doubt, collected from the *Blumea* shrub," Gerini, *Researches on Ptolemy's Geography*, 439n.1. According to Gerini, this term subsequently spread into Southeast Asia where is was adopted for the name of *D. aromatica* trees and their products, later appearing in Arab treatises of the ninth century as the toponym Fanśūr and highest quality camphor known as *fanśūrī*, see Gerini, 435; see also Donkin, *Dragon's Brain*, 131. This stance had not been accepted by later scholarship and has been refuted by Pelliot, see Pelliot, *Marco Polo*, Vol. 2, 662–63. Gerini's thesis came on the heels of the recently uncovered ngai camphor industry of southern China. This revelation seems to have presented itself as a convenient explanation for the recurring claims of camphor production in medieval India.

[1882] See discussion and relevant citations in Puran Singh, "A Note on the Manufacture of Ngai Camphor from the Blumea Balsamifera D.C. of Burma," in *The Indian Forest Records*, vol. 1 (Calcutta: Superintendent of Government Printing, 1909), 265–86.

[1883] Schafer, *Vermilion Bird*, 28, 163; Schafer, *Shore of Pearls*, 36, 84.

In review, while the *Illustrated Classic of Materia Medica* of 1062 supports the view that camphor extraction through sublimation was practiced in maritime Southeast Asia during the mid-eleventh century, a dating that may be extended back a century based on records of Cham tributes, specifically of Heated Dragon Brain in 1011 and Fresh Dragon Brain in 986, it is not clear which raw materials were used. The weight of evidence, *pace* Heng, suggests that woods chips of the *D. aromatica* were utilized in this period, not the branches and twigs of the *B. balsamifera*, a point clearly illustrated in the *Record of Aromatics of the Southern Barbarians* of 1151.

If we return to the *Materia Medica of the Kaibao Era* what further information on *aina* can we glean? For one, Aina Aromatic is claimed to resemble herbaceous mugwort (*Artemesia* spp.).[1884] The analogy between *Artemesia* and (presumably) *B. balsamifera* may be based on appearance, as neither are large trees, yet *Artemesia* species are comparatively much smaller plants, thus making the comparison rather tenuous.[1885] If we turn to other medical literature, Aina Aromatic appears twice in the *Essential Priceless Prescriptions for All Urgent Ills* (*Beiji qianjin yaofang* 備急千金要方; DZ1163), a practical medical formulary first compiled in the mid-seventh century, but edited up through the eleventh century. Regardless of a precise dating, Aina Aromatic is listed among an eighteen-ingredient

[1884] The fact that Stuart and Smith reported that the "plant is not described" and, moreover, that the extant description was mainly for a "stearopten," i.e., a solidified essential oil, reveals how poorly they understood the (admittedly cryptic) entry for Aina Aromatic, see Stuart and Smith, *Chinese Materia Medica*, 69. As we will see, most of the entry does not discuss ngai camphor at all.

[1885] These issues apparently caused no concern for Joseph Needham who states this passage refers to *B. balsamifera*, see Needham, Lu, and Huang, *Science and Civilisation,* Vol. 6, Part 1, 303. Based on an older report, Donkin mistakenly claims that Li Shizhen compares the smell of mugwort (*Artemesia* spp.) leaves and *B. balsamifera* leaves, see Donkin, *Dragon's Brain*, 46. The comparison is properly between mugwort and Thousand Year Ai (*qiannian ai* 千年艾), see BCGM:1.941 [千年艾/集解]. This latter plant, first included in the *Systematic Materia Medica*, is now identified as *Crossostephium chinense*, of the daisy family, see Nanjing zhongyiyao daxue, *Zhongyao da cidian*, #423. Notably, that Li Shizhen's description of the Thousand Year Ai as having yellow flowers like the wild chrysanthemum does not align with the *B. balsamifera*.

recipe for a perfume blend and among a six-ingredient recipe for a halitosis remedy.[1886] In both cases, it is treated as a valued aromatic component. This correlates with the other information provided in the *Materia Medica of the Kaibao Era* which describes the plant in question as a valuable ingredient for perfuming [18b].

The description of Aina Aromatic in the *Materia Medica of the Kaibao Era* is relevant to older medieval works that, for some, represent the earliest importation of distilled ngai camphor into China, a belief which I believe is untenable. Specifically, the *Treatise on the Guang Region* by Guo Yigong, written in the mid-fifth century, lists *aina* as an export of the (city-)states of Piao 剽 (or 驃 or 漂), located on the Irrawaddy River in present-day Upper Myanmar (note that Hong Chu's entry uses the more generic "Western countries" [18a]).[1887] The question remains if the *Treatise on the Guang Region* intended to refer to *B. balsamifera* (a plant native to the region[1888]), to its extracted camphor aromatic, or to a different plant. As we have seen, camphor extraction was not described in any literature until many centuries after the *Treatise on the Guang Region* was compiled, making this identification highly unlikely. Surviving fragments of Guo Yigong's passage on *aina* provide no further details on the plant, but there is other evidence from the medieval period where *aina* referred to altogether different *flora*.

For example, the medieval Chinese Buddhist tradition treats *aina* as a type of fragrant plant that appears distinct the shrubby *B. balsamifera*. *Aina* is found in the **Mahāsattva Sutra (Mohe chatuo jing* 摩訶剎頭經; T696*)*, alternatively titled *the Sutra on Washing the*

[1886] DZ1163:17.11b–12a and 184a–4b, respectively. Protection against fetid breath is also noted in medieval Sanskrit sources, see Sternbach, "Camphor in India," 437.
[1887] T2122:573c04; TPYL:8.982.862.
[1888] As reported in the early twentieth century, *B. balsamifera* is "known to grow more abundantly in Burma than elsewhere," Singh, "Note on the Manufacture of Ngai Camphor," 268.

Image of the Buddha (*Guan fo xingxiang jing* 灌佛形像經), a work listed as anonymous in the sixth century catalog of Buddhist scriptures by Sengyou, thus providing a *terminus ante quem*.[1889] In this text, *aina* is among the ingredients for preparing the scented five-colored waters (wuse shui 五色) used to bathe the statue of the Buddha during his birthday celebrations.[1890] The ritualist is directed to combine *aina* with Indian *douliang* [HC#34] and Indian bay leaf [HC#38], which are described as three different kinds of plants or herbs *(cao* 草). They are to be crushed and steeped in water to provide the liquid with a dark greenish (*qing* 青) hue.[1891] Based on these directions, it is impossible for *aina* to have referred to distilled camphor flakes or a camphoraceous oil. Furthermore, Huilin's early ninth century dictionary simply notes that *aina* is a fragrant herb (*xiangcao* 香草) and makes no connection to imported (or native) camphor products.[1892]

Fortunately, one Buddhist scripture provides further insight into the botanical identity of this plant. *Aina* is also found listed among the ingredients for the balneotherapy of goddess Sarasvatī as recounted in the *Sutra of Golden Light*.[1893] In the eighth century translation of Yijing we are provided a transcription for *aina* as *sheliye* 世黎也, Middle Chinese **śjäi-liei-jia*, which renders an underlying *śaileya*.[1894] There are two possible identifications of *śaileya* relevant to our inquiry. The primary meaning is *Anethum graveolens* (syn. *Peucedanum*

[1889] T2145:29a17.
[1890] T696:798b13 (and summarized by Daoshi, see T2122:543b06; T2123:77b01). I discuss these directions in more detail in my commentary to HC#34.
[1891] T696:798b13–14.
[1892] T2128:502a04.
[1893] T664:386c15; T665:435a06–07.
[1894] I am following the identification provided by Ludvik, *Sarasvatī*, 312; also see Monier-Williams, *A Sanskrit English Dictionary*, 1090. Catherine Ludvik notes that Johannes Nobel identified *śaileya* as an *Artemisia* spp., undoubtedly taking a lead from the *Materia Medica of the Kaibao Era*. The Indian dill variant is known as *Anethum graveoeloens* var sowa Roxb. ex Flem. (sometimes identified as *Anethum sowa*). In contrast, Berthold Laufer reads the transcription *sheliye* as referring to a type of *kuśa* grass, i.e., *Desmostachya bipinnata* (syn. *Poa cynosuroides*), see Laufer, "Malabathron," 34–35n.3.

graveolens), otherwise commonly known as dill or as a variant known as Indian dill. While this is not incontrovertible evidence regarding the general identification of *aina* in all early Chinese sources, it does align with its description as a fragrant plant in other Buddhist texts. Moreover, the volatile oils known as carvone and limonene which are present in Indian dill would impart a strong scent and subtle color to water.

This secondary meaning of *śaileya* is more directly related to the early medieval Chinese identity of *aina*: fragrant lichen.[1895] As noted in Hong Chu's entry above, copied and anonymized from the *Newly Revised Materia Medica*, the term *aina* was used in China as a name for a "coating" (*yi* 衣) of green material growing on old pine trees [18b].[1896] This substance is now identified as lichen, a composite organism of two separate entities, fungi and algae, that often grows on tree bark.[1897] Critically, as is also noted in the *Newly Revised Materia Medica*, *aina* was used in Chinese perfumery. This aspect also harmonizes with the use of lichen in Indian perfuming arts.[1898] Consequently, the citations to Aina Aromatic in the *Essential Priceless Prescriptions for All Urgent Ills* noted above more likely refers to perfuming lichen, not ngai camphor nor *Blumea*. Since the lichen is cited as growing on pine trees, we may also speculate on a more narrow identification, specifically as *Pseudevernia furfuracea*, commonly called tree moss, a substance regularly used as a fixative in modern perfumery and which most commonly uses cedar and pine trees as hosts.[1899] This species is

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[1895] Monier-Williams, *A Sanskrit English Dictionary*, 1090.
[1896] XXBC:12.302. In the *Systematic Materia Medica aina* is described as "a coating of green moss/algae" 綠苔衣, BCGM:1.1414 [桑花 /附錄] .
[1897] Hua, Buell, and Unschuld, *Dictionary of the Ben Cao Gang Mu*, 393 (#4).
[1898] James McHugh, "The Disputed Civets and the Complexion of the God: Secretions and History in India," *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 132, no. 2 (2012): 256n.42; see also McHugh, *Sandalwood and Carrion*, 268n.22.
[1899] Daniel Joulain and Raphaël Tabacchi, "Lichen Extracts as Raw Materials in Perfumery. Part 2: Treemoss," *Flavour and Fragrance Journal* 24, no. 3 (2009): 105–16. As noted by these authors, other kinds of lichen also grow on pine trees, such as *Hypogymnia physodes*, *Usnea* spp., *Alectoria capillaries* and *Parmelia sulcata*.

considered a form of fruticose lichen that produce structures similar to small, finely branched plants (and as a consequence, may bear a resemblance to dill).

The eventual emergence of the dual Chinese meaning of *aina* as both lichen and *B. balsamifera* is rather humorously depicted in the *Classified Essentials of Materia Medica* from the sixteenth century. The illustrated entry for Aina Aromatic depicts a Chinese drug collector scraping a substance off a pine tree while a foreigner stands beside him with a collection bag of small tree branches and leaves. The two figures look at each other quizzically, as if seeming to question their different understandings of *aina* – one as pine tree lichen and the other as a *B. balsamifera* branches and leaves.[1900] As a general rule in modern scholarship (though not necessarily applicable to the medieval period), "*aina*" is treated as a lichenized pine tree fungus, while "Aina Aromatic" is treated as *B. balsamifera*.[1901] Specific terminology for camphor extracted from the *B. balsamifera* appears to be modern (ca. nineteenth century), for example, ngai powder (*aifen* 艾粉) refers to the crude camphor product, ngai flakes (*aipian* 艾片) refer to refined ngai camphor, and ngai oil (*aiyou* 艾油) refers to the camphoraceous byproduct of distillation.[1902]

While *aina* clearly came to refer to a "coating" of tree moss by the seventh century, its earlier meaning remains murky. For example, *aina* also appears in an early fifth century translation, or more likely, an apocryphal composition, by the Buddhist monk Zhu Fonian 竺佛念 (fl. 379–413). Given the difficulty in dating the **Mahāsattva Sutra*, Zhu Fonian's text

[1900] The illustration is depicted in Needham, Lu, and Huang, *Science and Civilisation,* Vol. 6, Part 1, 304; see also textual description in Chen," Fanciful Images," 305–06. Neither source comments on the apparent competing interpretations of *aina*, however.
[1901] See Hua, Buell, and Unschuld, *Dictionary of the Ben Cao Gang Mu*, 393 (#4, lichen on old pines), 393 (#5, *B. balsamifera*); cf. Nanjing zhongyiyao daxue, *Zhongyao da cidian*, which only lists Aina Aromatic (#1221–1222, *B. balsamifera*)
[1902] These terms are noted, for example, in Stuart and Smith, *Chinese Materia Medica*, 70.

remains the earliest attestation of *aina* in Buddhist sources (and predates the *Treatise on the Guang Region* by several decades). *Aina* is listed among a group of common aromatics, including ox-head sandalwood [HC#79], cloves [HC#8], aloeswood [HC#3], and storax [HC#5].[1903] Also perplexing is the appearance of *aina* in a questionably old, anonymous "Han" era *yuefu* poem where it is paired with, again, Indian *douliang* as well as foreign *midie* (rosemary? [HC#42]).[1904] This poem is sometimes cited by modern scholars to attest to the long-term Chinese knowledge of ngai camphor, a stance that should now be seen as untenable.[1905] Given the clear association of *aina* with foreign exotica in these sources, it seems unclear if it should refer to tree moss, a natural substance readily available in China. This might push the identification towards imported *B. balsamifera* or Indian dill, but further research would need to be done on use of these scented plants in India during the early medieval period, especially in the northeast close to present-day Myanmar, the location cited in the *Treatise on the Guang Region*.

If we turn to the sixteenth century *Systematic Materia Medica*, we are provided almost no additional information regarding *aina* other than what is provided in the seventh century. This is unfortunate because the information provided by the editors of the *Newly Revised Materia Medica* is quite fascinating in regards to the history of medieval perfumery. The received edition of the text states that *aina* is "blended with all sorts of aromatics and

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[1903] T309:1015c29. The passage appears corrupt. For example, the list of aromatics also contains *baxiang* 跋香, which may be a truncation of *duomoluoba xaing* 多摩羅跋香 (*tamālapattra*) and is unexpectedly interrupted by the insertion of *mengjing* 夢經, "dream sutra" (?); for more on the work of Zhu Fonian, see Jan Nattier, "Re-Evaluating Zhu Fonian's *Shizhu duanjie jing* (T309): Translation or Forgery?," *Annual Report of The International Research Institute for Advanced Buddhology at Soka University for the Academic Year 2009* 13 (2010): 231–58.

[1904] T2122:573c04–06; TPYL:8.982.862.

[1905] The poem is also regularly quoted in pre-modern Chinese sources. For example, we find this poem cited by Daoshi in the seventh century, the editors of *Imperial Readings of the Taiping Era* in the tenth century, and in the sixteenth century *Systematic Materia Medica*, see T2122:573c04–06, TPYL:8.982.862, and BCGM:1.898, respectively.

when burned the smoke is condensed so the greenish white [hue] can be appreciated."[1906] Similar to onycha [HC#35], *aina* is treated as an additive to incense blends that controls the dissipation and movement of smoke. Unlike onycha, which appears in several of the recipes collected by Hong Chu, *aina* only appears in one, the Recipe for Globes of Incense [HC#144]. Importantly, the recipe describes the substance as the green coating on pine trees, confirming that tree moss – not *B. balsamifera* nor distilled ngai camphor – was the intended ingredient. Moreover, suggestive of the special properties of *aina* noted above, the smoke created from the blend would congeal and move as a singular condensed plume of spherical smoke.

19) Sweet Pine Aromatic (pine? → spikenard / vetiver? / Himalayan cedar?) 甘松香

[19a] The *Supplement to the Materia Medica* states, "Its taste is warm. It is non-toxic. It treats ghost *qi*, sudden heart and abdominal pain, and distension with fullness[1907].

[19b] [When preparing] a bath it scents the body. It grows in clusters and the leaves are delicate.

[19c] The *Treatise on the Guang Region* states, "Spikenard grows in Liangzhou[1908]."

[19a] 本草拾遺曰：味溫無毒，主鬼氣，卒[1909]心腹痛，脹滿。[1910]

[19b] 浴人身令香。叢生葉細。[1911]

[1906] 合諸香燒之，其煙团聚，青白可爱也。 XXBC:12.302。
[1907] Zhang and Unschuld, *Dictionary of the Ben Cao Gang Mu*, 672.
[1908] An administrative district that comprised present-day Gansu, Ningxia, and portions of Qinghai, see Hua, Buell, and Unschuld, *Dictionary of the Ben Cao Gang Mu*, 192.
[1909] Read 卒 as 猝.
[1910] Cf. BCGM:1.858 [甘松香/氣味, 主治].
[1911] Unattributed, paraphrased quote from the *Illustrated Classic of Materia Medica*; cf. BCGM:1.858 [甘松香/集解].

[19c] 廣志云：甘松香生涼州。[1912]

[COMMENTS] Spikenard, also known as Indian nard or muskroot, refers to the perennial *Nardostachys jatamansi* (syns. *N. chinensis*, *Valeriana jatamansi*) of the honeysuckle family and its fragrant aromatic rhizome. In Greco-Roman Mediterranean commerce, nard (Greek *nardos*) referred to a perfumed oil extracted from certain fragrant grasses, while true nard or spikenard, with "spike" referring to the creeping underground rootstalk, referred to the amber colored oil expressed from the *N. jatamansi* rhizome.[1913] Spikenard oil has an earthy and woody scent that some find similar to the scent of musk [HC#2].[1914]

Grown throughout the Himalayas and Hindu Kush, spikenard was the costliest of Indian plant products imported into the Roman Empire, nearly twenty time more expensive than costus root [HC#16].[1915] Earlier Biblical nard may also be of the Himalayan type and Greek authorities of the third century BCE specifically speak on the superiority of Indian nard.[1916] In spite of such early attestations in Western and Near Eastern antiquity, spikenard may not appear in Chinese sources until the mid-fifth century. The preface to Fan Ye's perfuming manual, likely compiled between 433 and 446, groups spikenard along with storax [HC#5], gum guggul [HC#6], and saffron [HC#7], all well-known products of the Western

[1912] Cf. T2122:573c01, cf. TPYL:8.982.862. Both of these sources cite the "mountains of Liangzhou." Cf. BCGM:1.858 [甘松香/集解]. The relevant passage in the *Systematic Materia Medica*, as cited by *Materia Medica of the Kaibao Era*, contains "Guzang 姑臧 [in present-day Gansu] and the mountains of Liangzhou."
[1913] Casson, *Periplus*, 193, 207, 222, 236–37.
[1914] Arabic writers since Ibn Māsawayh believed musk deer grazed upon spikenard, thus providing musk with its characteristic scent, see King, *Garden of Paradise*, 159–60, 208–11; see also Levey, "Ibn Māsawaih," 399, 403.
[1915] Casson, *Periplus*, 191, 193.
[1916] Wilfred H. Schoff, "Nard," *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 43 (1923): 219–22.

Regions [HC#84]. Later, during the Sui, imperial historians knew of spikenard specifically as an export of Sogdia (Kangguo 康國), north of the Hindu Kush.[1917]

N. jatamansi is also thought to be native to the mountains of southeastern Gansu, southern Qinghai, and western Sichuan, but it is unclear when this regional source was first utilized by the Chinese. The medieval Chinese term for spikenard, *gansong* 甘松, literally "sweet pine," is found in a passage attributed to the *Guideway to Mountains and Seas*. The term does not seem to refer to a scented root, however, but a type of pine tree growing in Sichuan.[1918] Nevertheless, by the sixteenth century, the *Systematic Materia Medica* reports spikenard (*gansong*) growing in western Sichuan (Chuanxi 川西), the same region as suggested in the *Guideway to Mountains and Seas*.[1919] In addition, the mid-fifth century *Treatise on the Guang Region* reports *gansong*, presumably spikenard, as growing in Liangzhou [19c] which covers portions of present-day Gansu and Qinghai. Even with these potential regional sources, spikenard was only incorporated into Chinese medical literature in 739 with the publication of the *Supplement to the Materia Medica* [19a].[1920]

Spikenard was known in India as *nalada* and can be found in the *Atharvaveda* as part of a love philter potion.[1921] *Nardos*, as noted above, is the Hellenized form of *nalada*.

[1917] As noted in the *Book of Sui*, see SuiS:83.1848 (using the variant 貶 for 甘) and Laufer, *Sino-Iranica*, 455–56.

[1918] "Gansong Mountain Range, also called Pine and Mulberry Mountain Range, is where the Yangzi River originates," 甘松嶺，亦謂之松桑嶺，江水發源。TPYL:2.166.581. The alternative name of Pine and Mulberry Mountain Range confirms the understanding of *gansong* as a tree, giving the proper reading of Gansong Mountain Range as Sweet Pine Mountain Range, not Spikenard Mountain Range. In addition, the editors of the *Imperial Readings of the Taiping Era* include this passage under the section of Songzhou 松州, "Pine Province," a Tang-era administrative region in Sichuan, see Hua, Buell, and Unschuld, *Dictionary of the Ben Cao Gang Mu*, 287; for the Gansong Mountain Range, see Hua, Buell, and Unschuld, *Dictionary of the Ben Cao Gang Mu*, 108.

[1919] BCGM:1.858 [甘松香/釋名]; see also Stuart and Smith, *Chinese Materia Medica*, 278.

[1920] The *Systematic Materia Medica* cites the tenth century *Materia Medica of the Kaibao Era* as the first medical text to incorporate spikenard, but this is in error.

[1921] Schoff, "Nard," 217.

Equally, this term was transcribed in Chinese Buddhist works as *naluotuo* 那羅陀, Middle Chinese **nâ-lâ-dâ*. The early ninth century dictionary of Huilin offers a folk etymology of *nalada*, claiming that the underlying Sanskrit word is composed of *nara* (*naluo* 捺羅) and *dhara* (*tuoluo* 陀羅), together meaning "carried by a person." Thus, as Huilin explains, because the plant's flower is wonderfully fragrant, people carry it on their belt-sash, giving rise to the complete Indic name "the flower carried by people" (*ren chi hua* 人持花).[1922] While this is a fanciful explanation, it reveals the use of spikenard in medieval olfactory culture as a bodily perfume. The eleventh century *Illustrated Classic of Materia Medica*, anonymized by Hong Chu above, notes that spikenard can be infused into bath water to perfume the body [19b] while the tenth century *Materia Medica of the Kaibao Era* claims the root "can be blended with all sorts of aromatics to bind inside garments."[1923]

At first glance, spikenard also seems to appear in the Buddhist balneotherapy of goddess Sarasvatī, but some uncertainty arises regarding its translation and transcription. For one, Yijing's early eighth century translation of the *Sutra of Golden Light* claims *gansong* is equivalent to an underlying *shanmiche* 苫弭哆 (Jñānagupta's earlier translation uses *gansong*, but provides no transcription).[1924] This is a transcription of the Sanskrit *śāmyaka*, a medicinal plant that it otherwise unattested. It has been suggested that it refers to *Cedrus deodara*, or Himalayan cedar.[1925] We find further confusion when we encounter

[1922] 那正曰：捺羅。此云人也。陀謂：陀羅。此云持也。其花香妙，人皆佩之，故曰人持花之也。T2128:441a13; see also T2131:1178b05–07. Notably, Huilin does not explicitly connect *naluotuo* to the presumed Chinese nomenclature for spikenard, *gansong*; we turn to this terminology below.
[1923] 可合諸香及裛衣。BCGM:1.858 [甘松香/集解]; see also HYBC:2.32.43. *Yi* 裛 refers to wearing scenting sachets filled with aromatics; this contrasts with perfuming or fumigating garments with scented smoke.
[1924] T665:435a06 (reading 苦 as 苫, following the Taishō editors' footnote; cf. BCGM:1.858 [which uses *kumiche* 苦彌哆]) and T664:386c13, respectively.
[1925] I follow Catherine Ludvik for the identity of *śāmyaka*, see Ludvik, *Sarasvatī*, 310; cf. Laufer, *Sino-Iranica*, 215–16 (who prefers to read the uncorrected *kumiche* [see previous footnote] as transcribing *kuñcī* or *kuñcikā*).

transcriptions for *nalada* elsewhere in the balneotherapy ingredient list: *naluotuo* in Jñānagupta's sixth century translation, as seen above, and *naladuo* 捺剌柁, Middle Chinese **nâ-lât-dâ*, in Yijing's early eighth century rendition. Jñānagupta provides the generic Chinese translation, grass (or herb), *cao* 草, while Yijing provides *wei* 葦, a wild wetland reed in China often identified as *Phragmites australis* (syns. *P. communis, Arundo phragmites*), sometimes known as common reed.[1926]

These examples above seem to indicate that Jñānagupta and Yijing both found *gansong* to be an insufficient translation for *nalada*, and moreover, seem to have had difficulty in expressing what *nalada* referred to in terms of its precise botanical referent. Let us turn to the former issue first. If the understanding of *śāmyaka* as Himalayan cedar is correct, and this is by no means certain, it appears both translators of the *Sutra of Golden Light* understood *gansong* semantically, as "sweet pine tree," and elected to use the name as a loose analogue for the cedar tree of the Himalayas. This makes further sense if "sweet pine" was viewed as a tree growing on the high-altitude Tibetan Plateau in the western part of present-day Sichuan. Further research on *śāmyaka* and *shanmiche* will be necessary to reach a more conclusive resolution to this question.

The latter issue regards the significance of *nalada*. It appears that Yijing followed the earlier translation of Jñānagupta who also differentiated Chinese *gansong* and Sanskrit *nalada*, although providing a more exact botanical analogue as a *Phragmites* species as opposed to a generic "grass" (and in contrast to Huilin, who claimed it was a flower). This

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Śāmyaka does not appear in the Sanskrit dictionary of Monier-Williams. The suggestion by Johannes Nobel of *Cedrus deodara* may stem from his literal reading of the Chinese equivalent, *gansong*, provided by Yijing.

[1926] See Bretschneider, *Botanican Sinicum*, Part 2, 101; Harper, *Early*, 292n.3; Rickett, *Guanzi*, Vol. 2, 272; Nanjing zhongyiyao daxue, *Zhongyao da cidian*, (#2227–2229). Huizhao's commentary to Yijing's translation clarifies that the inner part of the *wei* reed is fragrant, see T1788.302b25.

quandary seems to be more easily solved, as a secondary meaning of *nalada* points us to the root of *Chrysopogon zizanioides* (syns. *Andropogon Muricatus*, *Vetiveria zizanoides*), commonly known as vetiver grass.[1927] This is a tall perennial grass with deep roots from which a fragrant oil can be extracted. This plant is more commonly identified in Sanskrit literature as *uṣīra*, however, which Yijing transcribes as *washiluo* 嗢尸羅 elsewhere in the *Sutra of Golden Light*.[1928] In this case, Yijing uses *uṣīra* to identify Mao Root Aromatic (*maogen xiang* 茅根香), one of several native Chinese and regional *mao*-grasses commonly used in religious ritual and perfumery.[1929] Following from this, it seems reasonable to assume that Yijing knew of *nalada* and *uṣīra* as two different Indian grasses that yielded scented oils. Outside of vetiver, there are several additional oil-grasses native to India, including citronella (*Cymbopogon nardus*), lemongrass (*C. citratus*), and palmarosa (*C. martini*), among others. If we exclude vetiver, Yijing's *nalada* may have referred to one of these oil-grass plants, thus helping to explain his use of common reed (*P. australis*) as a botanical analogue.[1930] This broad understanding of *nalada* is corroborated in early Greek sources where *nardos* was known as a grass growing in the deserts of Gedrosia, the coastal region of present-day Baluchistān, a suitable climate for *Cymbopogon* species, but not spikenard.[1931]

The Sanskrit term that came to be more commonly used for spikenard was *māṃsī*. We find this term transcribed, for example, in the Tang-era translation of the *Extensive Collection of Dhāraṇīs of the Great Buddha Uṣṇīṣa* as *mangsi* 唅斯, complete with an

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[1927] Monier-Williams, *A Sanskrit English Dictionary*, 530. For more on vetiver in Indian perfumery, see McHugh, *Sandalwood and Carrion*, 166, 239–40, 261n.12.
[1928] T665:435a06; see also Ludvik, *Sarasvatī*, 314.
[1929] For further dicussion on the variety of Chinese *mao*-grasses, see my comments to lemongrass at HC#36. Jñānagupta's translation of the *Sutra of Golden Light* has no parallel for Yijing's *uṣīra*/Mao Root Aromatic.
[1930] Common reed is generally non-odorous, but was important in Han-era exorcistic rites and an early custom of hanging reed ropes over the doorway during New Year's celebrations, see Bodde, *Festivals*, 81–82, 128–30.
[1931] Schoff, "Nard," 221–22; see also Laufer, *Sino-Iranica*, 455.

interlinear comment clearly identifying it as spikenard (*gansong*).[1932] The *Sutra of Wondrous Attainments*, a Buddhist tantric text translated in the early eighth century shortly after Yijing's death, further qualifies the meaning of *gansong*, rendering it as "the fragrant root of the *gansong*" (*gansong xiang gen* 甘松香根), a phrase which directly points to the scented spikenard rhizome.[1933]

As discussed above, by the late medieval period spikenard was commonly known as a perfume. This is also supported by the frequency in which spikenard appears as an ingredient among the blending recipes at the end of the *Materia Aromatica*, a total of eleven times. According to Yamada Kentarō, of the sixteen recipes he analyzed in Hong Chu's catalogue, spikenard comprised just short of ten percent of all ingredients combined.[1934]

20) Aromatic from Lingling (sweet basil ? / valerian root? → loosestrife) 零陵香[1935]

[20a] The *Treatise on Nanyue*[1936] states, "Another name is *Yan* Herb."

[1932] T946:173c17. Elsewhere it is written as *mangsi* 忙斯, see e.g. T893:640a20, T893:669c14.
[1933] See e.g. T893:609a14.
[1934] Yamada, "Chin sunawachi kaori," 5; Yamada, *Tōa kōryō shi kenkyū*, 174–76. More precisely, Yamada calculates spikenard comprised 9.4 percent of the ingredients, just under that of sandalwood at 11.18 percent.
[1935] Like the eponymously named imported goods Parthian Aromatic [HC#6] and the Aromatic from Barus [HC#12], this is one of a pair of ancient Chinese aromatics that received a regional name; the other is the Aromatic from Douliang [HC#34].
[1936] The *Treatise on Nanyue* (*Nanyue zhi* 南越志) is lost five *juan* gazetteer written by Shen Huaiyuan 沈懷遠 (ca. 5th cent.) of the Liu Song (420–479), see Zheng et al., *Dictionary of the Ben Cao Gang Mu*, 340, 396. This is an early geographical work covering Lingnan (comparable to the old country of Nanyue 南越, i.e. the Southern Yue), comprising present-day Guangdong, Guangxi, Hainan, and the northern regions of Vietnam, see Hua, Buell, and Unschuld, *Dictionary of the Ben Cao Gang Mu*, 201, 228–29. The region of Lingling (see comments below) would just fall within the scope of this gazetteer.

[20b] Another name is sweet basil. It grows in the mountain valleys of Lingling[1937]. Its leaves are like *luole*[1938].

[20c] The *Guideways through the Mountains and Seas* states, "Sweet basil [leaves] resemble hemp leaves. It has a squarish stalk and smells like the sprouts of Sichuan lovage[1939]. It is able to stop epidemics[1940]."

[1937] Lingling 零陵 refers to a commandery established under the Han that comprised the area of present-day southern Hunan and surrounding areas, see Hua, Buell, and Unschuld, *Dictionary of the Ben Cao Gang Mu*, 201. This area was thought to be the burial place of the mythic emperor Shun 舜 who, according to one medieval tradition, deposited an agate jar full of sweet dew at the top of the mountains of Lingling, see Foster, "Wang Chia's *Shih-I*," 394. Silvio Bedini offers a translation for Lingling as "Misty Tumulus," see Bedini, "Trail of Time," 101n.39

[1938] *Luole* 羅勒 is the current standard nomenclature for *Ocimum basilicum*, or sweet basil, see Pan, *Chuci*, 30–31; Hua, Buell, and Unschuld, *Dictionary of the Ben Cao Gang Mu*, 414 (#712), and Nanjing zhongyiyao daxue, *Zhongyao da cidian*, (#910, #2845, #2849).

[1939] *Miwu* 蘼蕪 (or 蘼蕪, 麋蕪, *weiwu* 薇蕪) is an especially fragrant native Chinese botanical that appears in many classical sources. It is mentioned in the "Lesser Minister of Life Spans" (*Shaosi ming* 少司命) as collected in the *Songs of Chu*, as well as the third century BCE "Categories of Land" (Diyuan 地員) chapter of *Master Guan* (*Guanzi* 管子) and the second century BCE "Forest of Persuasions" (*Shuolin* 說林) chapter of the *Master of Huainan* (*Huainanzi* 淮南子), see CC:2.71 (trans. Sukhu, *Songs of Chu*, 14), GZ:19.58.1101 (trans. Rickett, *Guanzi*, Vol. 2, 269–70), and HNZ:17.1185 (trans. Major et al., *Huainanzi*, 674), respectively. Notably, out of dozens of plants cited in *Master Guan*, *miwu* is identified as one of five "fragrant plants" (*chou* 臭 [sic]). The *Master of Huainan* claims that *shechuang* 蛇床 is often mistaken for *miwu*, but that the former does not emit a sweet fragrance. *Miwu* also features in two different therapies listed among the medical manuscripts recovered at Mawangdui, see Harper, *Early*, 238 and 274. Moreover, in the early medieval period, Guo Yigong's *Treatise on the Guang Region* underscores *miwu* as a fragrant plant and notes the Chinese warlord Cao Cao concealed *miwu* in his robes (possibly as an apotropaic fumigant), see TPYL:8.983.871. This association of *miwu* in the Chinese imagination as extraordinarily fragrant likely accounts for elements of its nomenclature being incorporated into fictional aromatics such as Tuwu Aromatic [HC#45] and *Hengwu* Aromatic [HC#65]. As to its botanical identification, the Eastern Han dictionary *Explaining Graphs and Analyzing Characters* glosses *miwu* as *jiangli* 江蘺, a plant now identified as the umbelliferous *Ligusticum striatum* (syns. *L. wallichii*, *L. chuangxiong*; modern *chuanxiong* 川芎), otherwise commonly known as Sichuan lovage, see SWJZ:1.12 and TPYL:8.983.871; see also Pan, *Chuci*, 16–17; cf. Read, *Chinese Medicinal Plants*, 61 (who identifies *miwu* as a species of *Selinum*, which falls under the umbelliferous *Apiaceae* family, the same as *Ligusticum*). A further specification is noted in the roughly contemporaneous *Classic of Materia Medica of the Divine Husbandman* which claims that *miwu* strictly refers to the leaves (*ye* 葉) or sprouts (*miao* 苗) of the Sichuan lovage plant (*xiongqiong* 芎藭, syn. *jiangli*), see XXBC:7.189 and XXBC:7.190; see also Hua, Buell, and Unschuld, *Dictionary of the Ben Cao Gang Mu*, 416 (#771). While *miwu*, *jiangli*, and *xiongqiong* were all treated as roughly synonymous by the early medieval period, David Knechtges believes they referred to three different aromatic plants during the Western Han, perhaps all members of the umbelliferous family, see Knechtges, *Wen Xuan*, Vol. 2, 58.

[1940] *Li* 癘 typically refers to illness that affects many people, see Zhang and Unschuld, *Dictionary of the Ben Cao Gang Mu*, 311.

[20d] This is the Aromatic from Lingling. Its taste is pungent. It is non-toxic. It treats malign *qi* attachment-illness, heart and abdominal pain, and downward *qi*[1941]. It perfumes the body and is blended with various aromatics for use as a decoction or [medicinal] pills. When combined with wine [the result] is exceptional."

[20a] 南越志云：一名燕草。[1942]

[20b] 又名薰草，生零陵山谷，葉如羅勒。[1943]

[20c] 山海經曰：薰草似麻葉，方莖，氣如蘼蕪，可以止癘。[1944]

[20d] 即零陵香。味苦無毒，主惡氣注[1945]，心腹痛，下氣，令體香，和諸香或作湯丸用，得酒良。[1946]

[COMMENTS] Basil is one of the many plants with intensely scented leaves that fall under the *Lamiaceae* mint family, including rosemary, sage, and lavender, among others. While many contemporary readers will view such plants primarily as a culinary delights, in ancient and medieval China strongly scented plants such as basil were used to stave off illness, perfume the body, and symbolize virtue. There has been much debate as to the indigenous origin of basil, some placing it in Africa, some in India or Iran, and others in Southeast Asia.[1947] Regardless of origin, basil appears to have been introduced early and naturalized in

[1941] I have been unable to identify this illness.
[1942] Cf. T2122:574a08, cf. TPYL:8.982.866, cf. BCGM:1.901 [薰草/集解]. According to the *Systematic Materia Medica*, the *Materia Medica of the Kaibao Era* originally cited this text.
[1943] Unattributed, paraphrased quote from the *Materia Medica of the Kaibao Era*; cf. BCGM:1.901 [薰草/集解].
[1944] Cf. SHJ:2.4698–99; cf. XXBC:20.524; cf. BCGM:1.901 [薰草/集解]. According to the *Newly Revised Materia Medica*, Tao Hongjing originally cited this text.
[1945] Read 注 as 疰, following BCGM:1.902 [薰草/主治].
[1946] Unattributed, paraphrased quote from the *Materia Medica of the Kaibao Era*; cf. BCGM:1.902 [薰草/氣味, 主治]. The claim that this drug tastes bitter is attributed to the pharmacologist Zhen Quan 甄權 (541–643).
[1947] Berthold Laufer believed basil originated in Iran and spread to India and China, see Laufer, *Sino-Iranica*, 586.

many regions of the Old World, straddling tropical and subtropical climates.[1948] Currently there are a handful of species and varieties of basil cultivated in China today. Of these, *Ocimum basilicum*, commonly called sweet basil, has the greatest phytogeographic range from Sichuan in the southwest, to Jiangsu on the east coast, to Guangdong in the far south. The Aromatic from Lingling (*lingling xiang* 零陵香 or 零凌香, 苓陵香) is often identified as sweet basil, although this identification is largely built upon a network of tenuously attested synonyms and conflicting descriptions of plant morphology, thus making a firm botanical determination difficult.

Let us begin by identifying the most important nomenclature relevant to the Aromatic from Lingling. This latter name appears in a fifth century gazetteer, the *Treatise on Nanyue*, which reports it as an alternative name for the Yan Herb [20a].[1949] Since this treatise covers the tropical far south, we can surmise Lingling referred to the old Lingling commandery, comprised of present-day southern Hunan and adjacent areas in Guangxi. Three centuries later, the Tang editors of the *Supplement to the Materia Medica* report the Aromatic from Lingling was considered equivalent to the fragrant Xun Herb (*xuncao* 薰草) of classical Chinese texts, and moreover that the Xun Herb was specifically to be treated as the root of the Hui Herb (*huicao* 蕙草), another scented plant made famous through pre-imperial poetry

[1948] While it is often thought that a basil species was known in Greece and Rome, the extent of its cultivation is still debated. The *okimon* of Theophrastus (371–287 BCE) and Pliny (23/24–79 CE) is typically understood as a type of basil introduced from India; see brief comments in Laufer, *Sino-Iranica*, 586–90. One of the more common names for basil in Sanskrit is *tulasī*.

[1949] According to Daoshi's citation of the *Treatise on Nanyue*, the Aromatic from Lingling was called the Yan Herb (*yancao* 鷰草) by locals (*turen* 土人), see T2122:574a08. According to Tao Hongjing, sweet basil (*xuncao*) was called the Yan Herb by commoners (*suren* 俗人), see XXBC:20.542. *Yan* 燕 (or 鷰) refers to the swallow as well as an ancient state in northeast China, but the relationship between these concepts and the eponymous plant remain undetermined. An apparent abbreviation for the Aromatic from Lingling, *ling* 零, appears in Fan Ye's preface to his blending manual [HC#84], completed before his death in 446.

in the south.[1950] The plants known as *xun* 薰 and *hui* 蕙 were considered synonymous since the mid-second century, a point that was repeated in medical literature and medieval dictionaries.[1951] And while the *Supplement to the Materia Medica* affirms the former is the rootstalk of the latter, this anatomical nuance was largely ignored by other authorities who treated them as alternative names for the same plant. Thus, the identity of the Aromatic from Lingling has been inextricably bound to the identity of these two ancient native Chinese plants, to which we now turn our attention.

Hui was one of the most cited *flora* in the *Songs of Chu*, while *xun* could be found in a greater array of documents, but was still relatively rare in relation to other aromatics like thoroughwort [HC#29] or wild angelica [HC#30]. We will focus on *xun* here and will save comments for *hui* below [HC#32]. The earliest textual citation to a *xun* plant is found in the *Zuo Commentary* as part of an oracular message dated to 656 BCE. The relevant portion of the passage reads as follows:

> One part *xun* and one part Chinese bluebeard; ten years hence the stench of the Chinese bluebeard will linger.[1952]
> 一薰一蕕，十年尚猶有臭。

The turpentine-like aroma of the flowering Chinese bluebeard (*Tripora divaricata*, syn. *Caryopteris divaricata*) was considered offensive and overpowering in relation to the aroma of *xun*, thus the warning encountered in later classical sources against storing these plants in the same container. Such statements in classical texts are "olfactory analogies" intended to be read through a lens of moral virtue. In this case, the warning alerts us to the belief that even

[1950] 薰草即是零陵香，薰乃蕙草根也。BCGM:1.901 [薰草/集解].
[1951] CC:1.7; GY:10.743; XXBC:20.834; for further discussion see my comments to sweet basil at HC#32.
[1952] CQZZ:12.3893; cf. trans. Durrant, Li, and Schaberg, *Zuo Tradition*, 269. While the Chinese idiom has a sense similar to the English phrase "oil and water," an analogy for two things that cannot coexist, the Chinese phrase also carries a sense that that a bad smelling stench will eventually overcome a pleasant odor.

the most upright person can fall prey to the overpowering influence of immoral behavior occurring around them. This point is clearly explained in the relevant commentary of Du Yu 杜預 (222–285): "goodness is easily lost while evil is hard to remove."[1953]

Outside of this passage, the *Zuo Commentary* also notes the existence of a Xun Road (*xunsui* 薰隧) in the state of Zheng 鄭, part of present-day western Henan, where a political covenant was forged between several high ministers of the state.[1954] The place name may indicate the local cultivation of *xun* plants or symbolize the importance of maintaining moral virtue in political dealings. It is also not unreasonable to treat it as a combination of both.

The symbolic and political importance of *xun* is further underscored in the now lost *Records of the Ruler's Standards* (*Wangdu ji* 王度記) which may date to the Warring States period. A preserved passage of the text correlates certain fragrant substances with different ranks of office: "The emperor uses *chang* [i.e. wild turmeric], the vassal kings use *xun*, the great ministers use thoroughwort root, officials use southernwood, and commoners use mugwort."[1955] According to the reading of this passage by Jia Gongyan 賈公彥 (fl. 650), members of each class are required to employ a different scented plant to spice the sacrificial

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[1953] 善易消，惡難除。CQZZ:12.3893; see also my comments to Hong Chu's Preface.

[1954] CQZZ:41.4392, trans. Durrant, Li, and Schaberg, *Zuo Tradition*, 1321. We might wonder if the text could also be read as "*xun* and burning mirror" (*xunsui* 薰燧), a term we find in the *Master of Huainan*, HNZ:16.1131; see also Chapter 3, Section 5. This would mean the covenant was established by perfuming with the *xun* plant.

[1955] 天子以鬯，諸侯以薰，大夫以蘭芝[→芷]，士以蕭，庶人以艾。ZLZS:19.1662. As explained by Jia Gongyan, the imperial use of *chang* technically refers to the use of wild turmeric; for more on this latter plant, see my comments to Yu Gold Aromatic at HC#7. A similar passage, not attributed to the *Records of the Ruler's Standards*, is found in the third century dictionary, the *Enlargement of the Literary Expositor* (*Guangya* 廣雅): "When the emperor sacrifices he uses *chang*, the vassal kings use *xun*, the high ranking great ministers use the root of thoroughwort, officials use southernwood, and commoners [use] mugwort," 天子祭以鬯，諸侯以薰，卿大夫以茝[→芷]蘭，士以蕭，庶人艾。GY:9.688.

ale used during state libation rites.[1956] In spite of this careful delineation of administrative rank and suitable sacrificial scent, I am unaware of similar distinctions made elsewhere in our received canon of ancient Chinese works. It is perhaps noteworthy to highlight that Jia Gongyan does not understand these plants, used in the context of state sacrifice, to be employed as incense, but used in service of nourishing the spirits and ancestors.

It was more common for early classical texts to portray *xun* as an ideal plant for burning and use as a personal perfume. This is undoubtedly related to the relationship of *xun* to the graph *xun*$_1$ 熏 (without the grass radical), which means "to perfume" and "to diffuse smoke." For example, Xu Shen's second century gloss on *xun*$_1$ gives us "the ascending smoke of fire." [1957] While classical works provide specific descriptions of the *xun* plant, we might wonder if the name (with added grass radical) carried a sense of any plant that was burned for its smell.[1958]

We see the burning of *xun*, for example, in the *Master of Huainan* where it is used to cover stench in the palace and to perfume clothing.[1959] A more general comment is also noted in the *Book of Han* (*Han Shu* 漢書) which clarifies such use:

> Alas, because *xun* is fragrant it is burned and because grease makes light it is used up. [1960]
> 嗟虖，薰以香自燒，膏以明自銷。

[1956] ZLZS:19.1662. This interpretation is echoed in Wang Niansun's commentary on the entry for *xun* in the *Enlargement of the Literary Expositor*: "In antiquity, during sacrifices one would boil it [i.e. *xun*] to use for the libation sacrifices" 古者祭則煮之以祼。GY:10.743.

[1957] 火煙上出。SWJZ:1.10. Xu Shen's subsequent analysis notes: "Its [semantic] constituents are 'grass' and 'black,' 从屮从黑, clearly suggesting charred plant matter; for further discussion on *xun*$_1$, see Chapter 3, Section 5. Censers from the Western Han were called "diffusion burners" (*xun*$_1$*lu* 熏爐), while in the Eastern Han they became known as "incense burners" (*xianglu* 香爐). Importantly, however, in the Western Han *xun*$_1$ did not necessarily always infer combustion, as can be seen in the tomb inventory slip recovered at Mawangdui that lists *xun*$_1$*nang*, "perfuming sachets" (*xun*$_1$*nang*) among the tomb's contents, see Chapter 2, Section 3.

[1958] While *xun*$_1$ is often treated as a verb, *xun* is frequently found in classical works functioning as a verb as well.

[1959] HNZ:16.1131 and HNZ:17.1217; see discussion of these passages in Chapter 3, Section 5.

[1960] HS:72.3085. A different citation from the *Book of Han* in the *systematic Materia Medica* replaces *xun* with thoroughwort (*lan*), see BCGM:1.904 [蘭草/正誤].

The sense of inevitable loss due to the practical utility of *xun* as a perfume is also encapsulated by the now lost Jin-era treatise known as the *Master Su* (*Suzi* 蘇子):

> Due to its tusks the elephant loses its life, yet it cannot discard their whiteness. Due to its fragrance *xun* is burned, yet it cannot discard its scent.[1961]
> 像以牙喪身，不能去其白；薰以芳自燒，不能去其香。

A similar sentiment regarding cassia as a spice is expressed in *Master Zhuang*, warning that its "usefulness" leads to the tree's untimely demise [HC#52].[1962]

Notably, the pleasant fragrance of *xun* and its old association with virtue and high-ranking nobility will eventually lead to its adoption as a perfume and fumigant for the robes of the Imperial Secretariat who were received by Han emperors [HC#87].[1963] In terms of early medical applications, *xun* was also viewed as a powerful fumigant that when worn on a belt-sash could halt epidemics [20c]. In addition, Ge Hong's fourth century *Master who Embraces Simplicity* provides a magical spell using *xun* for protection against thieves: "Always on a *zhi*-day, take superior dirt from the courtyard and mix it with cypress needles and Xun Herb. Smear this on the door frame one *chi* in area and robbers will never come."[1964]

Given the importance of the *xun* plant in ancient and early medieval sources, what might we gather regarding its botanical identity and that of the Aromatic from Lingling? Both *hui* and *xun* appear in the *Guideways through the Mountains and Seas*, but the only

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[1961] TPYL:8.983.873. A different citation from the *Mater Su* replaces *xun* with thoroughwort (*lan*), see TPYL:8.983.869.
[1962] ZZ:1.4.163
[1963] The claim in the *Systematic Materia Medica* that the *xun* plant was burned in antiquity to draw down the spirits is not supported in any surviving ancient works, see BCGM:1.901 [薰草/釋名]; see also discussion in Chapter 5, Section 1.
[1964] 常以執日取天井上土，以和柏葉，薰草，以泥門戶，方一尺，則盜賊不來。TPYL:8.983.873. A slightly different wording is found in the Ming Daoist canon edition of the *Master who Embraces Simplicity*, see DZ1185:6.08b, trans. Ware, *Alchemy*, 119.

information regarding the plant's physical characteristics are cited under the Xun Herb [20c]. The full citation is as follows: "It has the leaves of hemp, a squarish stalk, reddish flowers, black seeds, and the scent of Sichuan lovage sprouts."[1965] To this we might add the description in the *Record of Drugs Collected by Gentleman Tong* (*Tongjun caiyao lu* 桐君采藥錄), a work that may date to the Western Han or earlier, which reports that the leaves of the Xun Herb reveal an "opposing arrangement" of leaves, meaning a pair of opposing leaves grew from the same node on the stem.[1966]

While such descriptions are insufficient to make any definitive identifications, several of these characteristics are considered typical of plants in the labiate mint family. According to Pan Fujun, based on the descriptions of opposite leaves, a square stalk cross-section, and black seeds, an identification of the Xun Herb as a species of *Ocimum* is plausible.[1967] Such an identification is also supported by the fact that sweet basil is cultivated today in Hunan and Guangxi, regions that comprise the old commandery of Lingling as well as the territory controlled by the ancient state of Chu where *hui*, a reputed synonym of *xun* since the second century, was an important ritual aromatic.[1968]

This identification, however, does not square with all of plant's recorded characteristics. For example, the *Guideways through the Mountains and Seas* cites the Xun Herb as having red flowers, while elsewhere the Hui Herb is noted as having purple flowers. Only the latter description corresponds to the dark purplish corolla developed by *O*.

[1965] 麻葉而方莖，赤華而黑實，臭如靡蕪。SHJ:2.4698–99; see also TPYL:8.983.873.
[1966] 兩兩相對。XXBC:20.524; see also BCGM:1.901 [薰草/集解]. For more on this text, see Zheng et al., *Dictionary of the Ben Cao Gang Mu*, 471.
[1967] Pan, *Chuci*, 2nd ed.
[1968] For the identification of *xun* as *Ocimum basilicum*, see Read, *Chinese Medicinal Plants*, 34 (#134a); Pan, *Chuci*, 30–31; Hua, Buell, and Unschuld, *Dictionary of the Ben Cao Gang Mu*, 432. (#1329). The comprehensive *Zhongyao da cidian* does not contain a separate main entry headword for *xun*, *hui*, or the Aromatic from Lingling.

basilicum.[1969] The connection to hemp leaves is also curious from the standpoint of an *Ocimum* species which does not produce a multi-lobed leaf structure or exhibit a pronounced serrated leaf margin (although a shallow serrate is often present).

The identification of an *Ocimum* species is not without additional historical complexities. For one, precisely when basil plants were introduced into China, or if they are indeed indigenous to the Chinese tropics, remains unknown. It is also difficult to know when foreign basil was first known to China as a product of commerce. Depending on how one parses the text, the *Abridged Account of Wei* of the mid-third century may report the Xun Herb as one of the aromatics of the Roman Empire.[1970] This might be a reference to Mediterranean sweet basil cultivated in the region since the first century, although some consider it to have been introduced there much earlier while others reject its early cultivation altogether.[1971] Equally, it is impossible to know if Xun Herb in the *Abridged Account of Wei* was a fortuitous match (basil with basil) or merely a loose botanical analogue to help identify the unknown foreign *flora*.

In addition, there is some evidence to suggest that an Indian basil variety was introduced into China by at least the late third century. As noted by Berthold Laufer, the name *luole* 羅勒, Late Han Chinese **la-lək*, might approximate the Sanskrit *karālaka* (or *karāla*), a species of *Ocimum*, whereby the first syllable was dropped.[1972] This Chinese term was first cited in the *Treatise on the Investigation of Things* (*Bowuzhi* 博物志) by Zhang Hua

[1969] A good depiction of this coloring can be found in Pan, *Chuci*, 30. It has been incorrectly claimed that *O. basilicum* has yellow flowers, see e.g., Li, *Fourth Century Flora*, 76.
[1970] SGZ:30.861, TPYL:8.983.873.
[1971] Laufer, *Sino-Iranica*, 586–90.
[1972] Laufer, *Sino-Iranica*, 588.

張華 (232–300).[1973] As seen in the tenth century *Materia Medica of the Kaibao Era*, anonymized in Hong Chu's entry above [20b], Xun Herb was said to resemble *luole*. If the *xun* plant was indeed native basil and *luole* was an Indian basil variety, we might expect more than this singular lukewarm analogy. Nevertheless, modern Chinese authorities have adopted *luole* as the official translation of the *Ocimum* genus.

The relative rarity of the term *luole* in medieval sources finds some explanation in the *Essential Techniques for All People*, an important work on horticultural compiled under the Northern Wie and completed between 533 and 544. It explains that due to an imperial naming taboo involving Shi Le 石勒 (r. 330–333), the first ruler of the Latter Zhao (319–351), the name *luole* was abandoned and a new name was adopted, "Thoroughwort Aromatic" [HC#29].[1974] There is not enough surviving documentation to fully analyze the veracity or impact of such a decree, but we do have evidence that some Buddhist translators used Thoroughwort Aromatic to translate *arjaka*, a type of Indian basil. Unfortunately, we cannot simply treat every occurrence of Thoroughwort Aromatic in our sources as basil since Tao Hongjing also cites this name as an alternative to native thoroughwort (*Eupatorium*).[1975] This apparent connection between *xun*/basil and thoroughwort forced by Shi Le's naming taboo may not have been entirely up to chance. Already in the fourth century the famed exegete Guo Pu 郭璞 (267–364) was claiming that the ancient *hui* plant was a kind of

[1973] "If one burns horses' hooves and goats' horns until they become ash, and strews this on damp soil during the spring and summer, then *luole* will grow up," trans. Greatrex, *Bowu Zhi*, 85.
[1974] QMYS:3.25.1.1; see also Knechtges, *Wen Xuan*, Vol. 2, 232, Laufer, *Sino-Iranica*, 298n.1 and 300n.3.
[1975] XXBC:7.188. In addition, Tao Hongjing claims the commoners' name for *luole* was the "vegetable of Queen Mother of the West" (*Xiwangmu cai* 西王母菜), see XXBC:18 and BCGM:2.1640 [羅勒/集解]. This is in apparent deference to the powers associated with *luole* in the *Treatise on the Investigation of Things*, see relevant footnote above.

thoroughwort (*lan*).[1976] Since many authorities treated *xun* and *hui* as synonymous in the early medieval period, one could justly easily infer a connection between *xun* and thoroughwort.[1977]

All considered, it is clear that while the *xun* plant has a rich history in ancient and early medieval sources, its identity is elusive, including its early relationship to the *hui* plant. Taking the *Record of Drugs Collected by Gentleman Tong* as a guide, specifically regarding the identification of an opposing arrangement of leaves, and citation to a square stalk in the *Guideways through the Mountains and Seas* – both hallmarks of a plant in the mint family – I believe the identification of *xun* as sweet basil (*O. basilicum*) remains a reasonable placeholder around which we can center a discussion on early medieval smell culture.

Other identities for *xun* have been suggest in modern scholarship. On one hand, the widely cited *Chinese Materia Medica* of 1911 of George A. Stuart and Frederick P. Smith identified *xun* and the Aromatic from Lingling as the leguminous *Melilotus arvensis (*syn. *Melilotus officinalis*), or sweet clover, with characteristic yellow bloom and trifoliate leaf. This has been handily, and perhaps rightfully, ignored by most other authorities on the botanical history of China.[1978]

[1976] SHJ:2.4702. Such a belief might originate from the claims in the *Supplementary Records of Famous Physicians* that both Xun Herb and Hui Herb grew in lowland marshes, XXBC:20.834; we return to this passage in my commentary to sweet basil at HC#32.

[1977] I have not found an explicit claim equating *xun* with thoroughwort (*lan*), but *xun* is sometimes *replaced* by *lan* in similar passages. For example, both the passages in the *Book of Han* and *Master Su* cited earlier are found with a *lan* substitute, see relevant footnotes to the translations above.

[1978] See Stuart and Smith, *Chinese Materia Medica*, 262. Stuart and Smith reject the identification of *xun* as *O. basilicum* "by the weight of authority." I presume the authorities in this case were recently published illustrated Japanese botanical manuals, such as the *Illustrated Catalogue of Materia Medica* (*Honzō zufu* 本草圖譜) by Iwasaki Kan'en 岩崎灌園 (1786–1842) and the *Illustrated Descriptions of Herbs and Trees* (*Sōmoku zusetsu* 草木圖說) by Iinuma Yokusai 飯沼慾齋 (1783–1865), both of which are cited by Emil Bretschneider as depicting a *Melilotus* spp., see Bretschneider, *Botanican Sinicum*, Part 2, 230–31. Such an identification, however, finds no correspondence with the descriptions of plant morphology given in early medieval Chinese sources. Furthermore, the *Illustrated Examination on the Names and Identities of Plants* (*Zhiwu mingshi tukao* 植物名實圖考), published in China in 1848, clearly depicts a plant in the mint family and is reportedly called *aikang* 矮糠, a term otherwise used to identify *O. basilicum*, see comments in Bretschneider, *Botanican Sinicum*, Part 2, 230; Stuart and Smith, *Chinese Materia Medica*, 289; cf. Li, *Fourth Century Flora*, 76 (who, perhaps following Stuart and Smith, erroneously claims this text depicts a *Melilotus* spp.). Bernard Read gives a primary

There is a more widely accepted second school of thought, however, that elects to interpret the Aromatic from Lingling, intertwined with the identity of the Xun Herb since the fifth-century, as the flowering *Lysimachia foenum-graecum*, a type of loosestrife. This plant only occurs in a concentrated region around southern Hunan, southern Yunnan, northern Guangdong, and Guangxi.[1979] This identification is largely supported by the widespread use of *L. foenum-graecum* in Traditional Chinese Medicine.[1980] Correspondingly, this often forces a cascading effect regarding the identity of both the Xun Herb and Hui Herb. Notably, *L. foenum-graecum* has yellow flowers and displays an alternate, not an opposing, leaf arrangement, thus providing an even less amenable correspondence to the descriptions of ancient *xun* and *hui* plants. It might be the case that the name "Aromatic from Lingling" was adopted in the later medieval period for *L. foenum-graecum*, a plant that appears to narrowly grow in the old region of Lingling, but it seems doubtful this should force the identify both *xun* and *hui*, plant names of a much older vintage and apparently far greater phytogeographic range. It remains to be determined when this shift in botanical referent started to occur, but it may have begun by the eleventh century, if not earlier.[1981] Given that both Pan Fujun and the

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identification for *xun* as *O. basilicum*, but also includes a secondary identification as *Melilotus* spp., see Read, *Chinese Medicinal Plants*, 34 (#134a). Needham and Lu summarily dismiss Read's "mis-identification" without realizing it stemmed from Stuart and Smith's earlier work, see Needham and Lu, *Science and Civilisation in China,* Vol. 5, Part 2*,* 148n.a. Unfortunately, the influential translation of the *Songs of Chu* by David Hawkes popularized the identification of *hui* as "melilot," see Hawkes, *Songs of the South*. While such an identification is justified by nineteenth century Japanese botanical works, it not only fails to be supported by contemporaneous Chinese botanical works, but also does not correspond to ancient Chinese descriptions.

[1979] Pan Fujun weighs the arguments for and against *L. foenum-graecum*, see Pan, *Chuci*, 2nd ed. Yet another identification, proposed by the botanist Hui-Lin Li, gives *hui* as *Pogostemon cablin*, or Malayan patchouli [HC#38], see Li, *Fourth Century Flora*, 75–77. This is based, in part, on the spurious claims of the *Prospect of the Plants and Trees of the Southern Regions* which asserts the *hui* and *xun* plants grew only in the tropical far south. This view is unique and not supported by other medieval documents and thus should be rejected.

[1980] The standard modern Chinese nomenclature for *L. foenum-graecum* is Numinous Aromatic Herb (*lingxiang cao* 靈香草), see Nanjing zhongyiyao daxue, *Zhongyao da cidian*, (#2445, which lists *xun* and the Aromatic from Lingling as synonyms, but not *hui*; cf. #2845, see also following footnote).

[1981] The *Systematic Materia Medica* reports that the eleventh century pharmacologist Su Song described the Aromatic from Lingling as occurring in the regions of present-day Hunan, Guangdong, and Guangxi and favoring low-lying marshlands, thus pointing to an identification of *L. foenum-graecum*. Yet, the morphology of

recent *Ben Can Gang Mu Dictionary* identify *xun* and the Aromatic from Lingling as sweet basil, I have followed their lead, but acknowledge the identities of these *flora* are far from certain and likely unstable through time.[1982]

As a final point of investigation, the name "Aromatic from Lingling" was adopted by translators of Buddhist texts by at least the end of the sixth century, but seemingly for a very different aromatic plant. We find it, for example, in Jñānagupta's rendering of the balneotherapeutic rite in the *Sutra of Golden Light*.[1983] It is also found in Yijing's retranslation of the same work from the early eighth century, but it is paired with an unexpected transcription, *duojieluo* 多揭羅, Middle Chinese **tâ-k^{h}jäi-lâ*, which renders an underlying *tagara*.[1984] *Tagara* is now most commonly understood as an aromatic root, possibly valerian root (*Valeriana* spp.) [HC#77]. Following Yijing, Huilin's early ninth century Buddhist dictionary glosses *duojieluo* as the "Aromatic from Lingling," as does Fayun's 法雲 (1088-1158) mid-twelfth century dictionary.[1985] Yijing also uses *lingling* (without the suffix "aromatic") as one of the ingredients in preparing the scented waters for the bathing the Buddha ceremony, suggesting he was not merely copying terminology from Jñānagupta when he re-worked the *Sutra of Golden Light*, but found value in the

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the plant he describes with leaves like hemp, square stalk, and an opposing leaf arrangement – all deriving from older descriptions – do not match with *L. foenum-graecum*; see BCGM:1.902 [薰草/集解]. As noted in an earlier footnote, the *Illustrated Examination on the Names and Identities of Plants* of 1848 still identifies the Aromatic from Lingling as *O. basilicum*.

[1982] Pan, *Chuci*, 30–31; Hua, Buell, and Unschuld, *Dictionary of the Ben Cao Gang Mu*, 412 (#655), 432 (#1329); see also Read, *Chinese Medicinal Plants*, 34 (134a). *O. basilicum* is identified in the entry for *luole*, with *xun*, *hui*, and the Aromatic from Lingling listed as synonyms, in Nanjing zhongyiyao daxue, *Zhongyao da cidian*, (#2845; cf. #2445, see also previous footnote). Shafer also identifies the Aromatic from Lingling as sweet basil, but is mistaken in his claim that essential oils were "pressed" from the plant's leaves, see Schafer, *Golden Peaches*, 158. Needham and Lu also identify *O. basilicum*, but also suggest *O. sanctum* if there was a cold-resistant variety, see Needham and Lu, *Science and Civilisation in China,* Vol. 5, Part 2, 136n.d. For more on the history of the *hui* plant, see my comments to sweet basil at HC#32.

[1983] T664:386c15.

[1984] T665:435a04; see also Ludvik, *Sarasvatī*, 312.

[1985] T2128:324b09 and T2131:1105a01, respectively.

nomenclature for identifying this Indian aromatic.[1986] Our lack of a firm understanding regarding the identity of *tagara* inhibits better insight into Indian *lingling*. Circumstantially, the indigenous *Śūraṃgama Sutra* (*Shoulengyan jing* 首楞嚴經; T945) possibly compiled within only two years of Yijing's completion of the *Sutra of Golden Light* in 703, cites the unknown Indian *lingling* as part of a ten-ingredient blend for making a scented paste when creating a ritual *maṇḍala*.[1987] Intriguingly, it positions *lingling* between costus [HC#16] and spikenard [HC#19], two aromatics that were derived from plant roots, thus suggesting *lingling* was envisioned as a fragrant root in some medieval Buddhist circles.[1988] This identification of *lingling* as a root plant may be related to the roughly contemporaneous report in the *Supplement to the Materia Medica*, published in 739, that *xun* was the root of the *hui* plant (and based on even older claims), but this remains purely speculative and does not account for why the Indic plant was not simply translated as *xun*.

In review, when the Aromatic from Lingling first surfaces in surviving Chinese sources in the fifth century, it appears to be a plant associated with the old Lingling commandery, a territory that was also once occupied by the ancient state of Chu. The ancient association of Chu with the *hui* plant and, moreover, this plant's synonymy with the *xun* plant since the second century helps motivate the identification of the Aromatic from Lingling as sweet basil (*O. basilicum*), but such a determination cannot be made without reservation. Moreover, for reasons that are not clearly understood, by the end of the sixth century Buddhist translators adopted the name Aromatic from Lingling, or more simply, *lingling*, to refer to *tagara*, which in turn may have referred to valerian root. Lastly, some

[1986] T698:800b18.
[1987] On the date of Yijing's translation, see Ludvik, *Sarasvatī*, 149. It is believed the *Śūraṃgama Sutra* may have been compiled in 705, see the relevant footnote at HC#76.
[1988] T945:133b08–10.

modern sources identify Aromatic from Lingling as a type of loosestrife (*L. foenum-graecum*), which may reflect a change in the botanical referent in as as-of-yet undetermined period.

21) Mao Aromatic inflorescence (sweetgrass?) 茅香花

The *Tang Materia Medica* states, "It grows in Jiannan[1989] and all provinces. Its stem and leaves are blackish brown in color and its flowers are white. This is not lemongrass [HC#36]. Its taste is bitter and warm. It is non-toxic. It treats malignity strike and warmth in the stomach[1990] and halts vomiting. The leaves and sprouts can be boiled for a warm bath. This wards off evil *qi* and causes people to be perfumed.

唐本草云：生劍南諸州，其莖葉黑褐色，花白，非白茅[1991]也。味苦溫無毒，主中惡，溫胃，止嘔吐。葉苗可煮湯浴，辟邪氣，令人香。[1992]

[COMMENTS] The proper citation for the passage above belongs to the *Materia Medica of the Kaibao Era* of the late tenth century, not the *Newly Revised Materia Medica* of the Tang. As we will see later in our discussion of lemongrass [HC#36], there were a variety of *flora* that incorporated the graph *mao* 茅 which generally referred to grass plants with long, sword-like leaf blades. Among the last of the plants to appear in medieval materia medica literature was Mao Aromatic (*mao xiang* 茅香), first incorporated with the publication of the *Materia*

[1989] A region that covers present-day Sichuan, Yunnan, and Guizhou, see Hua, Buell, and Unschuld, *Dictionary of the Ben Cao Gang Mu*, 154.
[1990] I have not identified this illness.
[1991] Read 白茅 as 白茅香, following BCGM:1.896–897 [茅香/集解].
[1992] Cf. BCGM:1.896–897 [茅香, 花, 苗葉/集解, 氣味, 主治]. Hong Chu erred in his citation, all of this information derives from the *Materia Medica of the Kaibao Era*, not the *Newly Revised Materia Medica*.

Medica of the Kaibao Era. As we see in the entry above, Mao Aromatic is carefully distinguished from a type of lemongrass that bears the similar name White Mao Aromatic (*baimao xiang* 白茅香). (It is worth noting that the *Materia Aromatica* contains the error White Mao [*baimao* 白茅] which refers to scentless cogongrass.) Both Mao Aromatic and White Mao Aromatic were used to make scented bathing water, but the latter was identified as growing in tropical regions further south, while the former grew in Jiannan 劍南, comprising the southwestern regions of China, as well as the more temperate Shaanxi 陝西, Hedong 河東 (present-day southwestern Shanxi), and Biandong 汴東 (eastern Henan).[1993]

Modern sources will sometimes identify Mao Aromatic as a *Cymbopogon* or *Andropogon* species (both are closely related under the *Poaceae* grass family), but neither genera have Chinese species that grow wild in more temperate climates.[1994] This critique is also applicable the identification of Mao Aromatic as citronella, *Cymbopogon nardus*, which is not native to China and currently is only cultivated in the tropical south.[1995] Other sources will identify Mao Aromatic as sweetgrass, or *Hierochloe odorata* (syn. *Hierochloe borealis*), the old scientific terminology which has now been incorporated under the newer nomenclature of *Anthoxanthum nitens* (syn. *Poa nitens*).[1996]

Notably, archaeobotanical remnants of sweetgrass were recovered from the second century BCE tombs at Mawangdui. Most revealing was a bamboo container of sweetgrass

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[1993] BCGM:1.896 [茅香/集解].

[1994] See e.g. Stuart and Smith, *Chinese Materia Medica*, 40 (*Andropogon Schoenanthus*, syn. *Cymbopogon schoenanthus*), Read, *Chinese Medicinal Plants*, (#720, *Andropogon Schoenanthus* and *Cymbopogon spp*.); . Hua, Buell, and Unschuld, *Dictionary of the Ben Cao Gang Mu*, 415 (#748, *Cymbopogon citratus*).

[1995] Edward Schafer suggested *C. nardus* "or a closely related species," see Schafer, *Golden Peaches*, 158, 315n.22; this seems to have been followed by Needham and Lu, *Science and Civilisation in China,* Vol. 5, Part 2, 136n.e.

[1996] Nanjing zhongyiyao daxue, *Zhongyao da cidian*, identifies Mao Aromatic Root (*maoxiang gen* 茅香根) as *H. odorata* (#2666).

labeled with a small wooden plaque inscribed with the graph *xi* 葸. This is now taken as an orthographic variant of *hui* 蕙, which is among the most commonly occurring fragrant plants in the *Songs of Chu* anthology. *Hui*, however, is more commonly described in medieval literature as an herbaceous plant in the labiate mint family, specifically sweet basil [HC#32], thus the identification of *A. nitens* remnants as *xi*/*hui*, and the relatively late appearance of the name Mao Aromatic in medical literature, deserves further investigation that will have to be explored at another time.[1997]

22) Jian Aromatic (aloeswood) 葴香

The *Supplement to the Materia Medica* claims, "This is also from the same tree [that produces] aloeswood. It is designated as such due to the black striations in the wood grain. 本草拾遺曰：亦沈香同樹，以其肌理有黑脈者謂之也。[1998]

[COMMENTS] By the time Hong Chu compiled the *Materia Aromatica*, *jian* 葴 (and its numerous orthographic variants[1999]) was long established as a secondary commercial tier of aloeswood. In contrast to the premier tier of Sinking Aromatic [HC#3], known for its high specific gravity that caused it to sink in water, *jian* remained buoyant. These easily identifiable traits were related to the amount of oleoresin infused into the wood fibers. Another proxy to determine resin content was to examine the coloration of the aloeswood piece. Heavily saturated wood was dark in color, with the finest specimens appearing

[1997] For more on the discovery of sweetgrass at Mawangdui, see my comments to sweet basil at HC#32 and Chapter 2, Section 3.
[1998] Cf. BCGM:2.1937 [沉香/集解]. The *Supplement to the Materia Medica* as preserved in the *Systematic Materia Medica* mistakenly calls this *jianxiang* 煎香.
[1999] Names for the second-tier of aloeswood include: *jian* 箋, *jian* 篟, *jian* 淺, *zhan* 棧, and *jian* 煎.

completely black. Lesser quality aloeswood pieces had only black striations or were mottled with dark spots, leaving parts of the wood golden yellow in color. Consequently, the different color designations of black and yellow also denoted aloeswood quality. Given the rather arcane and confusing terminology that emerged to indicate different grades of aloeswood, as no less than twelve different names are given for aloeswood in the base text of the *Materia Aromatica*, it is worth examining the early historical development of these changes in China. An overview of these developments can be found in the table below.

Table of Medieval Aloeswood Classifications

Title	Date	Aloeswood Classifications
Treatise on Strange Things of the Southern Regions	ca. 280	Sinking Aromatic, Jian Aromatic, Qian Aromatic (?)
Treatise on Nanyue	5th century	Sinking Aromatic, Jian Aromatic, Chicken Bone Aromatic
Book of Liang	635	Sinking Aromatic, Jian Aromatic
Newly Revised Materia Medica	659	Sinking Aromatic, Jian Aromatic, Chicken Bone Aromatic, Dark Cassia Aromatic, Horse Hoof Aromatic
Supplement to the Materia Medica	739	Sinking Aromatic, Jian Aromatic, Chicken Bone Aromatic, Dark Cassia Aromatic, Horse Hoof Aromatic
Records of the Strange from Lingbiao	early 10th century	Sinking Aromatic, Jian Aromatic, Chicken Bone Aromatic, Yellow-Aged Aromatic
Traditions of Heavenly Aromatics	early 11th century	[Four Classes only] Sinking Aromatic, Jian Aromatic, Yellow-Aged Aromatic, Freshly-Produced Aromatic
Illustrated Classic of Materia Medica [redacted *Treatise on Nanyue*]	1062	Sinking Aromatic, Jian Aromatic, Chicken Bone Aromatic, Dark Cassia Aromatic, Horse Hoof Aromatic, Yellow-Aged Aromatic
Prospect of the Plants and Trees of the Southern Regions	ca.12th century (revised dating)	Sinking Aromatic, Jian Aromatic, Chicken Bone Aromatic, Dark Cassia Aromatic, Horse Hoof Aromatic, Yellow-Aged Aromatic, Honey Aromatic (+Cloves)
Materia Aromatica	early 12th century	[Classifications and variant names] Sinking Aromatic [#3], Jian Aromatic [#22], Chicken Bone Aromatic [#15], Dark Cassia Aromatic [#14], Yellow-Aged

Title	Date	Aloeswood Classifications
		Aromatic [#23], Freshly-Produced Aromatic [#3b], Honey Aromatic [#42], Waxy Sinking Aromatic [#3b], Water Basin Aromatic [#24], White Eye Aromatic [#25], Leaf Aromatic [#26], Wood Aromatic [#16]

In the early medieval period, before the creation of more complex classification systems, *jian* was described in slightly different ways, but was always considered an inferior product to Sinking Aromatic. The oldest verifiable record of *jian* is the *Treatise on Strange Things of the Southern Regions*, which was compiled in the mid-to-late third century. The relevant passage on aloeswood was preserved by the monk Daoshi in his catalogue of aromatics from the seventh century. The passage describes the procedure for harvesting aloeswood before turning to an explanation of the buoyancy test. We are told that there are segments of wood sandwiched between the higher-grade pieces of Sinking aloeswood that are not very solid nor dense. When these pieces are placed in water they exhibit a neutral buoyancy, neither sinking nor floating. These were to be called Jian Aromatic. A third, lower grade, was comprised of the smallest, most crude white pieces which were called Qian Aromatic (*qian xiang* 槧香).[2000] Yamada Kentarō speculates that Qian Aromatic was a later interpolation of Song editors and thus aloeswood only had a two-tier grading classification during early medieval period.[2001] For support, Yamada relies on the *Book of Liang* which

[2000] T2122:573c24–29 (citing *jian* 箋 and *qian*); cf. TPYL:8.982.865 (citing *zhan* 棧 and replacing *qian* with *xi* 系).

[2001] Yamada, *Tōa kōryō shi kenkyū*, 186. A term with similar orthography, Zan Aromatic (*zan xiang* 暫香), appears as a designation for a lesser grade of aloeswood during the Song, see Yamada, 168–70. Yamada overlooks the fact that this particular citation to Qian Aromatic in the *Treatise on Strange Things of the Southern Regions* cannot originate from the editors of the Song-era *Imperial Readings of the Taiping Era* as he presumes. The passage, including the reference to Qian Aromatic, is found previously in Daoshi's *Forest of Pearls in the Garden of the Dharma*, a text dating to the seventh century; see T2122:573c24–29. If treated as a later interpolation, *qian* would have been added a few centuries earlier than Yamada first estimated, certainly before Daoshi compiled his work in 668.

describes aloeswood on the Malay Peninsula as only comprising Sinking Aromatic and Jian Aromatic.[2002]

Different explanations for grading aloeswood eventually emerge, such as we see in the *Treatise on Nanyue*, a lost work that was compiled during the Liu Song in the fifth century. In the relevant passage preserved in the *Imperial Readings of the Taiping Era*, a buoyancy test is again described to differentiate between Sinking Aromatic and an aloeswood piece that floated to the surface of the water. If it floated the piece was to be called Chicken Bone Aromatic [HC#15]. Only the "most crude" (*zuicu* 最粗) type of aloeswood was to be called Jian Aromatic, thus creating a three-tier system of classification.[2003] A very different citation from the *Treatise on Nanyue* is preserved by the eleventh century *Illustrated Classic of Materia Medica* which provides a six-tier classification system. Buoyancy, again, differentiated Sinking Aromatic and Chicken Bone Aromatic, the latter of which was described as half-floating and half-sinking. The final four types were distinguished by where the aloeswood piece was cut from the tree. The slender branches hewn from the tree that were not yet rotting were called Dark Cassia Aromatic [HC#14], the pieces carved from roots were called Yellow-Aged Aromatic [HC#23], the lighter pieces taken from the knotty parts of the roots were called Horse Hoof Aromatic, and the pieces cleaved from the main trunk were called Jian Aromatic.[2004] As we will see, several of these names are clearly

[2002] Yamada, *Tōa kōryō shi kenkyū*, 185, see also LS:54.48.795.
[2003] TPYL:8.982.863. Yamada only considers the *Treatise on Nanyue* in relation to his discussion of Honey Aromatic, a term for aloeswood Yamada did not recognize originated in Han-era Buddhist translations, see his comments in Yamada, *Tōa kōryō shi kenkyū*, 189. Importantly, Yamada does not include the *Treatise on Nanyue* in his chart for the various grading iterations of aloeswood, see Yamada, 192. If the reading from the *Imperial Readings of the Taiping Era* can be taken as authentic, the *Treatise on Nanyue* is the first to refer to Chicken Bone Aromatic and is an intermediate step between the early two-tier grading system and the five-tier system of the *Newly Revised Materia Medica* (to be discussed below).
[2004] BCGM:2.1937 [沉香/集解].

anachronistic to the fifth century, thus this classification system is better viewed as a product of the eleventh century when the *Illustrated Classic of Materia Medica* was compiled.[2005]

The *Newly Revised Materia Medica*, published in 659, enumerates five different kinds of aloeswood, including Sinking Aromatic, Jian Aromatic, Chicken Bone Aromatic, Dark Cassia Aromatic, and Horse Hoof Aromatic. The editors of this Tang-era text do not provide the criteria for differentiation, however, only noting that all come from the same tree.[2006] Less than a century later, in 739, the *Supplement to the Materia Medica* outlines a few guidelines for these classifications. It explains, unsurprisingly, that Sinking Aromatic sinks in water and that Jian Aromatic floats, but the latter also has easily visible black striations, as noted in the Hong Chu's entry above. Moreover, Chicken Bone and Horse Hoof are classified as subtypes of Jian Aromatic and can be distinguished by their apparent shape. Lastly, Dark Cassia Aromatic comprised the slender branches cut from the tree.[2007]

While buoyancy was still an underlying criterion for most types of aloeswood and the principle means to identify the finest grade, visual properties (color and shape) conflicted with criteria based on material origin. The benefits of the former over the latter for merchants must have been evident – by lacking the ability to verify which part of the tree harvesters obtained aloeswood pieces, merchants could instead rely on ever-present visual characteristics to classify different grades.

The material origin criteria seems to have developed *after* the buoyancy criteria was already well-known. What may account for the emergence of such a system? It may have

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[2005] Yamada includes the six-tier classification is listed under the *Illustrated Classic of Materia Medica*, see Yamada, 192.
[2006] XXBC:12.314, see discussion in Yamada, *Tōa kōryō shi kenkyū*, 172.
[2007] Yamada, *Tōa kōryō shi kenkyū*, 187–88. Yamada cites the passage as preserved in the *Verified and Classified Materia Medica*. For a shortened citation to the *Supplement to the Materia Medica*, see BCGM:2.1937 [沉香/集解].

been partly motivated by a widespread misunderstanding concerning the botanical origins of the many new aromatics entering early medieval ports and perfume markets. Most typically, a range of different aromatic exotica such as cloves, sandalwood, patchouli, and so forth were viewed as the products of a *single* chimerical tree. On one hand, a nascent singular origin theory can be read into the Indian Buddhist tendency to distinguish different scented materials based on parts of a tree, such as Root Aromatic, Heartwood Aromatic, Resin Aromatic, Bark Aromatic, Flower Aromatic, and Leaf Aromatic.[2008] No individual tree naturally provided aromatics of each of these generic kinds, so this list is better interpreted as an osmological system for categorizing different scents based on culturally salient material foundations.[2009] Unlike temperate north China, India possessed far more botanical diversity in regards to highly scented plant matter, including sandalwood heartwood, gum guggul oleogum, cinnamon bark, Indian bay leaf, and spikenard root.

On another hand, a singular origin theory can also reflect genuine Chinese confusion regarding supra-regional commodities. We first find clear evidence of this sometime during the Eastern Jin, when the official Yu Yiqi 俞益期 (ca. 4th cent.) started sending letters to Han Kangbo 韓康伯 (d.u.) to discuss local products of the south, including one rather miraculous tree. According to their exchange, an unnamed foreigner told them of a single tree that yielded six exotic aromatics: its flowers were cloves, its resin was frankincense, its knotty joints were costus, its roots were sandalwood, its leaves were Malayan patchouli, and its heartwood was aloeswood.[2010] This belief is echoed again in the middle of the sixth century,

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[2008] T1548.526b18–20.

[2009] As discussed in Chapter 2, Section 4, the Chinese Five Odors were also rooted in material foundations, but of a very different sort: the various cooked and uncooked states of sacrificial foods.

[2010] T2122:573b08–10, b16–17, b23–25, b28–29, c10–11, 574a02–03; see also Yamada, *Tōa kōryō shi kenkyū*, 357. Other portions of Yu Yiqi's letters are found scattered in the *Book of Sui*. It is, however, cited in the

when Emperor Yuan describes a single tree from Funan, an early strategic entrepôt on the Mekong Delta, as producing five of the most valued aromatics: its roots were sandalwood, its knotty joints were aloeswood, its flowers were cloves, its leaves were Malayan patchouli, and its resin was frankincense.[2011] This lore continued well into the ninth century when the *Miscellaneous Morsels from Youyang* speaks of a Single Tree of Five Aromatics (*yimu wuxiang* 一木五香), dividing the tree just as Emperor Yuan.[2012] A material origins theory allows a broad array of aromatics to be conceptually ordered according to their distinctive material properties. At the same time, it also elaborates a sense of wonder regarding the *flora* of distant countries that produce such exotic aromatics.

We might wonder how these ideas influenced Chinese harvesters of native aloeswood, such as we see in the works above as well as the *Records of the Strange from Lingbiao*, compiled by Liu Xun in the early tenth century. Its division of aloeswood products relied solely on material origins; Sinking Aromatic, Chicken Bone, Yellow-Aged, and Jian Aromatic were all part of a single tree, corresponding to the roots, trunk, branches, and knotty joints, respectively; the buoyancy test was irrelevant. In addition, it was reported, the tree bark could be used as paper.[2013]

Essential Techniques for All People, see e.g. QMYS:10.92.37.1 (on the betelnut), QMYS:5.45.35.1 (silkworm), and QMYS:10.92.2.2 (an unknown grain).

[2011] TPYL:8.982.865. We might speculate that the curious reference to a Five Aromatics Tree (*wuxiang mu* 五香木) in the *Book of Sui* did not refer to a single item, but this grouping of five different aromatics, see SuiS:82.1833, cf. Wheatley, "Ch'ih-t'u," 124 ("perfumed woods").

[2012] YYZZ:18.1303.

[2013] BCGM:2.1937 [沉香/集解]. A single tree of eight products, seven types of aloeswood in addition to cloves, can also be found in the *Prospect of the Plants and Trees of the Southern Regions*, a text purportedly from the early fourth century, see Li, *Fourth Century Flora*, 87–90; Liu, *Songdai Xiangpu*, 155. As noted by Ma Tai-loi, this is a pastiche of passages from several works, the latest dating to the early twelfth century, and thus should not be taken as a genuine fourth century description, see Ma, "Nan-Fang Ts'ao-Mu Chuang," 238; a similar stance regarding this passage is taken in Yamada, *Tōa kōryō shi kenkyū*, 187.

Such byzantine distinctions were of likely minimal value to the growing class of perfume connoisseurs and merchants who traded highly valued aloeswood. Thus, in the early eleventh century, the once renowned official Ding Wei 丁謂 (966–1037), based on his personal knowledge of aloeswood harvesting and trade on the "Aromatic Isle" [HC#90] of Hainan during a period of banishment, reworked the existing classifications and criteria. To fix the older classification systems, he established what he termed the Four Classes and Twelve Types (*siming shierzhuang* 四名十二狀) of aloeswood. This is preserved in his *Traditions of Heavenly Aromatics* [HC#119], a progenitor of the materia aromatica genre.[2014] Without going into great detail, Ding Wei kept the general distinction between Sinking Aromatic and Jian Aromatic, but spilt the latter type into two, establishing a lesser grade that was even less saturated and dark-colored, calling it Yellow-Aged Aromatic (recycling the older term originating from the *Records of the Strange from Lingbiao*[2015]).

A further distinction differentiated each of these three classes according to whether the fragrant aloeswood had fully or "matured," or it if was "immature" or "unnatural." Unfortunately, Ding Wei does not clearly explain the meanings behind such designations. For example, Ding Wei defines a piece of aloeswood as Freshly-Produced (*shenjie* 生結) if it had been "harvested before waiting for it to come to maturity or if unnatural."[2016] I understand this to refer to either harvesting a piece of aloeswood "too early," meaning that it has not yet developed enough oleoresin within its wood fibers to be considered of a higher

[2014] The following summarizes the brief discussion in Liu, *Songdai Xiangpu*, 150–56. Liu explains that Ding Wei used four classes divided into fourteen types, not twelve.
[2015] Yamada, *Tōa kōryō shi kenkyū*, 187, 188–89, 215n.31.
[2016] 生結者，取不俟其成，非自然者也。SKQS:844.335a14; see also Liu, *Songdai Xiangpu*, 155.

quality class, or that it was produced through the "unnatural" help of the harvester's intervention.

There seems to be two different understandings regarding the intervening harvester. One interpretation comes from the twelfth century Daoist pharmacologist Kou Zongshi, who offers insight into aloeswood production in his *Materia Medica of Expanded Meaning* (*Bencao yanyi* 本草衍義). The relevant passage claims that only one or two *Aquilaria* trees out of a hundred naturally produced aloeswood, thus some local harvesters devised methods to increase the yield of the prized aromatic. To do so, the harvester cut off parts of the tree and buried them underground. After several years of rain, the "unnaturally" manufactured aloeswood was exhumed and called Freshly-Produced.[2017] While such methods would undoubtedly hasten the decay of the sapwood, it was believed the rainwater "soaked" (*zi* 漬) into the buried wood, presumably helping to create or further develop the dark-colored and richly scented aloeswood pieces. In my reading, this product stood in distinction from a piece of aloeswood that required no intervention and could be hewn directly from a dead or desiccated tree.[2018] The *Traditions of Heavenly Aromatics* might offer a different perspective on this matter. Later in the work, Ding Wei specifies that a "ripened" (*shu* 熟) piece of aloeswood is one that is "naturally matured" and drops from the tree of itself.[2019] Since Ding

[2017] Yamada, *Tōa kōryō shi kenkyū*, 190–91. The relevant passage from the *Materia Medica of Expanded Meaning* is also partly preserved in the *Enlarged and Illustrated Materia Medica* (*Tujing yanyi bencao* 圖經衍義本草; DZ768), see DZ768.21.25b–26a; for more on this latter text, see Schipper and Verellen, *The Taoist Canon*, 765–69. According to Kou Zongshi, this method was common on the continent, i.e. in southern China, but in contrast to the method on Hainan, Yamada, *Tōa kōryō shi kenkyū*, 191.

[2018] The belief appeared to be that a dead tree could no longer absorb sufficient amounts of water, thus arresting the natural production of aloeswood or higher grades of aloeswood. A similar distinction between "fresh" and "mature" aloeswood is made in the *Verified and Classified Materia Medica*, see Yamada, *Tōa kōryō shi kenkyū*, 191. According to Kou Zongshi, this method was common on Hainan, Yamada, 191.

[2019] According to Ding Wei, "It is said that Ripened Aromatic is called the Aromatic that Falls Down; all of these are naturally matured aromatics" 曰熟香，曰脫落香，皆是自然成香。SKQS:844.335b05–06.

Wei does not comment on burying aloeswood as described above, the Freshly-Produced aromatic he envisioned might simply refer to aloeswood "unnaturally" cut off the tree before it falls off on its own accord.[2020]

Whatever the specific intervention method, this created a staggered grading system whereby, for example, an "unnatural" piece of Sinking Aromatic was shifted down one class, making it equivalent to Jian Aromatic. According to Ding Wei's nomenclature, this was to be called "Freshly-Produced Sinking Aromatic" (*shengjie chen xiang* 生結沉香) and considered of second-tier quality equal to Jian Aromatic. This had a cascading effect down the three classes and the third-tier classification of Yellow-Aged aloeswood was also disaggregated between fully matured and "unnatural" pieces. Consequently, a new fourth class of aloeswood was created that was, somewhat confusingly, sometimes simply called Freshly-Produced (see, for example, HC#135).[2021] Further uneven subdivisions of the four classes, the so-called Twelve Types, were based largely on other physical and visual criteria.[2022]

Ding Wei's Four Classes of Aloeswood

First Class	Sinking Aromatic
Second Class	Jian Aromatic
	Freshly-Produced Sinking Aromatic (of Sinking Aromatic quality, but "unnaturally" produced through intervention)
Third Class	Yellow-Aged Aromatic
	Freshly-Produced Jian Aromatic (of Jian Aromatic quality, but "unnaturally" produced through intervention)

[2020] This interpretation seems to be favored by the *Treatise on the Barbarians*, see Hirth and Rockhill, *Chau Ju-Kua*, 204–05.
[2021] According to Ding Wei, "Freshly-Produced Sinking Aromatic is classified as Jian Aromatic grade, Freshly-Produced Jian Aromatic is classified as Yellow-Aged grade, and Freshly-Produced Yellow-Aged is classified as the lowest." 生結沉香，品與棧香等。生結棧香，品與黃熟等。生結黃熟，品之下也。 SKQS:844.335a14–15.
[2022] For a convenient tabular chart of these different classifications, see Liu, *Songdai Xiangpu*, 154. It should be noted that it does not appear Kou Zongshi made the same distinctions between the Four Classes and Twelve Types.

Fourth Class	Freshly-Produced Yellow-Aged Aromatic (of Yellow-Aged quality, but "unnaturally" produced through intervention)[2023]

In summary, aloeswood (first appearing in Buddhist sources at the end of the second century) appears to have been distinguished by at least the end of the third century between pieces that sink in water and those that float, the latter typically termed Jian Aromatic. Gauging from surviving sources, more classifications were introduced in the coming centuries, with a three-tier system used, at the latest, by the fifth century *Treatise on Nanyue* (adding Chicken Bone Aromatic) and a five-tier system by the mid-seventh century *Newly Revised Materia Medica* (adding Dark Cassia Aromatic and Horse Hoof Aromatic). The classification of Yellow-Aged Aromatic was added in the early tenth century *Records of the Strange from Lingbiao*. In the early eleventh century, Ding Wei reconceptualized the existing aloeswood categories, creating the Four Classes and Twelve Types, based on his personal observation of the aloeswood industry on Hainan.

Ding Wei's classification was not the final system, however, as the thirteenth century *Treatise on the Barbarians*, likely based on earlier precedent, offers yet another schemata for grading and classifying aloeswood. Critically, this work offers minor alterations to of Ding Wei's system, for example, recording that a fresh or "unnatural" pieces of aloeswood was of better quality than one fully "matured," presumably because the latter was viewed as being

[2023] If I understand the classifications correctly, there is no fourth-tier classification of aloeswood that has not yet naturally "matured" into Yellow-Aged Aromatic. Presumably, this would include all non-scented *Aquilaria* wood, which by definition would not be considered "aloeswood" of any grade. Consequently, the fourth tier is solely comprised of Yellow-Aged Aromatic, but which has been made through the intervention of harvesters.

recovered from a rotten log.[2024] Moreover, equally complex distinctions, often of an entirely different nature, emerged in Japan, including one based on geographic origins.[2025]

23) Yellow-Aged Aromatic (aloeswood) 黃熟香[2026]

Yellow-Aged Aromatic is also classified as Jian Aromatic, but it is significantly lighter, porous, and dried out. Nowadays, all sorts of blended incense use this.

黃熟香，亦棧香之類也，但輕虛枯朽不堪者。今和香中皆用之。

[COMMENTS] Yellow-Aged Aromatic is one of the commercial grades of aloeswood that developed in the late medieval period. It was first cited in the *Records of the Strange from Lingbiao*, compiled in the early tenth century, where it referred to aloeswood harvested from the branches of the *Aquilaria* tree.[2027] It was reconceptualized in the eleventh century by Ding Wei who distinguished Yellow-Aged as a lesser grade of Jian Aromatic, thus creating three principal classes of aloeswood products: Sinking Aromatic, Jian Aromatic, and Yellow-Aged Aromatic. Each of these tiers could be further distinguished by whether the aloeswood was produced naturally in the tree or that was produced through the intervention of harvesters.[2028]

[2024] Hirth and Rockhill, *Chau Ju-Kua*, 207; see also comments in Wheatley, "Geographical Notes," 71; Jung, "Cultural Biography of Agarwood," 112–13; and the tabular chart in Yamada, *Tōa kōryō shi kenkyū*, 197.
[2025] For the Japanese classification system based on geographic origins, see Yamada, 389–401; Jung, "Cultural Biography of Agarwood," 119n.86.
[2026] The editors of the *Siku quanshu* edition of the *Materia Aromatica* treat Yellow-Aged Aromatic under the entry for Jian Aromatic and thus do not provide its own headword. The Huacheng xylographic edition, however, lists Yellow-Aged Aromatic as separate from Jian Aromatic in its table of contents, thus I have decided to separate the entries here and have inserted a new headword.
[2027] BCGM:2.1937 [沉香/集解], see also Yamada, *Tōa kōryō shi kenkyū*, 187, 188–89, 215n.31.
[2028] For more medieval aloeswood classifications, see my comments to Jian Aromatic at HC#22.

24) Water Basin Aromatic (aloeswood) 水盤香

This is classified as Yellow-Aged [Aromatic], but it is especially large. It is often carved into fragrant mountain [sculptures] and Buddhist statues. It is also exported aboard ships.

類黃熟而殊大，多雕刻為香山佛像，並出舶上。[2029]

[COMMENTS] This aloeswood classification was a subdivision of the Yellow-Aged type.[2030] It was distinguished by its large size and thus could be carved into a multiplicity of forms, including Buddhist statues and miniature mountain landscapes. For example, the ninth century *Miscellaneous Compilation from Duyang* (*Duyang zabian* 杜陽雜編) notes the creation of a sculpture depicting a miniature Ten-Thousand Buddha Mountain made of sandalwood and aloeswood (the material, however, is not specified as Water Basin Aromatic).[2031] Moreover, Rolf Stein has documented how pieces of aloeswood in their natural form, often found (or carved) from rotting *Aquilaria* logs, were treated as mountains, especially in Vietnam.[2032] The *Systematic Materia Medica* notes that this type of aloeswood was not used in medicine, but could be burned for its smell.[2033]

[2029] I have not been able to identify the origin of this passage. It might reflect the personal comments of Hong Chu. This nomenclature for aloeswood is also used by the early twelfth century pharmacologist Kou Zongshi in roughly the same time period, see BCGM:2.1937 [沉香/集解], Yamada, *Tōa kōryō shi kenkyū*, 190.
[2030] It was not included in the aloeswood classification system of Ding Wei, see my comments to Jian Aromatic at HC#22.
[2031] See my comments to Sandalwood Pavilion at HC#103.
[2032] Stein, *World in Miniature*, 84–91.
[2033] BCGM:2.1938 [沉香/集解].

25) White Eye Aromatic (aloeswood) 白眼香

This is also an alternative name for Yellow-Aged [Aromatic]. Its color is mistaken for being white. It is not used as medicine. Some use it for blending [aromatics].

亦黃熟之別名也。其色差白，不入藥品，和香或用之。[2034]

[COMMENTS] This is an obscure alternative name for Yellow-Aged aloeswood [HC#23]. Unlike the common use of Yellow-Aged Aromatic in perfume blending, White Eye Aromatic is far less common and does not appear in the recipes at the end of the *Materia Aromatica*.

26) Leaf Aromatic (aloeswood) 葉子香

These are flakes of Jian Aromatic. Its fragrance is superior to that of Jian [Aromatic] and is also called Dragon Scales Aromatic.

即葭香之薄者，其香尤勝於葭，又謂之龍鱗香。[2035]

[COMMENTS] This aloeswood classification was a subdivision of the Jian Aromatic type [HC#22] which consisted of thinly cut chips (*paobian* 薄片) that reportedly had an exceptional fragrance.[2036]

[2034] I have not been able to identify the origin of this passage. It might reflect the personal comments of Hong Chu.
[2035] I have not been able to identify the origin of this passage. It might reflect the personal comments of Hong Chu. Dragon Scales Aromatic, as noted in the above entry, is also used by the early twelfth century pharmacologist Kou Zongshi in roughly the same time period, see BCGM:2.1937 [沉香/集解].
[2036] BCGM:2.1937 [沉香/集解].

27) Sparrow Head Aromatic (nutsedge root) 雀頭香[2037]

The [*Tang*] *Materia Medica* states, "This is nutsedge[2038]. Every place has it. The leaves and stems resemble the bur-reed, the root is like Chinese wolfsbane with hairs all around. The kind from Jiaozhou[2039] is most superior. It is as large as jujube pits. The regional kind is somewhat like almonds. The people of Jingxiang[2040] call it nutsedge root. [It treats] great downward *qi*, and dispels heat in the chest and abdomen[2041]. It is outstanding for use in blending aromatics.

本草云：即香附子也。所在有之。葉莖都似三棱，根若附子，周匝多毛。交州者最勝，大如棗核，近道者如杏仁許。荊襄人謂之莎草根。大下氣，除胸腹中熱，合和香用之尤佳。[2042]

28) Yun Aromatic (goldenbanner? / thoroughwax? / field mustard? → common rue? / rapeseed oil? → sweetleaf? / orange jasmine?) 芸香

[28a] The *Explanatory Notes of Cang Jie*[2043] states, "Thoroughwax resembles säfferot[2044]. It is edible."

[2037] The name for this aromatic is derived from the bulbous shape of the tuberous root of the nutsedge, which resembles the round head of a sparrow.
[2038] Bretschneider, *Botanican Sinicum*, Part 3, 252–53, 254–57; Stuart and Smith, *Chinese Materia Medica*, 141; Pan, *Shijing*, 225.
[2039] An administrative area established under the Eastern Han that comprised much of present-day Guangdong and Guangxi and the northern and central part of Vietnam. In the Three Kingdoms period under the state of Eastern Wu, Jiaozhou was mostly restricted to central and northern Vietnam, covering only the southernmost portions of Guangxi, see Hua, Buell, and Unschuld, *Dictionary of the Ben Cao Gang Mu*, 164
[2040] A regional name that corresponds to present-day northern Hubei, see Hua, Buell, and Unschuld, *Dictionary of the Ben Cao Gang Mu*, 171.
[2041] Zhang and Unschuld, *Dictionary of the Ben Cao Gang Mu*, 582.
[2042] Cf. XXBC:9.236–237, BCGM:1.888 [莎草/集解].
[2043] The *Explanatory Notes of Cang Jie* (*Cang Jie jie gu* 倉頡解詁) is an obscure lexicographical work probably from the Jin, see Zheng et al., *Dictionary of the Ben Cao Gang Mu*, 57.
[2044] Possibly a Chinese species of *Seseli*, some of which have an edible taproot.

[28b] Yu Huan's *Abridged Archives*[2045] states, "Yun Aromatic wards off silverfish[2046] and [book]worms[2047], therefore the library atheneum is called the Rue Atheneum.

[28a] 倉頡解詁曰：芸蒿似邪蒿，可食。[2048]

[28b] 魚豢典略云：芸香辟紙魚蠹，故藏書臺稱芸臺。[2049]

[COMMENTS] Known by the late medieval period as a powerful insect repellent for driving away silverfish and other paper eating vermin, Yun Aromatic (*yunxiang* 芸香 or 蕓香) is now often identified as *Ruta graveolens*, or common rue.[2050] This is a yellow flowering herbaceous plant widely known to the ancient Mediterranean world. As a member of the citrus family *Rutaceae*, rue has a strong citrus scent with noticeably bitter undertones. Rue was possibly introduced and cultivated in medieval China, although the evidence supporting this claim is meagre and conflicted. Importantly, these issues should be separated from the identity of the native Chinese plant known as *yun* 芸 (or 蕓) which is equally complex and uncertain. A more thorough investigation of these matters is a desiderium, the comments here are mostly conjectural.

[2045] The *Abridged Archives* (*Dianlüe* 典略) is a lost historical record of the state of Cao Wei that was written by the state historian Yu Huan in the mid-third century, see Zheng et al., *Dictionary of the Ben Cao Gang Mu*, 501. It is unclear if the *Abridged Archives* should be distinguished from Yu Huan's other work, the *Abridged Account of Wei*, see HC#7a.

[2046] *Lepisma saccharinum*, see brief comments in Needham and Lu, *Science and Civilisation in China,* Vol. 5, Part 2*,* 148–49n.f.

[2047] Likely one of many species of beetle larvae, see brief comments in Needham and Lu, *Science and Civilisation in China,* Vol. 5, Part 2*,* 148–49n.f.

[2048] Cf. QMYS:10.92.74.3 (citing 邪蒿 as 斜蒿), cf. BCGM:2.2106 [山攀/集解] (citing 芸蒿 as 芸香). Tao Hongjing cites this definition as originating from the third century *Treatise on the Investigation of Things* (*Bowu zhi* 博物志), see XXBC:6.167 (where only the leaves of the *yunhao* 芸蒿 are described); this passage is not in the received *Treatise on the Investigation of Things*.

[2049] Cf. TPYL:3.311. The source is alternatively cited as Yu Huan's *Abridged Account of Wei*.

[2050] Nanjing zhongyiyao daxue, *Zhongyao da cidian*, (#3953). *Yunxiang* is the modern Chinese name for *R. graveolens*

The first evidence of a foreign *yun* is found in the mid-third century *Abridged Account of Wei* (*Weilüe* 魏略), a work attributed to the historian Yu Huan, that describes a mysterious Yun Gum (*yun jiao* 蕓膠) as one of the aromatic products of the Roman Empire.[2051] Yun Gum was also noted in the mid-fifth century *Treatise on the Guang Region*, along with Parthian Gum [HC#6] and an unknown Black Gum (*hei jiao*).[2052] It is common in modern scholarship to treat the foreign *yun* plant as common rue, but we are immediately met with an intractable problem if we consider Yun Gum the oleogum of *R. graveolens*. This Mediterranean plant does not produce a resin or gum exudate of any kind. In the modern period, it is possible to distill a pale-yellow essential oil from the rue plant's leaves, stems, and inflorescences, which can harden under certain circumstances. There is, to my knowledge, no evidence of distilling rue oil in the third century, but we can perhaps point to a partly analogous scenario. The seventh century *Newly Revised Materia Medica* describes a process for extracting the juice of the asafetida (*awei* 阿魏; *Ferula assa-foetida*) root and drying it in the sun. The final product is said to "resemble gum" (*ru jiao* 如膠).[2053] It remains to be seen, however, if *R. graveolens* could express a similar root oil and be turned into a gum-like substance, or more pertinent to our inquiry, if Roman merchants were exporting either product. Ultimately, a rue gum, or possibly a rue oil, remains a mystery and Yun Gum may have referred to an entirely different substance.[2054]

[2051] SGZ:30.861, TPYL:8.982.866.

[2052] TPYL:8.982.867; cf. BCGM:2.2106 [山攀/集解] (citing 蕓膠 as 蕓香膠).

[2053] XXBC:18. Like galbanum [HC#51], asafetida is an oleogum obtained from the roots of several species in the *Ferula* genus, thus the parallel to *R. graveolens* is imperfect, see Howes, *Vegetable Gums and Resins*, 160–61.

[2054] One suggestion is that Yun Aromatic was sandarac, the oleoresin of the African *Tetraclinis articulata*, which was reportedly used to adulterate frankincense, see Stuart and Smith, *Chinese Materia Medica*, 394. I find this suggestion highly unlikely, but I have no immediate reason to exclude it from possibility. One might also put forth an argument that Yun Gum was asafetida. The editors of the *Newly Revised Materia Medica* report that a variant name for asafetida was *xunqu* 薰渠, to which Tao Hongjing had claimed a century earlier

It is presumed that both Yun Gum and Yun Aromatic, as noted in the third century *Abridged Archives* [28b], referred to the same plant. It is within this latter work we also find a clear description of this plant's use as a pesticide for preserving precious library holdings. Despite this apparent critical role for manuscript preservation, the next discussion of Yun Aromatic in this particular role comes much later in the eleventh century. Shen Kuo, the author of *Brush Talks from Dream Creek*, provides the most extensive commentary in this regard:

> In antiquity, people would use *yun* to ward off [book]worms in the library. *Yun* is a fragrant plant and nowadays people call it Seven *Li* Aromatic. Its leaves resemble the green pea plant [*wandou* 豌豆; *Pisum sativum* (?)] and it grows in small clusters. Its leaves are extremely fragrant. After fall, the leaves become white like powder. It is very effective in warding off [book]worms. The people of the south pick it and place it under their mats to drive away fleas and lice.[2055]
> 古人藏書闢蠹用芸。芸，香草也，今人謂之七里香者是也。葉類豌豆，作小叢生，其葉極芬香，秋間葉間微白如粉污，辟蠹殊驗。南人採置席下，能去蚤虱。

Shen Kuo's description of *yun* sounds like a small herbaceous plant and although the leaf morphology is not similar to the pea plant, this is now generally regarded as a description of common rue which has odoriferous leaves.[2056] Importantly, later in this passage, Shen Kuo claims he was able to acquire cultivars from another official, Lu Gong 潞公 (1006–1097), and plant them behind the imperial library, known as the Pavilion of Secrets (*mige* 秘閣).[2057]

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was known to the Chinese as *yuntai* 蕓台. Not only was *yuntai* additionally known as a native Chinese plant, possibly in the mustard family, but it is striking similar to the name *yuntai* 芸臺, "Rue Atheneum," noted above [28b]. I return to this latter point in the comments below. The editors of the *Newly Revised Materia Medica*, however, reject Tao Hongjing's claim that *yuntai* and *xunqu* (asafetida) were the same thing.

[2055] MXBT:3.22; cf. trans. Needham, Lu, and Huang, *Science and Civilisation,* Vol. 6, Part 1, 499; cf. BCGM:2.2106 [山礬/集解] (citing 芸 as 芸香).

[2056] Potential inconsistencies in Shen Kuo's description are noted by Li Shizhen. He specifically calls attention to Seven *Li* Aromatic, which he claims does not resemble the characteristics of the *yun* plant as described, see BCGM:2.2106 [山礬/集解]. I have not been able to confirm that rue leaves turn white in the winter, but a similar claim can also be found in the ninth century *Compilations from Duyang* which states Yun Aromatic was exported from Khotan and was "pure white like jade," 潔白如玉。 DYZB:1.5; BCGM:2.2106 [山礬/集解]; cf. Stuart and Smith, *Chinese Materia Medica*, 394 ("used in polishing jade").

[2057] MXBT:3.22–23; cf. trans. Needham, Lu, and Huang, *Science and Civilisation,* Vol. 6, Part 1, 499–500.

According to Shen Kuo the plants did not survive, yet this story suggests rue may have been cultivated in China by at least the eleventh century and its leaves (*not* its gum or oil) were principally used to repel insects.

Our analysis is hindered by the fact that *yun* was also a well-attested ancient Chinese aromatic plant. The Buddhist monk Daoshi collected several passages from older Chinese sources to document this botanical species in the seventh century, which he also called Yun Aromatic. It is notable, however, that his sources do not describe a foreign aromatic, but a plant that was very much part of the native Chinese landscape. According to the "Monthly Ordinances" (*yueling* 月令) section of the *Record of Rites* (*Liji* 禮記), as cited by Daoshi, it is in the middle month of winter the *yun* plant starts to grow. The Eastern Han exegete Zheng Xuan 鄭玄(127–200) further comments that the *yun* is a fragrant herb (*xiangcao* 香草).[2058] While the plant is an early harbinger of spring, arguably its most stunning property is revealed in the *Master of Huainan*: it is claimed to have the power to revive the dead.[2059] This passage is not preserved in the *textus receptus* of the *Master of Huainan,* but the text does quote the "Monthly Ordinances," noting that *yun* starts growing in the winter months.[2060] The belief in reviving the dead might originate from the sight of early *yun* sprouts emerging from the cold ground. Daoshi also cites two more texts that date to the turn of the common era. The Eastern Han *Explaining Graphs and Analyzing Characters* claims *yun* resembles the leguminous alfalfa plant (*muxu* 苜蓿; *Medicago sativa*), a plant introduced from the Western

[2058] 仲冬之月芸始生。鄭玄曰芸香草也。T2122:574a09–10; see also TPYL:8.982.866.
[2059] 芸可以死而復生。T2122:574a11; see also TPYL:8.982.866.
[2060] Major et al., *Huainanzi*, 198. This work translates *yun* as rue, which operates from the presumption that *Ruta graveolens* had already been introduced and successfully cultivated in China by the second century BCE, an unlikely occurrence.

Regions and successfully cultivated since the Western Han as horse fodder.[2061] Lastly, the *Record of Rites by Dai the Great* (*Da Dai liji* 大戴禮記), compiled by the scholar Dai De 戴德 (d.u.) in the Eastern Han, refers to the plant, albeit rather curiously, as a "shrine vegetable" (*miaocai* 廟菜).[2062]

Notably, there is nothing in these descriptions to suggest the native *yun* plant was used as an insect repellent, contrary to the claims of Joseph Needham who asserts that "*yun* was evidently well known to the ancient Chinese…to ward off bookworms."[2063] If anything, *yun* seems to have been considered edible, possibly even a type of legume or vegetable, not a noxious pesticide. On one hand, this finds resonance with the *Explanatory Notes of Cang Jie* in the entry above [27a], which describes a certain *yunhao* 芸蒿 as being edible. If we turn to early Chinese materia medica, this issue is not easily resolved. The annotations to the *Classic of Materia Medica of the Divine Husbandman* define *yunhao* as the leaves of *chaihu* 柴胡, now recognized as *Bupleurum chinense*, or Chinese thoroughwax.[2064] It remains to be seen, however, if *yun* and *yunhao* should be treated as the same plant, or if either of them should be treated as synonymous with Yun Aromatic.[2065]

If we remain in the early medieval period, Guo Pu's commentary to early dictionary known as *Approaching Elegance* explains that a plant called Ox Yun Herb (*niuyun cao* 牛芸草) was also called Yellow Flower (huanghua 黃華) with leaves that resembled the alfalfa

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[2061] 芸草似目蓿。T2122:574a10–11; see also TPYL:8.982.866. For more on alfalfa, see Laufer, *Sino-Iranica*, 208–19.
[2062] T2122:574a09; TPYL:8.982.866. This might be related to the claim in the Eastern Han *Comprehensive Vernacular Literature* (Tong suwen 通俗文) that notes *yuntai* 蕓薹 is called hucai 胡菜, "foreign vegetable," thus conflating *miao* 廟 and *hu* 胡, see TPYL:8.980.
[2063] Needham, Lu, and Huang, *Science and Civilisation,* Vol. 6, Part 1, 500.
[2064] Stuart and Smith, *Chinese Materia Medica*, 76; Read, *Chinese Medicinal Plants*, 55 (#214).
[2065] The *Systematic Materia Medica*'s citation of the *Explanatory Notes of Cang Jie* does not use *yunhao*, but Yun Aromatic, see BCGM:2.2106 [山蟇/集解].

plant (*shumu* 菽蓿), similar to the analogy used in *Explaining Graphs and Analyzing Characters* to describe *yun*.[2066] The close connection between *yun* and the color yellow may have originated in the *Book of Poetry*, where it appears to refer to flowers of a full and deep yellow.[2067] This has some bearing on a set of third century *fu*-rhapsodies composed on the topic of Yun Aromatic by Fu Xuan, Fu Xian 傅咸 (239–294), and Cheng Gongsui 成公綏 (231–273).[2068] Specifically, the preface composed by Fu Xuan laments over discarding the plant's extremely fragrant yellow flowers when they lose their scent. It is the case that common rue has yellow flowers, but there is nothing in these *fu*-rhapsodies to indicate the plant was imported from abroad, and moreover, we find compelling evidence of a native *yun* plant in older Chinese documents that could equally be considered appropriate here.

Based in part on identification offered in the *Illustrated Examination on the Names and Identities of Plants* (*Zhiwu mingshi tukao* 植物名實圖考), published in 1848, Pan Fujun suggests identifying *yun* as a type of *Thermopsis*, known broadly as goldenbanners for their bright yellow flowers.[2069] While *Thermopsis* falls under the legume family and has trifoliate leaves similar to alfalfa, the scent of the flowers and leaves is not noted among is defining characteristics. I nevertheless follow the lead of Pan Fujun while also acknowledging there are many seemingly insurmountable difficulties in identifying the native *yun* plant in the early medieval period.[2070]

[2066] EY:13.3526.
[2067] MSZY:14.1030 (Mao #214), trans. Waley, *Book of Songs*, 202.
[2068] TPYL:8.982.867.
[2069] Notably, the *Thermopsis* genus is sometimes rendered as *huanghua* 黃華, "yellow flower."
[2070] In addition to these above descriptive characteristic, Yun Aromatic was highly valued as an ornamental plant. The *Famed Palaces and Pavilions of the Jin* (*Jin gongge ming* 晉宮閣名) and the *Register of Palace Halls of Luoyang* (*Luoyang gongdian bu* 洛陽宮殿簿) all describe Yun Aromatic as being planted in courtyards of the north, see TPYL:8.982.866–867. Notably, there are several species of *Thermopsis* that grow in the temperate climates of the north, while *R. graveolens*, of Mediterranean origin, only occurs in warmer regions.

Neither *yun* 芸 nor Yun Herb (*yun cao* 芸草) are ever provided their own entries in Chinese materia medica literature and Yun Aromatic is only first listed in the sixteenth century *Systematic Materia Medica*, along with many of the descriptive passages we examined above, as a synonym for *shanfan* 山礬.[2071] This is now often identified as *Symplocos chinensis*, a flowering shrub or small tree in the sweetleaf family.[2072] Another school of thought prefers to identify *shanfan* as *Murraya exotica*, a small tree in the citrus family commonly known as orange jasmine.[2073] Needham speculates that since both the *R. graveolens* and *M. exotica* are members of the citrus family, they might have shared chemical qualities that allow both of them to be used for protecting books against pests.[2074]

A final point should be raised regarding the name *yuntai* 芸臺 (or 蕓臺), the Rue Atheneum, or alternatively the Rue Pavilion (*yuege* 芸閣), a poetic, yet extraordinarily uncommon Chinese name for a library [28b]. This name is clearly an homage to the Thoroughwort Atheneum (*lantai* 蘭臺), the imperial library that housed important documents used by early Han historians to compile official histories.[2075] The use of thoroughwort in the name of the building was almost certainly honorific (thoroughwort was symbolic of virtue), yet a belief circulated in the medieval period that thoroughwort powder was scattered onto clothing and books to repel bookworms and other vermin.[2076]

[2071] BCGM:2.2106 [山礬/釋名]. The inclusion is not without some dispute, see Needham, Lu, and Huang, *Science and Civilisation,* Vol. 6, Part 1, 500.
[2072] Hua, Buell, and Unschuld, *Dictionary of the Ben Cao Gang Mu*, 422 (#958), cf. Nanjing zhongyiyao daxue, *Zhongyao da cidian*, (#338–339, *Symplocos sumuntia*). For more on how the Chinese sweetleaf is used, see Stuart and Smith, *Chinese Materia Medica*, 427.
[2073] Read, *Chinese Medicinal Plants*, 105 (#352); Needham, Lu, and Huang, *Science and Civilisation,* Vol. 6, Part 1, 501.
[2074] Needham, Lu, and Huang, *Science and Civilisation,* Vol. 6, Part 1, 501.
[2075] Hucker, *Dictionary of Official Titles*, 300 (#3560).
[2076] BCGM:1.904 [蘭草/集解]. This is cited from the *Miscellaneous Records of the Western Capital*; for more on this work and its dating, see the relevant footnote to Musk from Jiuzhen at HC#67. The same use of thoroughwort is also noted by the third century commentator Lu Ji, see Needham, Lu, and Huang, *Science and*

In contrast to *yuntai* cited above, the similar term *yuntai* 芸苔 (or 蕓薹) – with grass radical over *tai* 苔 (or 薹) – has its origins in the early strata of Chinese materia medica literature where Tao Hongjing treats it as having a noxious stench.[2077] *Yuntai* is now widely recognized as a species in the *Brassica* mustard genus (*yuntai* being the modern name of the genus), and specifically *Brassica campestris* (syn. *Brassica rapa* var. *oleifera*), sometimes called field mustard.[2078] This plant is widely cultivated across China (it is unknown when it was first introduced) and bears many of the hallmarks we have discussed above: bright yellow flowers, edible taproot and edible shoots that appear very early in spring (i.e., close to winter), elongated seeds pods that appear like legumes, and the source of a pressed seed oil, commonly considered a type of rapeseed oil, that can be used as an insect repellent.[2079] Might this be the mysterious "shrine vegetable" of Dai De, also known as Ox Yun Herb to Guo Pu?

One cannot help but wonder if imported Yun Gum and the pesticidal properties of Yun Aromatic point to an imported mustard seed oil with strikingly similar properties to native *yuntai*. It would seem, however, the inferred widespread use of Yun Aromatic as an insect repellent in medieval Chinese libraries may be misplaced; it is more likely the idea started as a playful (mis)reading of the *yuntai* plant which may have had some similarity to our unknown Roman import.

Civilisation, Vol. 6, Part 1, 508. Thoroughwort was used in ritual contexts to drive away malignant influences, thus possibly also giving rise to its use as an insecticide, see my comments to Thoroughwort Aromatic at HC#29.

[2077] XXBC:18.

[2078] Hua, Buell, and Unschuld, *Dictionary of the Ben Cao Gang Mu*, 435 (#1433).

[2079] Among the most well-known mustard plants in China is *B. rapa* var. *glabra*, otherwise known as bok choy (*baicai* 白菜). The standards rapeseed plant is *B. napus*, but several mustard plant species are of the oilseed type. It has been noted, however, that *Brassica* plants were more commonly used as a leaf-vegetable or root vegetable in China, and the seed oil was less used, see Alain. P. Bonjean et al., "Rapeseed in China," *Oilseeds & Fats Crops and Lipids* 23, no. 6 (2016): 1–7.

The identities of *yun*, Yun Gum, and Yun Aromatic, either foreign or domestic, are far from clear. A type of wild goldenbanner (*Thermopsis* spp.) or mustard plant (*Brassica* spp.) may be the ancient and early medieval *yun*, but there is only minimal evidence to support these claims. We can presume there was some similarity of these plants to imported Yun Gum and Yun Aromatic, which I suggest more likely points to a kind of rapeseed oil rather than our speculative "rue oil" (and certainly not a rue oleogum exudate), but evidence regarding third century Mediterranean exports would better answer this question. The later medieval description of *yun* as possessing strongly scented leaves that repel insects is perhaps the best evidence for an identification of common rue, but this is far from confirmatory and the later pharmacological tradition treats this *yun* as a type of tree, either the sweetleaf (*S. chinensis*) or orange jasmine (*M. exotica*). Consequently, it is difficult to know if Mediterranean rue (*R. graveolens*) ever entered China during the long medieval period.

29) Thoroughwort Aromatic (thoroughwort / sweet basil) 蘭香

[29a] The *Chuan Materia Medica*[2080] states, "Its taste is pungent, [its nature] is uniform. It is non-toxic. It treats watery free-flux illness[2081], extirpates the *gu* poison, and wards off the inauspicious. Another name is Water Aromatic. It grows in the lakes and marshes of the

[2080] The *Chuan Materia Medica* (*Chuan bencao* 川本草) is an alternative name for the *Materia Medica of Shu* (*Shu bencao* 蜀本草), a lost materia medica compiled by Han Baosheng 韓保昇 (ca. 10th cent.) during the Later Shu (934–965), see Zheng et al., *Dictionary of the Ben Cao Gang Mu*, 423.
[2081] I cannot identify this illness, but consider it a transposition of *shui li*, see Zhang and Unschuld, *Dictionary of the Ben Cao Gang Mu*, 470.

Great Wu[2082]. Its leaves resemble Marsh Thoroughwort, [but] are pointed, long, and toothed. The flowers are reddish white and [the plant is] fragrant."

[29b] "It can be boiled in water and used as a bath to treat wind disease[2083]."

[29a] 川本草云："味辛平，無毒，主利水道，殺蟲[2084]毒，辟不祥。一名水香，生大吳池澤。[2085]葉似蘭[2086]，尖長有岐，花紅白色而香.[2087]

[29b] 煮水浴以治風[2088]。[2089]

COMMENTS] *Lan* 蘭 is among the most famous of ancient Chinese aromatic plants, in part due to its frequent use in classical Chinese poetry to evoke the scent of sweet botanicals and to signify a person's virtue. In time, this name was adopted for other plants, including the many varieties of orchid (*lanhua* 蘭花) and magnolia (*mulan* 木蘭). The ancient and early medieval *lan*, however, was distinct from these plants with showy floral blooms. According to Pan Fujun, prior to the Song, *lan* most likely referred to an East Asian species of *Eupatorium*, commonly called thoroughwort or boneset, a class of herbaceous perennials that typically grow at the edge of marshlands.[2090] A rather broad range of nominal compounds

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[2082] Honorific name for the ancient state of Wu 吳 which controlled present-day Jiangsu and much of the adjacent areas of Shanghai, Anhui, and Zhejiang, see Hua, Buell, and Unschuld, *Dictionary of the Ben Cao Gang Mu*, 82.
[2083] Disease brought forth by winds, see Zhang and Unschuld, *Dictionary of the Ben Cao Gang Mu*, 159. Winds, also known as *wind qi* (*fengqi* 風氣), refer to a wide range of pathologies attributed to the intrusion of baleful winds into the body, see Zhang and Unschuld, *Dictionary of the Ben Cao Gang Mu*, 151.
[2084] Read 蟲 as 蠱, following XXBC:7.188 and BCGM:1.905 [蘭草/主治].
[2085] Cf. XXBC:7.188. All of this information is originally taken from the *Classic of Materia Medica of the Divine Husbandman* and early annotations.
[2086] Read 蘭 as 澤蘭, following BCGM:1.904 [蘭草/集解].
[2087] Cf. XXBC:7.188, cf. BCGM:1.904–905 [蘭草/集解, 氣味, 主治].
[2088] Read 風 as 風病, following BCGM:1.905 [蘭草/主治].
[2089] Unattributed, paraphrased quote from the *Materia Medica of the Kaibao Era*; cf. BCGM:1.905 [蘭草/主治].
[2090] Pan, *Shijing*, 144–45; Pan, *Chuci*, 20–21.

pulled from classical sources, such as *zelan* 澤蘭 (Marsh Thoroughwort), *lancao* 蘭草 (Thoroughwort Herb), *qiulan* 秋蘭 (Autumn Thoroughwort), *chunlan* 春蘭 (Spring Thoroughwort), *peilan* 佩蘭 (Belted Thoroughwort), and so forth, have spurred both medieval and modern interests in distinguishing between different kinds of *lan* in the pre-modern period. Precise identifications are hampered by inadequate documentation from sources in the pre-imperial period and inconsistent descriptions in the medieval period.

Starting in the early medieval era, Chinese pharmacological literature distinguished between two principal types of thoroughwort: Thoroughwort Herb (*lancao*) and Marsh Thoroughwort (*zelan*). In the sixteenth century, Li Shizhen 李時振 (1518–1593), claimed they were two "species" (*zhong* 種) in the same "genus" (*lei* 類), to borrow terminology from modern taxonomy.[2091] In their documented histories throughout the long medieval period, both plants were reported to grow in marshlands and were used in powerful balneotherapeutic remedies. In addition, according to the eighth century pharmacologist Chen Zangqi, Thoroughwort Herb could be mixed with oils to create a thoroughwort lotion (*lanze* 蘭澤) which could be applied to the head and hair.[2092] The two thoroughwort "species" were typically distinguished by their morphology, although medieval authors tend to disagree regarding which characteristics defined the appropriate type.[2093]

[2091] 一類二種也。BCGM:1.904 [蘭草/集解].

[2092] BCGM:1.903 [蘭草/釋名]. It was also possible to infuse a fatty paste with thoroughwort and use it as a candle, see Sukhu, *Songs of Chu*, 174.

[2093] Pan Fujun principally identifies *lan* as *Eupatorium japonicum* (*zelan* being the modern scientific name for the genus *Eupatorium*), but also suggests *E. chinense* (sometimes considered synonymous with *E. japonicum*) and *E. fortunei* (now identified in modern sources as *peilan*) as possible considerations, see Pan, *Shijing*, 144–45; Pan, *Chuci*, 20–21. These three species, all with fairly wide distribution across China, are also listed under *peilan* in the Nanjing zhongyiyao daxue, *Zhongyao da cidian*, (#2884). In contrast, Thoroughwort Herb (*lancao*) is elsewhere identified as *E. fortunei* and Marsh Thoroughwort (*zelan*) as *Lycopus lucidus*, or bugleweed, a plant known to grow in marshy areas with an edible rhizome, see Hua, Buell, and Unschuld, *Dictionary of the Ben Cao Gang Mu*, 411 (#616) and 435 (#1446), respectively.

The relationship between a third type of thoroughwort, Thoroughwort Aromatic (*lanxiang* 蘭香), to the above pair of thoroughwort types remains unclear. In the early sixth century Tao Hongjing claimed that Thoroughwort Aromatic was an alternative name for Decocted Marsh Grass (*jianzi cao* 煎澤草) that grows throughout the eastern regions of China.[2094] He reports that some people considered these plants the same as Thoroughwort Herb, which was known to have grown in the marshlands of the old state of Wu, also located on the eastern coast [29a]. If we take this to be the case, then this grouping of three names (Thoroughwort Aromatic, Decocted Marsh Grass, and Thoroughwort Herb) was considered distinct from the other principal type, Marsh Thoroughwort, which was known for having less fragrant leaves (and possibly considered the original Aromatic from Douliang, HC#34). The Tang editors of the *Newly Revised Materia Medica* appear to dispute Tao Hongjing's claims, but it is difficult to know the scope of their objections and if they specifically involve Tao Hongjing's assertions about the identity of Thoroughwort Aromatic.[2095] Notably, the sixteenth century *Systematic Materia Medica* rephrases the wording of the Tang editors and clarifies that Thoroughwort Aromatic was the commoners' name for Thoroughwort Herb.[2096] To add further confusion, as we will see below, the term "thoroughwort aromatic" was also used in a restricted sense, as seen in some Buddhist scriptures, to refer to an entirely different plant.

[2094] XXBC:7.188. In the same passage, the *Supplementary Records of Famous Physicians* also specifically tie Thoroughwort Herb to the old state of Wu on the east coast.
[2095] The editors loosely restate a few of Tao Hongjing's assertions and finish by claiming, "this is, in the end, not knowledgeable" 終非的識也。XXBC:7.188.
[2096] The *Systematic Materia Medica* reads the editors' comments more narrowly, reporting that Tao Hongjing's assertion that Decocted Marsh Grass and the Aromatic from Douliang are the same "cannot be known" 不能的識。BCGM:1.904 [蘭草/集解]. The statement that Thoroughwort Aromatic was a commoners' name was originally found under the discussion of Marsh Thoroughwort, see XXBC:9.230.

Critical to our inquiry, thoroughwort – in both its specific and generic senses – also played an integral role in medieval Chinese religious and medical practice. For example, Thoroughwort Herb was listed in the *Classic of Materia Medica of the Divine Husbandman* as an herb that could cause one's body to become light and that could halt the aging process when ingested. In other words, it was considered among the drugs conducive to bodily immortality. It was also claimed thoroughwort could grant a person the ability to penetrate the spiritual realm, meaning that person could communicate directly with spirits and other powerful beings.[2097] These benefits were also noted in the catalogue of aromatics by the monk Daoshi in the seventh century, who listed them under the heading of Thoroughwort Aromatic.[2098] The specific use of Thoroughwort Aromatic is also noted in the "Numinous Treasure Recipe for Yellow Essence" (*Lingbao huang jing fang* 靈寶黃精方) found in the *Array of the Five Talisman Numinous Treasures of the Most High*, a text compiled during the Jin in southeastern China.[2099] Among the lengthy directions for concocting and ingesting a special life-lengthening drug, a Thoroughwort Aromatic infused bath is part of the purificatory practices, along with dietary restrictions and the avoidance of married women, that will grant a person immortality.[2100]

Such associations were built upon much older notions concerning the favorable fragrance of thoroughwort and its ties to the divine. These connections were firmly established in the *Songs of Chu* anthology where this fragrant plant was used to attract and appease the spirits. Thus we find thoroughwort being planted near spirit shrines, used as mats

[2097] XXBC:7.188.
[2098] T2122:574a12–15.
[2099] For more on this seminal early Daoist work, see Schipper and Verellen, *The Taoist Canon*, 232–33; Raz, *Emergence of Daoism*, 16, 148–65, and the numerous citations therein.
[2100] DZ388:2.23a.

for displaying sacrificial offerings, and infused into warm water to cleanse a shaman before her contact with the spirits.[2101] The hot scented bath used for ritual lustration was described as a Thoroughwort Decoction (*lantang* 蘭湯), a term that reappears in later Chinese sources.[2102] Thoroughwort is also described as being strung together and tied to a belt-sash as an ornament or apotropaic charm [HC#97].[2103] When the second century BCE tombs of Mawangdui were unearthed in the early 1970s, Tomb 1 revealed an embroidered rectangular pillow stuffed with thoroughwort foliage, specifically identified as *Eupatorium fortunei*, confirming this plant's importance in the south.[2104] In addition to providing a pleasing scent – *E. fortunei* gives off a fragrance similar to lavender – it is possible the pillow had a therapeutic or protective application.

Moreover, thoroughwort, under its variant name *xian* 薝 (or 蕑), also appears in the *Book of Odes*.[2105] As part of the poetry collection related to the state of Zheng, thoroughwort is cited as one of the fragrant plants gathered during a springtime courtship festival.[2106] This regional practice of courtship and marriage may also be brought to bear on a story preserved in the *Zuo Commentary* where a heavenly messenger gifts thoroughwort to a young concubine in the state of Zheng. This leads to her pregnancy and the birth of a royal heir

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[2101] See CC:2.71, trans. Sukhu, *Songs of Chu*, 14; CC.2.56, trans. Sukhu, 6; and CC.2.57, trans. Sukhu, 7, respectively. These uses of thoroughwort are summarized in Sukhu, *Shaman*, 88. It is also been suggested that the thoroughwort mats were used for steaming meat that was dressed with sweet basil, see Lu and Lo, "Scent and Synaesthesia," 40.

[2102] For more on the use of scented baths, see my comments to Clouding the Imperial Palace Aromatic at HC#56.

[2103] CC:1.3, trans. Sukhu, *Songs of Chu*, 35.

[2104] Hunan sheng bowuguan, *Mawangdui yi hao Han mu*, Vol. 1, 71 (identified as item 440); Chen and Li, "Mawangdui yi hao mu," 6. Another roughly contemporaneous Western Han tomb was discovered containing two bronze pillows filled with Sichuan peppercorns, see Lu and Lo, "Scent and Synaesthesia," 42–43.

[2105] For emending the reading of *jian* 薝 to *xian* 閑, see BCGM:1.903 [蘭草/釋名].

[2106] MSZY:4.732 (Mao #95), cf. trans. Waley, *Book of Songs*, 76 (translating thoroughwort as "scented herbs"). Elsewhere in the *Book of Odes*, thoroughwort is described as growing on the edges of a marsh, see MSZY:7.807 (Mao #145), trans. Waley, *Book of Songs*, 112.

whom she names Lan (Thoroughwort) [HC#83A]. The symbolic use of thoroughwort as an emblem of courtship, sexual union, and pregnancy may stem from the magical use of scented plants as love philters. For example, thoroughwort (*xian*) is listed among the plants in the recovered medical manuscripts of Mawangdui that are attested as aphrodisiacs.[2107] It has also been suggested that bathing in thoroughwort infused waters was intended to draw down the spirits to initiate an "erotic relationship."[2108]

Lu Ji's 陸璣 (261–303) commentary on the *flora* and *fauna* of the *Book of Odes* provides further insight into the ancient use of thoroughwort. In reference to the courtship festival, he notes the following:

> It is a custom in Zheng that during the third month men and women gather thoroughwort at the river's edge so as to purge and eliminate from themselves [all ill-fortune]. It is the case because thoroughwort (*lan*) is a barrier (*lan*) and thoroughwort (*xian*) is an enclosure (*xian*) [against ill-fortune]. These meanings are the same.[2109]
> 鄭俗，三月男女秉蕑于水際，以自祓除。蓋蘭以闌之，蕑以閑之。其義一也。

In Lu Ji's analysis, thoroughwort also possessed powerful apotropaic properties, linking the etymology of the names *lan* and *xian* to protective barriers. According to Derk Bodde, the events portrayed in the *Book of Odes* speaks to an ancient festival that "embodies springtime renewal, purification, and sexual rites," and which eventually came to be celebrated during the Han on the third day of the third month.[2110] Fragrant thoroughwort thus stands at a critical nexus of early cultural beliefs and practices related to courtship, progeny, protection, and

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[2107] Harper, *Early*, 330. For more on the use of aromatics as tokens of love and affection, see my commentary to Purloined Aromatic at HC#96.
[2108] Hawkes, *Songs of the South*, 97; see also Bodde, *Festivals*, 276.
[2109] BCGM:1.903 [蘭草/釋名]. For further comments by Lu Ji concerning thoroughwort, see Needham, Lu, and Huang, *Science and Civilisation,* Vol. 6, Part 1, 508. The full title of Lu Ji's treatise is the *Commentary on the Plants, Trees, Birds, Beasts, Insects and Fish in the Mao Edition of Odes* (*Maoshi caomu niaoshou chongyu shu jiaozheng* 毛詩草木鳥獸蟲魚疏).
[2110] Bodde, *Festivals*, 273.

divine communication. Likewise, during the Han, court officials were expected to wear thoroughwort as they entered the grounds of imperial palace to meet with the emperor [HC#88]. Far more than covering bad body odor, these scented adornments were also a sign of deference when in the presence of the Son of Heaven, a figure with close ties to divine order.

As a consequence of these imbricated layers of meaning, the fragrance of thoroughwort and other scented plants such as wild angelica [HC#30] and sweet basil [HC#32] were often conceived as symbolic of the virtue of the person who wore them. This led to a rich field of allusion where smell and virtue are treated as analogous, such that a person's virtue can spread and influence others, or remain (visually) unnoticed in spite of its presence, or be overtaken by stronger opposing forces, just as real olfactory phenomena operate in the world.[2111] We find such ideas exemplified in Hong Chu's preface to the *Materia Aromatica*, where thoroughwort is equated with both wholesomeness and the proper Confucian gentleman (*junzi*).[2112]

It should be noted that the most prized part of the thoroughwort plant was not its flowers, but its intensely scented stems, leaves, and rhizomatic root.[2113] This is corroborated not only by the discovery of *Eupatorium* foliage at Mawangdui, but also the recovered medical manuscripts that specify the use of thoroughwort leaves, roots, and fruits.[2114] These manuscripts never refer to thoroughwort flowers, nor does the *Book of Odes* or the *Songs of Chu*. Nevertheless, it is quite common to see English translations rendering *lan* as orchid, a

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[2111] The best discussion on the symbolism of thoroughwort in the early poetic tradition is Sukhu, *Shaman*, 87–115 and Sukhu, *Songs of Chu*, 30–34.
[2112] See also my comments to After a While, One will Smell its Fragrance at HC#83B.
[2113] The manuscripts specify the use of thoroughwort leaves, roots, and fruits – nothing is said concerning its flowers, see Harper, *Early*, 298, 370, 371.
[2114] See Harper, *Early*, 298 (root), 370 (fruit), 371 (leaves).

plant recognized by its characteristic display of colorful blooms. According to Li Shizhen, this error in identification may stem back to Kou Zongshi 寇宗奭 (fl. 12th c.) who conflated Thoroughwort Herb (*lancao*) with the orchid (*lanhua*).[2115] Ultimately, Li Shizhen laments that "it is common among people up until today to treat that which is not *lan* as *lan*. How is this confusion so profound? Alas!"[2116] This confusion with orchids and misdirected focus on flowers led Emil Bretschneider (1833–1901) to be skeptical of the identification of *lan* as *Eupatorium*, claiming that *Eupatorium* flowers were not sufficiently fragrant.[2117] As we now understand, the flowers of the *lan* (thoroughwort) were not traditionally used medicinally nor enjoyed for their smell.[2118]

If we turn to the tenth century *Chuan Materia Medica*, cited by Hong Chu [29a], we find a description of thoroughwort with elongated, pointed (lanceolate), and toothed leaves, as well as flowers that are red and white in color, all descriptions that match squarely with *E. fortunei*. Moreover, arguably the oldest description of *lan* is found in the "Lesser Minister of Life Spans" (*Shao siming* 少司命), one of the "Nine Songs" (*Jiuge* 九歌) that forms the oldest layer of the *Songs of Chu*. There *lan* is described as growing in thick patches with green leaves and purple stems, all also characteristic of *E. fortunei*.[2119] Importantly, *E. fortunei* produces leaves and stems with high concentrations of fragrant volatile oils, giving

[2115] BCGM:1.904 [蘭草/正誤]. See also the brief comment in Needham, Lu, and Huang, *Science and Civilisation,* Vol. 6, Part 1, 287.
[2116] 世俗至今猶以非蘭為蘭，何其惑之難解也。嗚呼。BCGM:1.905 [蘭草/正誤].
[2117] Bretschneider, *Botanican Sinicum*, Part 2, 229; see also Needham, Lu, and Huang, *Science and Civilisation,* Vol. 6, Part 1, 508. Bretschneider cites the nineteenth century *Illustrated Descriptions of Herbs and Trees* by Iinuma Yokusai as depicting a *Eupatorium* species.
[2118] Some modern translators of Chinese poetry have decided to render *lan* as orchid, regardless of time period, on the basis that thoroughwort is "awkward to handle metrically," see comments in Waley, *Shamanism*, 17; see also Knechtges, Wen Xuan, Vol. 1, 485n.2. Bodde leaves the term *lan* untranslated, claiming that thoroughwort is an "unromantic name," Bodde, *Festivals*, 275.
[2119] 綠葉兮紫莖。CC:2.72, trans. Sukhu, *Songs of Chu*, 14.

off the scent of lavender when crushed. In combination with archaeobotanical discoveries at Mawangdui, a type of thoroughwort is a strong candidate for the identity of *lan* up thorough the late medieval period.

There is one final note regarding an alternate botanical referent of *lan*. For example, *lan* was adopted in Buddhist scriptures for the phrase "stems of Lan Aromatic" (*lanxiang shao* 蘭香梢).[2120] This was used as rather curious approximation for the phrase "branches of the *arjaka* tree" (*ali shuzhi* 阿梨樹枝).[2121] Both phrases were used as metaphors to describe how the head of a person would split into seven parts, just as the stems of these plants could be pulled apart, should they disrespect the Dharma. The equation of thoroughwort with a kind of tree is unexpected and this is explained as a mistake by later Buddhist commentators. The early ninth century dictionary by Huilin clarifies that the older translations using the "branches of the *arjaka* tree" are erroneous because there is no such thing as an "*arjaka* tree."[2122] In Sanskrit, *arjaka* does not refer to a kind of tree but to a species of *Ocimum*, or basil. While thoroughwort is a loose approximation of an herbaceous plant like basil, the selection of *lan* was more strategic. "Thoroughwort Aromatic" was adopted in northern China to refer to sweet basil (*luole*) due to an imperial naming taboo of the mid-fourth century involving Shi Le (r. 330–333), the first ruler of the Latter Zhao (319–351).[2123] Thus, the Buddhist "stems of Lan Aromatic" in the above example actually refers to basil (*arjaka*) in the mint family. This may also be the case for other citations to Thoroughwort Aromatic

[2120] See, e.g. T665:450a11.
[2121] The latter phrase was undoubtedly popularized by its inclusion in Kumārajīva's translation of the *Lotus Sutra*, see T262:59b13; see also Seishi Karashima, *A Glossary of Kumārajīva's Translation of the Lotus Sutra* (Tokyo: The International Research Institute for Advanced Buddhology Soka University, 2001), 2.
[2122] T2128:541c13–14.
[2123] See also my comments to sweet basil at HC#20.

elsewhere, but it would be difficult to determine the proper botanical referent without other corroborating evidence.

30) Scented Aromatic (wild angelica) 芳香

The [*Tang*] *Materia Medica* states, "This is wild angelica. Another name is *zhi*, another is *xiao*, another is *guan*, another is *fuli*, and another is Marsh Scent. It grows in the low wetlands. Those in the river valleys of Hedong[2124] are outstanding. Closer regions also have them. Daoists use this aromatic in baths to drive away the corpse worms."

本草云：即白芷也。一名茝，又名蘼，又名莞，又名符[2125]離[2126]，又名澤芬。生下濕地，河東川谷尤佳，近道亦有，道家以此香浴去尸蟲。[2127]

[COMMENTS] In contrast to Hong Chu's selected headword, Scented Aromatic (*fangxiang* 芳香), it is more common to encounter this fragrant plant in classical texts under the name *baizhi* 白芷, or simply, the "white root."[2128] *Baizhi* is now often identified as an *Angelica* species, most commonly as *Angelica dahurica*, also known as Dahurian angelica or wild angelica, a wetland perennial frequently cultivated for its aromatic and medicinal pale-

[2124] An ancient regional name for the southwestern part of present-day Shanxi, see Hua, Buell, and Unschuld, *Dictionary of the Ben Cao Gang Mu*, 129.
[2125] Read 符 as 苻, following XXBC:8.218, BCGM:1.845 [白芷/釋名].
[2126] Read 離 as 蘺.
[2127] Cf. XXBC:8.218, cf. BCGM:1.845–849 [白芷, 葉 /釋名, 集解, 主治]. This quote is a mixture of the *Classic of Materia Medica of the Divine Husbandman* and Tao Honjing's annotations.
[2128] *Zhi* 芷 is almost universally understood as the name for an individual plant (and sometimes mistranslated as iris). As noted by Gopal Sukhu, however, the *Master Xun* notes that "*zhi* is the root of thoroughwort and the Chinese scholar tree," see Sukhu, *Shaman*, 89 and 219n.9; cf. John Knoblock, *Xunzi: A Translation and Study of the Complete Works, Volume I, Books 1–7* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1988), 137, 268–69n.20 (rendering *huai* 槐 as valerian, not the Chinese scholar tree). *Zhi* may have originally denoted the roots of certain plants, thus its adoption here as the "white root." The name Scented Aromatic was an alternative name listed in the *Classic of Materia Medica of the Divine Husband*, see XXBC:8.218.

colored taproot.[2129] Notably, both the roots and the leaves of the *A. dahurica* emit an intense scent.

In the early medieval period wild angelica was known under several regional names. According to the Eastern Han dictionary, *Explaining Graphs and Analyzing Characters*, to the people in the ancient state of Jin 晉 in the northwest, the plant was known as *xiao* 藸 (or 蕭); to the people in the state of Qi 齊 in the northeast it was known as *zhi* 茝; and in the state of Chu in the south, it was known as *li* 蘺 (or 蔮) or *yao* 藥 (medicine).[2130] The *Supplementary Record by Famous Physicians* provides a few others in addition to those above, although without regional affiliation: *guan* 莞, *fuli* 苻離 (or 苻蘺), and Marsh Scent (*zefen* 澤芬).[2131] Finally, the early third century *Materia Medica of Mr. Wu* (*Wushi bencao* 吳氏本草) also adds *pa* 葩 to the list of botanical synonyms.[2132]

With such a large variety of names, certainly the most securely recorded for any single aromatic, it is no surprise confusion arose regarding related plant terminology in the medieval period. For example, *Explaining Graphs and Analyzing Characters* glosses *li* as *jiangli* 江蘺, which it subsequently notes as synonymous with *miwu* 蘼蕪, now widely understood as Sichuan lovage [HC#20c].[2133] Elsewhere, the same dictionary glosses *guan* as

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[2129] Pan, *Chuci*, 18–19; Hua, Buell, and Unschuld, *Dictionary of the Ben Cao Gang Mu*, 395 (#64); Nanjing zhongyiyao daxue, *Zhongyao da cidian*, (#1414).
[2130] SWJZ:1.12 (under entry for *xiao*). For emending the reading of the graph *chai* 茝 to *zhi* (止) , see BCGM:1.845 [白芷/釋名].
[2131] XXBC:8.218.
[2132] TPYL:8.983.873; for more on this text, see Zheng et al., *Dictionary of the Ben Cao Gang Mu*, 518.
[2133] SWJZ:1.12; see also TPYL:8.983.871. When examining all relevant synonyms, we find a cascading effect whereby *xiao* is glossed as *li*, and *zhi* is glossed as *xiao*, see SWJZ:1.12–13. Consequently, in the lexical "ecosystem" of *Explaining Graphs and Analyzing Characters*, *zhi* and other related nomenclature all ultimately refer to *miwu*, Sichuan lovage, not angelica. It is perhaps worth noting that the lovage *Ligusticum* genus and *Angelica* genus both fall under the umbelliferous *Apiaceae* family and thus share some morphological characteristics.

wanlan 芄蘭, now identified as a type of dogbane.[2134] Moreover, *zhi*, which is cited as a regional name from the northeast can be found in documents from Chu in the south.[2135] This latter point is not too surprising, however, since the states of Qi and Chu shared a common border during the Warring States period in what is now southern Shandong province.

While we might infer a rather widespread distribution of wild angelica across temperate and subtropical China, a few medieval sources provide narrower phytogeographic domains. For example, we find the *Supplementary Record by Famous Physicians* claim wild angelica grew in Hedong in present-day southwestern Shanxi.[2136] Furthermore, a lost pre-imperial text known by the name of *Master Fan and Jiran* (*Fan zi Jiran* 范子計然) claims the plant could be sourced from around the state of Qi.[2137] By the early sixth century Tao Hongjing reports the plant could be found everywhere, but especially in the east.[2138] These details are corroborated in the eleventh century *Illustrated Classic of Materia Medica* which claims wild angelica could be found throughout China, but that the region of Wu, comprising present-day Jiangsu and Zhejiang on the east coast, had the most outstanding specimens.[2139]

Not all of these claims are expected in regards to the natural distribution of *A. dahurica*. While this species of angelica grows in the Chinese temperate northeast, including around present-day Shaanxi (neighboring Shanxi to the west) and Hebei, few *Angelica*

[2134] SWJZ:1.12. *Wanlan* has been identified as *Metaplexis japonica*, see Pan, *Shijing*, 110–11. Elsewhere in secondary literature, *guan* is identified as *Typha latifolia*, see Pan, *Chuci*, 18, 105.
[2135] *Zhi*, for example, can be found three times in "Encountering Sorrow," see comments below. Elsewhere in the *Songs of Chu* anthology, other reputed synonyms for wild angelica also appear: *yao* (written as 葯; CC:2.67), *baizhi* (CC:9.213), *guan* (CC:16.304; see previous footnote), and *xiao* (CC:17.316). *Zhi*, "root," also appears in "Encountering Sorrow" as part of *bizhi* 辟芷, "hidden root" (CC:1.4), *fangzhi* 芳芷, "fragrant root" (CC:1.10), and *lanzhi*, "thoroughwort root" (CC:1.40). The commentarial tradition will often treat the first example, hidden root, as synonymous with wild angelica (*baizhi*), see CC:1.4–5.
[2136] XXBC:8.218.
[2137] TPYL:8.983.873; for more on this text, see Zheng et al., *Dictionary of the Ben Cao Gang Mu*, 126.
[2138] XXBC:8.218; BCGM:1.845 [白芷/集解].
[2139] BCGM:1.846 [白芷/集解].

species of any kind grow in the subtropical east, let alone the tropical far south. Among those that do occur in the eastern coastal provinces include *A. biserrata* (known commonly today as *duhuo* 獨活) and *A. decursiva* (known as *qianhu* 前胡). Both of these species have scented roots and are commonly used in Traditional Chinese Medicine. It remains unclear if the angelica plants cited by Tao Hongjing as growing in the east would refer to *A. dahurica*, as is traditionally understood, or would have referred to *A. biserrate*, *A. decursiva*, or different *flora* altogether.

Broadly considered, the pale-colored scented root of angelica plants have a long history of therapeutic use in China. The third century BCE "Categories of Land" (Diyuan 地員) chapter of *Master Guan* 管子 cites wild angelica (*baizhi*) as one of five "fragrant plants" (*chou* 臭 [sic]) which are meant to "decrease illness and slow the process of aging."[2140] Wild angelica (*baizhi*) also appears in the second century BCE medical manuscripts of Mawangdui where it is used with cassia, ginger, wild ginger, and magnolia buds – all among the principal aromatics of the ancient Chinese smellscape – as part of a therapy for facial abscesses.[2141] This application was still known in early medieval materia medica which claimed the root could be made into a medical ointment for the face.[2142] Furthermore, a plant by the name of *yao*$_1$ 葯, treated as an orthographic and homophonic variant of *yao*, medicine or drug (and one of the synonyms listed in the *Supplementary Record by Famous Physicians*), is found in

[2140] 寡疾難老。GZ:19.58.1101, trans. Rickett, *Guanzi*, Vol. 2, 269–70. While portions of *Master Guan* are undoubtedly older, this chapter likely dates from the latter half of the third century and describes eastern China, see the extensive discussion of these points in Rickett, 256–59.
[2141] Harper, *Early*, 292–93 (following Harper's suggestion in the identity of *Asarum forbesii*, or wild ginger).
[2142] XXBC:8.218, BCGM:1.846 [白芷/主治]. Wild angelica is also a very common ingredient in medieval Chinese formularies and its pungent aromatic properties are displayed in a variety of recipes for hair lotion, hand cream, and ingestible pills that scent the body, see DZ1306:6.29a–b, 6.29b–30a, and 6.27b, respectively.

the *Guideways through Mountains and Seas*.[2143] By the third century, the dictionary known as the *Enlargement of the Literary Expositor* (*Guangya* 廣雅) equated the unknown *yao* with the leaves of the wild angelica plant, further deepening its ancient association with effective therapeutic treatments.[2144]

Wild angelica is also among the most important *flora* noted in the Warring States poem "Encountering Sorrow" as preserved in the *Songs of Chu* anthology. Similar to both thoroughwort [HC#29] and sweet basil [HC#32], wild angelica (*zhi*) is frequently described as being used as an ornament to adorn and scent the body. Three separate passages describe the plant as being strung (*ren* 紉), knotted (*jie* 結), and fastened (*lan* 攬), all of which can be understood as referring to being tied to the belt-sash of a person's garment.[2145] In the context of the poem, this adornment is undertaken by a female shaman who wishes to attract and appease a spirt who has descended to the earthly realm. On an allegorical level, the donning of sweet-smelling wild angelica represents the moral virtue of the shaman and the abiding presence of the spirit within her body. When the fragrances of wild angelica, sweet basil, and thoroughwort are traded for lesser smelling weeds in the unfolding narrative of the poem, this signals the loss of virtue and the eventual abandonment by the spirit.[2146] The sweet smell of such aromatics could also be emblematic of alluring a suitor, much like the female shaman calling the spirit close to her body.

[2143] SHJ:2.4740; SHJ:5.4856. *Xiao* (noted above) also appears in the former passage of the *Guideways through Mountains and Seas*, suggesting it was not always viewed as synonymous with yao_1 as reported in *Explaining Graphs and Analyzing Characters*. Guo Pu's commentary on the former passage glosses yao_1 as a separate name for *baizhi* (wild angelica), while glossing *xiao* simply as a "fragrant herb," see SHJ:2.4740. In the latter passage, against expectation, Guo Pu glosses *yao* as *xiao*, see SHJ:5.4856.
[2144] TPYL:8.983.872.
[2145] See CC:1.7, trans. Sukhu, *Songs of Chu*, 35; CC:1.12, trans. Sukhu, 37; and CC:1.14, trans. Sukhu, 37, respectively.
[2146] These points, and further layers of olfactory symbolism in "Encountering Sorrow," are discussed in Sukhu, *Shaman*, 87–115; Sukhu, *Songs of Chu*, 30–34.

The association of wild angelica with ornamentation and bodily perfuming is also attested in the second century BCE *Master of Huainan*, a text with strong ties to Chu culture. The treatise speaks of beautiful women (*meiren* 美人) wearing Sichuan peppercorns, galangal root, and wild angelica (*zhi*), all common aromatics that appeared in the *Songs of Chu*.[2147] Later in the *Master of Huainan*, court dancers are described as having bodies that give off the scent of wild angelica (*yao*) as they twist and turn.[2148] In these textual scenarios, the women would have likely been envisioned as dressing their belt-sashes with scenting sachets filled with aromatics. Indeed, we have contemporary and regional evidence of such practices from the Mawangdui tombs in Changsha, sealed the same century as when the *Master of Huainan* was compiled. The female occupant of Tomb 3 was found clutching two embroidered pouches containing Sichuan peppercorns, cassia bark, sweetgrass, and galangal root.[2149]

As highlighted in Hong Chu's entry above, among the most notable medical uses of wild angelic was its later adoption by Daoists to drive away bodily parasites, called corpse worms, that were believed to lead to one's death.[2150] This particular religio-medical use was noted in the *Scripture on Bathing the Body and Mind* (*Muyu shenxin jing* 沐浴身心經), preserved today as part of the eleventh century anthology, *Seven Writing-Slips from the Bookcase of the Clouds* (*Yunji qiqian* 雲笈七籤; DZ1032).[2151] The scripture provides

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[2147] HNZ:18.1295; cf. trans. Major et al., *Huainanzi*, 748 (who render the passage with "jasmine and angelica"). *Shenshu* 申菽 should be read as *shenjiao* 申椒, as seen in CC:1.7, which is identified as a *Zanthoxylum* species, see Pan, *Chuci*, 26–27. I read *duzhi* 杜芷 as two separate plants, angelica (*zhi*) and *duruo* 杜若, *Alpinia officinarum,* or galangal, see Pan, *Chuci*, 76–77.
[2148] HNZ:19.1367, cf. trans. Major et al., *Huainanzi*, 787 (rendering *yao* as "floss"); see also TPYL:8.983.872.
[2149] Hunan yixueyuan, *Mawangdui yi hao Han mu*, 262; see also Chapter 2, Section 3.
[2150] XXBC:8.218.
[2151] DZ1032:41.5b. For more information on the *Seven Writing-Slips from the Bookcase of the Clouds*, see Schipper and Verellen, *The Taoist Canon*, 943–54. These recipes are discussed in more length in Chapter 5, Section 8.

directions for infusing a ritual bath with fragrant essential oils, called the Five Ingredient Scented Bath (*wuzhong xiang tang* 五種香湯) and lists the ameliorative effect for each ingredient. As described in the text, wild angelica drives away the three corpse worms, peach wood bark wards off evil *qi*, biota leaf causes the Perfected and immortals to descend, the Aromatic from Lingling (sweet basil, HC#20) gathers the numinous sages, and costus root [HC#16] eliminates filth and impurity. When performed, this balneotherapeutic rite purifies the adept and invites numerous kinds of religious merit.

More simplified instructions for a religio-therapeutic wash, involving only wild angelica if necessary, are found in the *Scripture of the Forty-Four Methods on Yellow Silk*, a text that was known directly to Tao Hongjing in the sixth century.[2152] The scripture provides the following directions:

> Now, when visualizing the Supreme Dao and invoking the eradication of the Three Corpses, one must gather the root of wild angelica and costus and mix them into the water of an eastward flowing river. After simmering, take the liquid and wash one's body, this will dispel all Blood Corpses and malign *qi*. One can also mix them into incense and burn them in order to contact the spirits. If one is without costus, one can use angelica individually.[2153]
> 凡存念上道，祝除三尸之時，常當採取白芷草根及青木香，合以東流水，煮取其汁，以沐浴於身，辟諸血尸惡氣，亦常可和香燒之，以致神明。若無青木香香，亦可單用白芷。

Notably, this recipe uses a pair of plants, wild angelica and costus, with substantial root structures to infuse the wash. While the former is native to China, the latter was a foreign import, and thus possibly accounts for why the end of the directions state the wash could be made with solely wild angelica. According to medieval medical literature, when angelica roots were used in medicine, they were dug out of the ground in the second and eight months

[2152] Schipper and Verellen, *The Taoist Canon*, 179.
[2153] DZ1380:18b. These directions are repeated in the late sixth century compendia, the *Essence of the Supreme Secrets*, see DZ1138:50.3a.

and left to dry in the sun.[2154] In his *Collected Annotations on the Classic of Materia Medica of the Divine Husbandman*, Tao Hongjing stipulates that the leaves of the angelica plant, again known according to the *Enlargement of the Literary Expositor* as "medicine," could alternatively be used for preparing the ritual lustration.[2155] Furthermore, possibly restating a portion of the directions in the *Scripture of the Forty-Four Methods on Yellow Silk* where angelica could be burned to contact the spirits, Tao Hongjing notes that wild angelica could be used in perfumery and blending incense.[2156]

It is notable that this use as perfume and incense continued throughout the medieval period. Wild angelica appears not only in the recipe for Daoist Incense Beads [HC#106], but also in several of Hong Chu's aromatic blends, including one used as an offering paste for the Buddha [HC#131].

31) Huai Aromatic (platycarya? / fennel?) 蘹香 [= wild ginger]

The [*Tang*] *Materia Medica* states, "This is wild ginger. The leaves resemble the Chinese mallow[2157] and have the shape like a horse's hoof. The commoners call it Horse Hoof Aromatic[2158]. It is rarely used in medicine. Only Daoists ingest it to scent their bodies."

本草云：即杜衡也。葉似葵，形如馬蹄，俗呼為馬蹄香。藥中少用，惟道家服，令人身香。[2159]

[2154] XXBC:8.218.
[2155] XXBC:8.218. In contrast, the *Supplementary Record by Famous Physicians* notes the name of wild angelica leaves as *lima* 蒠麻, see XXBC:8.218.
[2156] XXBC:8.218.
[2157] *Malva verticilata*, see Pan, *Shijing*, 206–07.
[2158] This is not to be confuse with the aloeswood product of the same name, see my comments to *Jian* Aromatic at HC#22.
[2159] Cf. XXBC:8.219. This quote is a mixture of the *Classic of Materia Medica of the Divine Husbandman*, Tao Honjing's annotations, and the commentary of the editors of the *Newly Revised Materia Medica*.

[COMMENTS] Similar to Doulou Aromatic [HC#38], Hong Chu's gloss of the headword, Huai Aromatic (*huai xiang* 蘹香), is highly irregular and certainly in error. All of the information in the entry above is part of the description in the Tang-era *Newly Revised Materia Medica* for wild ginger, *duheng* 杜衡, often identified as an *Asarum* species.[2160] *Duheng*, not to be confused with *duruo* 杜若, galangal, appears as a powerful ritual aromatic alongside thoroughwort [HC#29], wild angelica [HC#30], and sweet basil [HC#32] in the *Songs of Chu* anthology. It is found, for example, in the poem "Mountain Spirit" (*shangui* 山鬼) as a belt-sash worn by a descending spirit, thus signaling divine presence through the sweet smell of ginger.[2161] The importance of wild ginger in the south is corroborated by the archaeological recovery of *Asarum forbesii* in the second century BCE tombs at Mawangdui in Changsha.[2162]

Turning back to Huai Aromatic, this nomenclature does not appear in *Newly Revised Materia Medica*, but we do find the similar *huai xiangzi* 懷香子, now sometimes identified as *Foeniculum vulgare*, or fennel, while at other times identified as *Platycarya strobilacea*, a type of tree.[2163] Notably, using different orthography, Daoshi also records a Huai Aromatic

[2160] Pan, *Chuci*, 38–39 (*Asarum forbesii*); Hua, Buell, and Unschuld, *Dictionary of the Ben Cao Gang Mu*, 400 (#247; *Asarum caulescens*).
[2161] CC:2.79, trans. Sukhu, *Songs of Chu*, 18.
[2162] See discussion in Chapter 2, Section 3.
[2163] XXBC:9.244. Both identifications are given in Hua, Buell, and Unschuld, *Dictionary of the Ben Cao Gang Mu*, 406 (#445) (citing the orthography 蘹香). For a description of the tree, more often written as *huai* 櫰, see BCGM:2.1951 [櫰香], see also discussion in Stuart and Smith, *Chinese Materia Medica*, 337. For a discussion of *huai* as fennel, see Stuart and Smith, 331–32.

(*huai xiang* 槐香) in his catalogue of aromatics, but I am unsure of its relationship with Hong Chu's headword, if any.[2164]

32) Hui Aromatic (sweetgrass? → sweet basil?) 蕙香

The *Treatise on the Guang Region* states, "Sweet basil has green leaves and purple flowers. Emperor Wu of Wei (r. 216–220) considered this as incense and burned it.

廣志云："蕙草綠葉紫花，魏武帝以為香，燒之。[2165]

[COMMENTS] *Hui* 蕙 is to be counted among the most famous aromatic *flora* of the ancient southern Chinese smellscape. The name appears two dozen times in the *Songs of Chu* anthology where it is described as an important bodily accoutrement, such as being used as a charm tied to the belt-sash of a garment or placed inside a scenting sachet [HC#97].[2166] It is also described as being cultivated in large gardens and used to cover sacrificial meat

[2164] T2122:574a15–16. *Huai* 槐 is commonly identified as the *Styphnolobium japonicum* (syn. *Sophora japonica*), or the Chinese scholar tree, see Stuart and Smith, *Chinese Materia Medica*, 415–16; Hua, Buell, and Unschuld, *Dictionary of the Ben Cao Gang Mu*, 406 (#433). The Chinese scholar tree does produce a resin that is used in Traditional Chinese Medicine, but I am unaware if this exudate was known as Huai Aromatic, see Nanjing zhongyiyao daxue, *Zhongyao da cidian*, (#5279). A *fu*-rhapsody attributed to Ji Han discusses this Huai Aromatic, of which only the preface survives, see TPYL:8.983.868; see also Li, *Fourth Century Flora*, 10. Needham apparently conflates Ji Han's *huai* with the homophonic variant *huai* (cited in preceding footnote), thus claiming Ji Han was writing about *P. strobilacea*, see Needham, Lu, and Huang, *Science and Civilisation,* Vol. 6, Part 1, 449n.h. Elsewhere, Needham notes the *S. japonicum* bears toxic fruit that can kill insects, see Needham, Lu, and Huang, *Science and Civilisation,* Vol. 6, Part 1, 483.

[2165] Cf. TPYL:8.983.872.

[2166] The act of stringing (*ren*) sweet basil is found twice in "Encountering Sorrow," see CC:1.7 and CC:1.13, trans. Sukhu, *Songs of Chu*, 35 and 37, respectively. In the same poem, sweet basil is also described as being used by a female shaman as a *xiang* 纕, glossed in the commentary of Wang Yi as a belt-sash, but which is more often used to describe the bellyband of a horse, see CC:1.14, trans. Sukhu, *Songs of Chu*, 37 (see also discussion of the term *xiang* in Sukhu, *Shaman*, 107). Elsewhere in the *Songs of Chu*, sweet basil is explicitly described as being worn as a belt charm (*pei*) in "Looking at Past Days in Sadness" (*Xi wangri* 惜往日), see CC:4.152, trans. Sukhu, *Songs of Chu*, 126. This use as a belt charm is echoed in the Han-era "Seven Remonstrances," see CC.13.239. In the "Lesser Minister of Life Spans," among the oldest portions of the *Songs of Chu*, a "sweet basil sash" (*huidai* 蕙帶) is one of the accoutrements of a descending spirit, see CC:2.72, trans. Sukhu, *Songs of Chu*, 14.

offerings.[2167] Along with thoroughwort [HC#29] and wild angelica [HC#30], the sweet smell of *hui* is used metaphorically in the *Songs of Chu* to signal a person's virtue and, according to Gopal Sukhu, stands "for the valuable but less assertive, more scholarly advisors among the king's ministers."[2168] Notably, the poet Sima Xiangru 司馬相如 (179–117BCE) provides a detailed description of a massive hunting park in the ancient southern state of Chu, which includes a garden of *hui* and other herbs, including both thoroughwort and wild angelica.[2169]

Hui does not appear in the *Book of Odes* (*Shijing* 詩經), but can be found in the *Guideway through Mountains and Seas*. In one passage it is cited as growing, along with *jian*-reed 菅 (a plant later related to cogongrass), in the foothills of the mountains of the Heavenly Emperor (Tiandi 天帝) to the west.[2170] While this description may underscore the *hui* plant's reputed semi-divine place of origin associated with the Heavenly Emperor, and thus may provide some rationale to its ritual use, it offers little in terms of botanical identification.[2171]

The collected annotations to the *Classic of Materia Medica of the Divine Husbandman* known as the *Supplementary Record by Famous Physician* provides a crucial piece of information that will shape the identity of the *hui* plant throughout the medieval

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[2167] See CC:1.10, trans. Sukhu, *Songs of Chu*, 36 and CC:2.55, trans. Sukhu, 6, respectively.
[2168] Sukhu, *Songs of Chu*, 166n.2; also see Sukhu, *Shaman*, 95.
[2169] The *hui* garden is noted in the *Rhapsody on Sir Vacuous* (*Zixu fu* 子虛賦), see SJ:117.3004; HS:57.2535; TPYL:8.983.871–872. For an annotated translation of the entire work, see Knechtges, *Wen Xuan*, Vol. 2, 53–72, esp. p. 57.
[2170] SHJ:2.4703; TPYL:8.983.871–72.
[2171] *Hui* is also said to grow in the foothills of Mt. Zhonghuang (*zhonghuang zhi shan* 中皇之山) and on Mt. Sheng (*sheng shan* 升山), see SHJ:2.4713 and SHJ:5.482, respectively. *Hui* appears in the *Guideway through Mountains and Seas* four times (the fourth is discussed below), but offers no physical description of the *hui* plant.

period. Specifically, *hui* is cited as an alternative name for the *xun* plant, sometimes called the Xun Herb (*xuncao* 薰草). The relevant description of the Xun Herb is as follows:

> Another name is Hui Herb. It grows in lowland marshes. It is gathered in the third month and dried in the shade. It is best when the nodes are removed. [2172]
> 一名蕙草，生下濕地，三月採，陰乾，脫節者良。

The influential third century dictionary, the *Enlargement of the Literary Expositor*, confirms the synonymy of *xun* and *hui*.[2173] Ultimately, this view appears to have originated with the eastern Han exegete Wang Yi 王逸 (d. 158), author of the earliest surviving full commentary on the *Songs of Chu* anthology. In his gloss to the terminology of the poem "Encountering Sorrow," Wang Yi specifies that a plant has "leaves called *hui* and roots called *xun*."[2174] This more precise anatomical interpretation of *hui* as leaves is elsewhere explicitly restated in the

[2172] XXBC:20.834. The claim that *hui* grows in lowland marshes might account for why some medieval authorities identify *hui* as a type of thoroughwort. This notably includes Guo Pu, see for example his remarks on the *Guideway through Mountains and Seas*, SHJ:2.4702. This belief was carried through to the sixteenth century with Li Shenzhen asserting that thoroughwort and *hui* were two species of the same genera, see BCGM:1.901 [薰草/釋名]. Both *hui* and thoroughwort were known as powerful aromatics in the *Songs of Chu*, with both grown in their own dedicated gardens, see CC:1.10, trans. Sukhu, *Songs of Chu*, 36. Elsewhere in his commentary Guo Pu also simply glosses *hui* as a "fragrant herb," see SHJ:5.4826.
[2173] 薰草，蕙草也。GY:10.743; cf. TPYL:8.983.871 (which glosses *huangcao* 皇草, "emperor grass" [likely an orthographic error], as Hui Herb).
[2174] 葉曰蕙，根曰薰。CC:1.7. See also the following footnote.

Enlargement of the Literary Expositor.[2175] The Tang-era *Supplement to the Materia Medica* continues to support the same stance.[2176]

The equation of these two plant names may not have been confirmed through the comparison of real-world specimens, however, but inferred through a pair of passages in the *Guideway through Mountains and Seas*. In the description of the mountains of the west, the text introduces an herb (*cao* 草) which is identified as the Xun Herb (*xuncao*) and then in a subsequent passage cites another generic herb (*cao*) which then claims its leaves resembled the *hui*.[2177] Consequently, one may mistakenly read both of these passages as asserting both Xun Herb and *hui* referred to the same plant, with the latter being the leaves of the former. In his commentary on the latter passage in the *Guideway through Mountains and Seas*, Guo Pu rejects this specific anatomical distinction as an error.[2178] It is worth underscoring that a straightforward reading of the *Guideway through Mountains and Seas* reveals no attempt to equate *xun* and *hui*, a position that seems to have only been proposed during the Eastern Han.

[2175] 其葉謂之蕙。GY:10.760. This is part of an entry in the *Enlargement of the Literary Expositor* that also glosses *jun* 菌 as *xun* (the *Systematic Materia Medica* erroneously cites *jun* as *lu* 鹵, see BCGM:1.901 [薰草/釋名]). This follows from the assertion first made by Wang Yi in his commentary on the *Songs of Chu* anthology. In the context of the *Songs of Chu*, however, this causes a potential problem because both *hui* and *jun* (read *xun*) are found in the same verse of "Encountering Sorrow." Wang Yi apparently avoids this redundancy by claiming the leaves (of the *jun* plant?) are called *hui* and the roots are called *xun*, see CC:1.7 and discussion above. The Song commentator on the *Songs of Chu*, Hong Xingzu, refutes this claim. He considers *jun* as part of the binomial *jungui* 菌桂 (*contra* Wang Yi, who reads them individually), which appears twice in "Encountering Sorrow," see CC:1.7, CC:1.13. Hong Xingzu's reading is supported by the fact *jungui* appears as a singular substance in the *Classic of Materia Medica of the Divine Husband*, see XXBC:12.304. Consequently modern translators will treat *jungui* as cassia bark, see e.g., Sukhu, *Shaman*, 95; see also Harper, *Early*, 268n.3 (who renders *jungui* as "curled cinnamon"). It is worth noting that Wang Yi elsewhere glosses *hui* simply as a "fragrant herb," see CC:1.25.

[2176] BCGM:1.901 [薰草/集解]. This passage is discusses in my comments to sweet basil at HC#32.

[2177] SHJ:2.4698 and SHJ:2.4702. The former is said to grow on Mt. Fu (*fu shan* 浮山), while the latter is said to grow on Mt. Bozhong (*bozhong zhi shan* 蟠冢之山). It is worth noting that both *hui* and *xun* are orthographically similar, and perhaps this too played a role in the belief that they referred to the same plant.

[2178] SHJ:2.4702; see also the modern commentary at GY10:761. As noted in a previous footnote, this is where Guo Pu asserts that *hui* is a "type of thoroughwort" (*lan shu* 蘭屬).

Nevertheless, we might glean from these debates one prevailing early medieval belief that *hui* was closely associated with a plant that had richly scented leaves, even if the term did not necessarily refer to leaves in isolation. The ancient Chinese smellscape was populated with many intensely scented rhizomes, including wild angelica, thoroughwort, wild turmeric [HC#7], and wild ginger [HC#31], among others, thus a suggestion of scented leaves should not be taken as irrelevant. Although far from definitive, this loosely point us in the direction of plant in the *Lamiaceae* mint family. Moreover, the connection to the *xun* plant, now often, but not universally, identified as a species of *Ocimum* have led many to read the *hui* plant as a kind of basil.[2179]

The mid-fifth century *Treatise on the Guang Region*, cited by Hong Chu above, provides an all-too-rare physical description of the *hui* plant, noting that it has green leaves and purple flowers.[2180] Excluding characteristics ascribed to the companion *xun* plant, this is the only surviving medieval physical description of the *hui* plant of which I am aware. While there is very little to work with in terms of identification, we cannot rule out *Ocimum basilicum*, a labiate plant with intensely scented green leaves and a dark purplish corolla that grows in and around the territory occupied by the ancient state of Chu. Moreover, as is also reported in the *Treatise on the Guang Region*, the warlord Cao Cao, posthumously named Emperor Wu, burned *hui* as a kind of incense.[2181] *Xun* was also famously burned in the Han

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[2179] Pan, *Chuci*, 30–31; Hua, Buell, and Unschuld, *Dictionary of the Ben Cao Gang Mu*, 432 (#1329); Nanjing zhongyiyao daxue, *Zhongyao da cidian*, (#2845; *hui* is listed under *luole*).

[2180] While Hong Chu's citation of the *Treatise on the Guang Region* corresponds to the passage preserved in the *Imperial Readings of the Taiping Era*, modern commentators will sometimes cite a longer passage that runs as such: "Sweet basil has green leaves and purple stems. Emperor Wu of Wei used this as incense. Nowadays, the low fields in the east cultivate this plant; its flowers are a true purple," 蕙草緑葉紫莖，魏武帝以此燒香，今東下田有此草，莖葉似麻，其華正紫也。SJ:117.3005n13; SHJ:2.4699. I am unsure of the origin of this passage.

[2181] For further speculation on how *hui* was used by Cao Cao, see my comments to Golden Incense Burner at HC#99.

court to perfume and fumigate the garments of officials who met with the emperor [HC#87]. This similar use of *hui* and *xun* as incense may have also contributed to the belief these two terms referred to the same plant.

Despite its relatively popular use through up the first few centuries of the common era, by the early sixth century textual citations to *hui* decrease significantly. Tao Hongjing acknowledges that *hui* was often encountered in ancient poetry, undoubtedly referring to the *Songs of Chu* and the poetic traditions it later influenced, but admits that many can no longer identify the plant. He specifically laments that while its name was still priased, its true identity remained confused.[2182] In subsequent surviving materia medica literature, *hui* is not provided its own separate entry, it is only listed as a synonym of *xun*.

Hui is only one of many aromatics plants drawn from early Chinese literature that has confused medieval and modern commentators alike. Due to modern archaeological excavations, however, the potential identity of *hui* has taken a new turn. Among the inventory slips found in Tomb 1 at Mawangdui was an individual slat inscribed with "one container of *xi*" (*xi yi si* 薤一笥).[2183] Critically, *xi* 薤 is now regarded as an orthographic variant of *hui*. The inventory slip matched a small wooden plaque inscribed "container of *xi*" (*xi si* 薤笥) that was attached to a woven bamboo box found in the western compartment of the tomb. When examined, the bamboo container was discovered to hold small bundles of roots and stems identified as *Anthoxanthum nitens* (syns. *Hierochloe odorata*, *H. borealis*), a

[2182] "Poets will often use the term *hui*, yet there is none who know which plant it may be. They praise its name, but are confused by reality!" 詩書家多用蕙語，而竟不知是何草。尚其名而迷其實。XXBC:20.524, BCGM:1.901 [薰草/集解].
[2183] Hunan sheng bowuguan, *Mawangdui yi hao Han mu*, Vol. 1, 117; Hunan sheng bowuguan, *Mawangdui yi hao Han mu*, Vol. 2, 233. The inventory slip is item 158.

hardy scented rhizomatic grass known commonly as sweetgrass [HC#21].[2184] If the identity of the graph *xi* is correct, these archaeobotanical remains, in conjunction with their written labels, provide us an extraordinarily rare insight into the material culture that animated textual references to ancient aromatics, or in this case, *hui* in particular.

If we return to the comments of Tao Hongjing, we find he claims that Xun Herb resembles cogongrass (*mao*), and moreover that he considered Xun Herb in the same genus (*lei*) as *hui*.[2185] Sun Ji takes this as a positive identification of a plant in the *Poaceae* grass family and sees the Mawangdui find confirming Tao Hongjing's statements on the identity of *xun* and *hui* as a type of scented grass.[2186] To these points we can also add that sweetgrass rhizome was found in several scenting sachets recovered from Mawangdui, as well as in two ceramic censers, including one in the southern compartment where the grass was burned before the tomb was sealed.[2187] These discoveries match well with the uses of *hui* as reported in the *Songs of Chu* as well as the ancient and early medieval descriptions of *xun* being incinerated as a perfume.

In spite of such strong evidence as to the ancient identity of *hui*, several new questions emerge that cannot be easily answered. This first is in regards to phytogeography. Sweetgrass has a very wide distribution across the temperate belt of China, from Xinjiang to Shandong, but grows today only on what might be considered the fringes of the old Chu state, in places such as present-day Henan, Shaanxi, Sichuan, and Guizhou. While the

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[2184] Hunan sheng bowuguan, *Mawangdui yi hao Han mu*, Vol. 1, 114, 117, 188. The small wooden label is item 43; the bamboo box is item 352.
[2185] 狀如茅而香者為薰草。XXBC:20.524, BCGM:1.901 [薰草/集解]. Elsewhere Tao Hongjing equates Xun Herb with Fragrant Mao, see XXBC:7.187. For more on Fragrant Mao, see my comments to lemongrass at HC#36.
[2186] Sun, *Handai wuzhi wenhua*, 413; see also Guoli gugong bowuyuan, *Xiangju tulu*, 8.
[2187] See discussion in Chapter 2, Section 3.

recovered aromatics at Mawangdui (in Hunan) revealed the existence of interregional trade, it seems unlikely a regional import would play such a significant role in the *Songs of Chu* or, more critically, be cited as a plant grown in Chu gardens.[2188] This includes a citation to a southern *hui* garden by Sima Xiangru, a figure who was only a generation younger than the occupant of Tomb 1 at Mawangdui. The second question is in regards to textual description of plant morphology. As we have seen, outside of Tao Hongjing, medieval sources routinely treat *hui* and *xun* as herbaceous flowering plants, not rhizomatic grasses. For example, the *Record of Drugs Collected by Gentleman Tong*, a work that may date to the Western Han or earlier, reports that the leaves of the Xun Herb exhibit an opposing leaf arrangement, a description firmly pointing to an herbaceous plant.[2189] In regards to *hui*, as noted above, the mid-fifth century *Treatise on the Guang Region* treats the plant as having purple flowers.

The totality of evidence suggests the botanical referent of *hui* was imprecise and in flux since the term's earliest textual appearances during the Warring States. Ultimately, I tentatively treat the *hui* plant as an herb that was synonymous to the *xun* plant, but acknowledge this is based on inconclusive, and sometimes contradictory, evidence.

33) White Gum Aromatic (liquidambar / sal dammar) 白膠香

[33a] The annotations to the *Tang Materia Medica* states, "The tree is tall and large and the

[2188] While the ancient *yu* plant used to spice sacrificial *chang*-ale in the north is often identified as a species of wild turmeric only occurring wild in the far south, ancient ritual treatises do not claim the *yu* plant was ever cultivated in gardens in the temperate climates of the north; for more on this ritual plant see my comments to wild turmeric at HC#7.

[2189] This passage was discussed in the comments to the Aromatic from Lingling at HC#20. One might also point to "Encountering Sorrow" in the *Songs of Chu* where a verse describes *hui* losing its fragrance as it turns into cogongrass (*mao*), see CC:1.40, trans. Sukhu, *Songs of Chu*, 45 (translating *mao* as "straw"). This might indicate that *hui* was *not* viewed as a type of grass.

wood grain is fine. The leaves have three lobes. The region between Shang[zhou][2190] and Lou[zhou][2191] has many [trees]. In the fifth month the tree is notched and a pit is made [by the roots to catch the resin]. In the eleventh month the resin is collected."

[33b] The *Materia Medica of the Kaibao Era* states, "Its taste is pungent and bitter. It is non-toxic. It treats dormant papules[2192], wind itching[2193], and surface swelling[2194]. This is liquidambar resin."

[33a] 唐本草注云：樹高大，木理細，莖[2195]葉三角，商洛間多有。五月斫[2196]為坎，十一月收脂。[2197]

[33b] 開寶本草云：味辛，苦，無毒，主癮疹，風癢，浮腫，即楓香脂。[2198]

[COMMENTS] White Gum Aromatic (*baijiao xiang* 白膠香) designated two different resinous exudates in the medieval period, one native to China and one native to India. The Chinese pharmacological tradition identified White Gum Aromatic as liquidambar (*feng xiang* 楓香), an oleoresin extracted from the *Liquidambar acalycina* and *L. formosana* (syn. *L. acerifolia*), deciduous trees native to tropical and subtropical China, with the latter species

[2190] An administrative area established in 578 that comprises present-day southeastern Shaanxi and northern Hubei, see Hua, Buell, and Unschuld, *Dictionary of the Ben Cao Gang Mu*, 272–73. Shanglou 商洛 was also an ancient place name in present-day Shaanxi, see Hua, Buell, and Unschuld, *Dictionary of the Ben Cao Gang Mu*, 271.
[2191] An administrative area established in 423 that comprises part of present-day Henan, see Hua, Buell, and Unschuld, *Dictionary of the Ben Cao Gang Mu*, 212.
[2192] Zhang and Unschuld, *Dictionary of the Ben Cao Gang Mu*, 640.
[2193] Zhang and Unschuld, 171.
[2194] Zhang and Unschuld, 178–79.
[2195] Omit 莖, following XXBC:12.307.
[2196] Read 斫 as 斫樹, following XXBC:12.307.
[2197] Cf. XXBC:12.307.
[2198] Cf. BCGM:2.1952 [楓香脂/氣味, 主治].

commonly known as the Chinese sweetgum.[2199] As described in the entry above [32b], liquidambar is collected by making incisions in the bark and allowing the scented exudate to secrete from the wounds. The resin would then harden upon contact with the air.

There are two initial botanical and terminological issues worthy of note regarding this tree, known in Chinese as *feng* 楓. First, for both classical and modern botanists, *feng* refers to tree species in both the genera *Liquidambar* (sweet gum) and *Acer* (maple). The key unifying characteristic is their easily identifiable palmately lobed leaves that dramatically change color in the fall. Importantly, however, the aromatic always referred to the exudate of the sweet gum trees, as maple trees do not produce a resinous exudate.[2200] Secondly, it should be noted that given the wide distribution of *Liquidambar* species all over the world, Chinese liquidambar resin should not be conflated with the famed aromatic resin of the *Liquidambar orientalis*, native to the Anatolian peninsula, which was, and remains, commonly referred to as storax or, alternatively, storax oil in later medieval China.[2201]

Based in part on the careful descriptions of this tree in the commentarial work of Guo Pu, Ping Wang has demonstrated that the Chinese knew about this aromatic exudate since at

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[2199] Citing the work of Margaret Hoey and Clifford Parks, Ping Wang claims the *L. formosana* is indigenous only to Taiwan and "is indeed not found in the mainland," see Ping Wang, "Sound of the Maple on the Yangzi River: A Topos of Melancholia in Early to Medieval Chinese Poetic Writing," *Tang Studies* 26 (2008): 18n.17. The work of Hoey and Parks, however, does not support this claim, but asserts that both the *L. formosana* and *L. acalycina* "co-occur locally," on the mainland, although the latter tends to grow in higher elevations, see Margaret T. Hoey and Clifford R. Parks, "Genetic Divergence in Liquidambar Styraciflua, L. Formosana, and L. Acalycina (Hamamelidaceae)," *Systematic Botany* 19, no. 2 (1994): 308 (and map on p. 309). It is possible the resin of the *Altingia gracilipes*, native to southern China and northern Vietnam, was conflated with true liquidambar resin (as suggested in Needham and Lu, *Science and Civilisation in China,* Vol. 5, Part 2*,* 142n.e), but only the leaves of the sweetgum were trilobed as noted in the entry above [33a]. See also brief comments on *L. formosana* in Yamada, *Tōa kōryō shi kenkyū*, 158, 160.

[2200] A helpful discussion for distinguishing these genera can be found in Wang, "Sound of the Maple," 13–17.

[2201] Adding confusion to these matters is the fact that Bernard Read refers to the resin of the *L. formosana* as "Formosan storax," while Joseph Needham refers to South Asian storax (i.e., benzoin) as "Indonesian liquidambar," see Read, *Chinese Medicinal Plants*, (#463); Needham and Lu, *Science and Civilisation in China,* Vol. 5, Part 2*,* 142, respectively.

least the early fourth century.[2202] Wang also cites Ji Han's *Prospect of the Plants and Trees of the Southern Regions* to further support this early history, but many scholars believe this work to be a twelfth century forgery.[2203] Wang reasons that Guo Pu cribbed some of his information from Ji Han, but the inverse is almost certainly the case.[2204] Moreover, other detailed descriptions of the liquidambar tree in the *Prospect of the Plants and Trees of the Southern Regions* can be traced to other medieval documents. For example, Xu Zhong's (before mid-7th cent.) *Records of the Southern Regions* notes that the characteristic spiked seedpods of the liquidambar tree are the size of duck eggs, a fact that is repeated in Ji Han's text.[2205]

Moving beyond the problematic *Prospect of the Plants and Trees of the Southern Regions*, we can find evidence for the use of liquidambar resin even earlier than the fourth century. As preserved in the *Imperial Readings of the Taiping Era*, an imperial proclamation was issued in the early third century by the warlord Cao Cao, possibly in response to a deadly epidemic, declaring the following: "When buildings and rooms are impure, one is allowed to burn liquidambar gum (*feng jiao* 楓膠) and sweet basil [HC#32]."[2206] The seventh century catalogue of aromatics by the monk Daoshi preserves a slightly different phrasing of this ordinance, noting that "liquidambar dried in the sun" (*feng pu* 楓曝) and sweet basil can be

[2202] Wang, "Sound of the Maple," 15.
[2203] This was first cogently argued in Ma, "Nan-Fang Ts'ao-Mu Chuang." Wang makes note of this work, but offers no counterarguments to Ma's findings, Wang, "Sound of the Maple," 15n.10.
[2204] Wang, "Sound of the Maple," 16–17.
[2205] For Xu Zhong's comments, see T2122:573c11–12; TPYL:8.982.863; Ma, "Nan-Fang Ts'ao-Mu Chuang," 236n.75; compare with Ji Han's comments in Li, *Fourth Century Flora*, 77; Wang, "Sound of the Maple," 16. Even the so-called "liquidambar tumors" (*fengren* 楓人) collected by the shamans of Yue, often read as rare insight into the popular religious practice of the early fourth century, should be traced to the *Records Narrating the Strange* by Ren Fang, a work compiled in the late fifth century, see Li, *Fourth Century Flora*, 78, cf. Wang, "Sound of the Maple," 22–23.
[2206] 房屋不潔，聽得燒楓膠及薰草。CCJ:3.59, TPYL:8.982.863. For further discussion of this proclamation, which I tentatively date to 217, see my comments to Golden Incense Burner at HC#99.

burned.[2207] This might be a copyist error for liquidambar gum, but as the reading stands currently, this provides insight into early processing procedures for liquidambar oleoresin. Moreover, to my knowledge, Cao Cao's proclamation is the earliest Chinese textual description for burning native tree resin for its scent. While the Chinese were aware of locally sourced pine resin, it was more often prepared in such a way as to be ingested as medicine or part of a dietary regimen, not burned.[2208] Notably, this earliest evidence for burning a native tree resin comes after the circulation of knowledge about Mediterranean storax, also as noted above was extracted from a species of *Liquidambar*.

Despite its relatively early discovery, liquidambar resin was only first recorded in Chinese pharmacological literature in the mid-seventh century with the publication of the *Newly Revised Materia Medica* [33a], where it is listed as a new entry (*xinfu* 新附) under the name Liquidambar Aromatic Resin (*fengxianf zhi* 楓香脂) and with White Gum Aromatic listed as an alternative name.[2209] Tao Hongjing had noted liquidambar (*feng xiang*) in his earlier sixth century notes to the materia medica literature, but had simply reported the scented resin had become a favorite among medieval perfumers and listed it as one of six principal aromatic ingredients.[2210]

Important to our inquiry, the *Newly Revised Materia Medica* is also the first work that explicitly connects the Chinese term *feng xiang* with the new nomenclature White Gum Aromatic. If we browse through medieval medical formularies, such as the *Emergency Prescriptions to Keep up your Sleeve* and the *Essential Priceless Prescriptions for All Urgent*

[2207] T2122:573c12–13.
[2208] The therapeutic ingestion of pine resin is noted several times in the second century BCE medical manuscripts from Mawangdui, see Harper, *Early*, 330, 344, 350, 363, and 410.
[2209] XXBC:12.307.
[2210] XXBC:12.313; Yamada, *Tōa kōryō shi kenkyū*, 166n.9. The list of six aromatics includes aloeswood, frankincense, cloves, patchouli, elemi, and liquidambar.

Ills, we find both names, *feng xiang* and White Gum Aromatic used in the ingredient lists for various therapies. They never appear in the same list, suggesting they were viewed as variant names for the same substance. Moreover, they both appear to be clustered in relatively narrow range of prescriptions devised to counteract foul odors, such as halitosis, body odor, and soiled clothing.[2211]

Despite the clear seventh century reference to native liquidambar, and excluding a curious citation to a "plain" or "white" gum (*sujiao* 素膠) in Ge Hong's fourth century *Master who Embraces Simplicity*, the name White Gum Aromatic appears to have its origins in Buddhist literature where it referred to a different scented exudate.[2212] In Yijing's translation of the balneotherapeutic ritual of Sarasvatī, he equates it to *sazheluopo* 薩折羅婆 (emended to *sazheluosuo* 薩折羅娑[2213]), or *sarjarasa*. This is primarily known as the resin of the *śāla* tree.[2214] This identification is further substantiated by Yijing's younger contemporary, Yixing 一行 (683–727). In commenting on the appropriate kinds of incense for esoteric rites, Yixing notes that White Gum Aromatic is the "juice [i.e., resin] of the *śāla* tree" (*suoluo shu zhi* 娑羅樹汁).[2215] A little more than half a century earlier, White Gum Aromatic was also listed among the Eight-Colored Aromatics in the *Dhāraṇī Collection Sutra* translated in 654, a few years previous to the publication of the *Newly Revised Materia*

[2211] For halitosis, see DZ1163:18.4a–b (White Gum Aromatic) and 18.5b–6a (White Gum Aromatic); for body odor, see DZ1163:74.10b-11a (*feng xiang*), and for fumigating soiled garments, see DZ1306:6.30a–b (White Gum Aromatic) and DZ1163:17.11b–12a (*feng xiang*). The recipe for fumigating soiled garments with White Gum Aromatic in the *Emergency Prescriptions to Keep up your Sleeve* also mentions Nail Aromatic (i.e., the later nomenclature for cloves, see HC#11), thus it should not be dated to earlier than the fifth century, a timeframe that roughly aligns with the earliest use of White Gum Aromatic.
[2212] DZ1185:12.8b. For the context in which Ge Hong gum substance appears, see Chapter 4, Section 7. White Gum Aromatic must be differentiated from White Gelatin or White Glue (*baijiao* 白膠), a natural adhesive found in the *Materia Medica of the Divine Husbandman* that is made by boiling antlers, see XXBC:15.370–371.
[2213] Pelliot, "Chau Ju-kua," 478n.2 (Middle Chinese **sa-źjät-lâ-sâ*).
[2214] T665:435a08; cf. Ludvik, *Sarasvatī*, 311 (where it is misidentified as liquidambar resin).
[2215] T1796.658c01. His commentary corresponds to the passage at T848:10c18.

Medica. This list includes a wide range of commercially traded goods, including camphor [HC#1], musk [HC#2], saffron [HC#7], aloeswood [HC#3], sandalwood [HC#4], frankincense [HC#9], storax [HC#5], and gum guggul [HC#6].[2216] Ultimately, the earliest surviving citation to White Gum Aromatic appears to be in the *Miscellaneous Collection of Dhāraṇī*, currently dated to the first half of the sixth century. It is described as being burned in conjunction with the recitation of a spell and the spreading of flowers atop alcohol.[2217] What appears to be an early transcription for *sarjarasa*, *sashelaishe* 薩闍賴闍, Middle Chinese **sa-dźja-lâi-dźja*, appears in the *Sutra of the Great Divine Spells of Auspiciousness* (*Dajiyi shenzhou jing* 大吉義神咒經; T1335), a work thought to date from the mid-fifth century.[2218]

The *śāla* tree is now identified as the *Shorea robusta*, a commonly occurring tardily deciduous tree that grows across the Indian subcontinent. The tree's pale golden-colored resin, commercially identified as a type of dammar, is also collected by notching and tapping similar to Chinese liquidambar. The commercial term "dammar" is applied to a broad range of resins originating in the lowland forests of Malay Peninsula and Indonesian Archipelago, but also generally encompasses any resin derived from trees in the family *Dipterocarpaceae*.[2219] The exudate of the *S. robusta* is thus distinguished by the name sal dammar, derived from the name of the *śāla* tree.

[2216] T901:787b01–03 (storax is listed, but explicitly excluded from the total count of eight).
[2217] T1336:625c22. The late fifth century *Consecration Sutra* names a type of incense as Gum Aromatic (*jiao xiang*), a term that I have elsewhere understood as gum guggul. In that context, however, Parthian Aromatic, i.e., gum guggul, is also listed among the types of incense to be burned, consequently I treat the reference to Gum Aromatic as a truncation of White Gum Aromatic, i.e., sal dammar, see T1331:501b05.
[2218] T1335:568b15 and 579b06. Compare this transcription, for example, to *sasheluosha* 薩闍囉娑 at T893:622b06.
[2219] For a discussion on these issues of terminology, see Langenheim, *Plant Resins*, 374–75.

There are still unresolved issues regarding the identity of "liquidambar" in Buddhist sources. If we turn to the earlier translation of Sarasvatī's rite by Jñānagupta, finished at the end of the sixth century, we find both White Gum Aromatic and liquidambar (*feng xiang*) as separate ingredients.[2220] In comparison to Yijing's translation, we find that Jñānagupta's liquidambar was likely rendering *śrīveṣṭaka* (*shilibisedejia* 室利薜瑟得迦, Middle Chinese **śjet-li-biei-ṣjɛt-tək-ka*), or Indian pine resin (from the *Pinus roxburghii*, syn. *P. longifolia*), which Yijing translated appropriately as *songzhi* 松脂, "pine resin."[2221] It is difficult to know why Jñānagupta did not use the widely accepted Chinese term for pine resin and instead opt for a different term, apparently also well known in Chinese circles, that referred to a different tree exudate. Indian *Shorea* trees (with simple oblong leaves), Chinese *Liquidambar* trees (with trilobed leaves), and pine trees (with needle-shaped leaves) all appear visually distinctive, even at a passing glance.

On possible explanation directs us to look at the *realia* of medieval commerce. We must remember that all of these trees produce a similar yellowish-white resin that consumers may have found difficult to distinguish. In fact, the twelfth century Daoist pharmacologist Kou Zongshi warns that both liquidambar (*feng xiang*) and pine resin could be confused for frankincense, noting that liquidambar is a more subtle yellowish-white in color and can be distinguished when burned.[2222] A similar point was made by Yixing a few centuries earlier, noting that Indian pine resin, cited as *shilimosaijia* 室利嚩塞迦 (*śrīveṣṭa*), could easily be

[2220] T664:386c14–15.
[2221] T665:435a03 and Ludvik, *Sarasvatī*, 311. Both *śrīveṣṭaka* and *śrīveṣṭa* refer to pine resin, see Monier-Williams, *A Sanskrit English Dictionary*, 1100.
[2222] BCGM:2.1953 [楓香脂/發明].

conflated with frankincense.[2223] In the face of such confusion between similarly light-colored oleoresins, it remains possible that Jñānagupta, who was from northwestern India, was provided a mistaken translation for *śrīveṣṭaka* (i.e. pine resin) as Chinese liquidambar.

Curiously, despite its prescribed use in Buddhist scripture, there does not seem to have been a substantial East Asian medieval trade in sal dammar. For example, it is not listed as a foreign import in surviving materia medica literature or discussed in Zhao Rukuo's thirteenth century *Treatise on the Barbarians* which described a vast array of commercially traded goods across Asia. One wonders if Chinese Buddhist ritualists simply replaced the prescribed substance with more readily available indigenously sourced substitute such as liquidambar, both of which were known as White Gum Aromatic.

34) Aromatic from Douliang (thoroughwort / unknown Indian aromatic) 都梁香[2224]

[34a] The *Records of Jingzhou*[2225] states: "In the county of Douliang[2226] there is a mountain.

[2223] T1796.658c01–02. This is found in Yixing's commentary to the *Sutra on the Manifest Buddhahood of the Great Vairocana and his Spiritual Transformations and Empowerments* (*Da Piluzhena chengfo shenbian jiachi jing* 大毘盧遮那成佛神變加持經; T848). The root text uses the transcription *shiliposaijia* 失利婆塞迦, see T848:10c18.

[2224] Like the eponymously named imported goods Parthian Aromatic [HC#6] and the Aromatic from Barus [HC#12], this is one of a pair of ancient Chinese aromatics that received a regional name; the other is the Aromatic from Lingling [HC#20].

[2225] The *Records of Jingzhou* (*Jingzhou zhi* 荊州記) is a lost three *juan* gazetteer written by Sheng Hongzhi 盛弘之 (d.u.) of the Liu Song, see Zheng et al., *Dictionary of the Ben Cao Gang Mu*, 237–38, 404. Sheng Hongzhi was the Vice Director (*shilang* 侍郎) of the chancellery under the enfeoffed prince of Linchuan, Liu Yiqing 劉義慶 (403–444), the famed collector of strange tales and compiler of the *New Account of Tales of the World* (*Shishuo xinyu* 世說新語) and the *Records of the Hidden and Visible Realms* (*Youming lu* 幽明錄). Liu Yiqing was also the Regional Inspector (*cishi* 刺史) of Jingzhou from 432 to 439, a large administrative region that comprises present-day Hubei, Hunan, and portions of adjacent provinces, see Hua, Buell, and Unschuld, *Dictionary of the Ben Cao Gang Mu*, 173. It is for this reason that Sheng Hongzhi gathered information about the region.

[2226] Judging by the differing regions covered by the two gazetteers cited in this entry, Douliang could refer to two different locations. In the first case, consisting as part of the old Jingzhou administrative district, the Douliang mountains were located in present day Hunan, northeast of Wugang city. In the second case, regarding the old territory of Huainan [33d], Douliang was located in present day Jiangsu, see Hua, Buell, and Unschuld, *Dictionary of the Ben Cao Gang Mu*, 93.

The top of that mountain has water from which grows Thoroughwort Herb, therefore it is called the Aromatic from Douliang."

[34b] "Its appearance is like Malayan patchouli [HC#38]."

[34c] An ancient poem[2227] states: "A Hundred Blend Incense in a *boshan* censer, saffron, storax, and *douliang* […]."

[34d] The *Treatise on the Guang Region* states: "[The Aromatic from] Douliang is exported from Huainan[2228]."

[34e] "Another name is Decocted Marsh Grass[2229]."

[34a] 荊州記曰："都梁縣有山，山上有水，其中生蘭草，因名都梁香。[2230]

[34b] 形如霍[2231]香。[2232]

[34c] 古詩曰：博山爐中百和香，鬱金蘇合及都梁。[2233]

[34d] 廣志云：都梁出淮南。[2234]

[34e] 一名煎澤草也。[2235]

[2227] See HC#125a.

[2228] A regional name referring to the area just south of the Huai River, including portions of present-day Jiangsu and Anhui, see Hua, Buell, and Unschuld, *Dictionary of the Ben Cao Gang Mu*, 142.

[2229] This evocative name was likely a reference to Chinese practice of boiling parts of the thoroughwort plant in order to infuse its fragrant essential oils into bathing water.

[2230] Cf. TPYL:8.983.864, TPYL:8.983.870; cf. T2128:651c06.

[2231] Read 霍 as 藿.

[2232] Unattributed, paraphrased quote from the *Treatise on Strange Things of the Southern Regions*; cf. T2122:573c08–10, cf. TPYL:8.982.863, cf. BCGM:1.900 [藿香/集解]. In distinction from the citation above, the *Treatise on Strange Things of the Southern Regions* uses *douliang* as a botanical analogue to help explain Malayan patchouli.

[2233] See HC#125a.

[2234] Cf. T2122:573c21 and TPYL:8.982.864.

[2235] Unattributed, paraphrased quote from the *Newly Revised Materia Medica*; cf. XXBC:7.188. This name was first noted by Tao Hongjing who treated it as a synonym for Thoroughwort Herb, see my comments to Thoroughwort Aromatic at HC#29.

[COMMENTS] There are many questions regarding the identification of this ancient Chinese aromatic. Most modern sources identify this plant as a native Chinese species of *Eupatorium*, so-named for being cultivated in the region of Douliang 都梁. Thus, the Aromatic from Douliang is most often read as a regional variety of *lan* 蘭, or thoroughwort [HC#29]. A principal source for this identification is the fifth century *Records of Jingzhou* cited by Hong Chu above [34a]. Tao Hongjing also explicitly states that the Aromatic from Douliang was synonymous with Marsh Thoroughwort (*zelan*) which grew throughout China in low-lying wetland areas. Moreover, according to Tao Hongjing's description, the leaves of Marsh Thoroughwort were only faintly aromatic (*wei xiang* 微香), but could nevertheless be used to prepare scented baths.[2236]

There are two possible locations for Douliang. On one hand, the *Treatise on the Guang Region* claims the aromatic plant was exported from Huainan [34d] and thus Douliang would have likely referred to the Douliang mountains in present-day Jiangsu. On the other hand, the roughly contemporaneous *Records of Jingzhou* covers geographical terrain further inland, and thus Douliang could have also referred to the Douliang mountains of present-day Hunan. The question of origin is presumably resolved by the pharmacologist Li Shizhen in the sixteenth century who claims that both the mountains of Jiangsu (near Xuyi 盱眙) and Hunan (near Wugang 武岡) produce this plant.[2237]

This may not have been the original perspective on this issue. In a series of comments that are difficult to decipher, Tao Hongjing cites the physician Li Dangzhi 李當之 (d. 250)

[2236] XXBC:9.229. The editors of the *Newly Revised Materia Medica* underscore the point that the leaves of the Marsh Thoroughwort "resemble Thoroughwort Herb [leaves] but are not fragrant," 似蘭草而不香。 XXBC:9.230.
[2237] BCGM:1.903 [蘭草/釋名] and Hua, Buell, and Unschuld, *Dictionary of the Ben Cao Gang Mu*, 93.

who asserts that Thoroughwort Herb (*lancao* 蘭草) *resembled* (*si* 似) the aromatic plants of Douliang.[2238] In Chinese pharmacological literature, Thoroughwort Herb was treated as distinct from Marsh Thoroughwort, thus such a comment is not as innocuous as it may appear. Specifically, Tao Hongjing cited Thoroughwort Herb as occurring in a narrow phytogeographic region in eastern China (specifically, the ancient state of Great Wu), in contrast to Marsh Thoroughwort, as noted above, which grew in marshlands all over China.[2239] Li Dangzhi and Tao Hongjing's comments might reflect an early distinction between the "true" Aromatic from Douliang, which would be, by implication, Marsh Thoroughwort growing in the marshy areas of the Douliang mountains in Hunan, but not Thoroughwort Herb in the east (i.e. Jiangsu) that merely *resembled* the plants from Douliang.[2240] In as much as strict pharmacological distinctions and nomenclature were adopted by regional gazetteers, this means the *Records of Jingzhou* may have been correct in claiming Thoroughwort Herb grew in the wet regions of the Douliang mountains in present-day Jiangsu, but incorrect in claiming that the plant was properly called the Aromatic from Douliang, a name *mutatis mutandis* reserved for Marsh Thoroughwort growing in the Douliang mountains of present-day Hunan.[2241]

[2238] 似都梁香草。XXBC:7.188. Notably, the *Systematic Materia Medica* critically omits "resembles" (*si*) in Li Dangzhi's statement, making it appear he equated the two plant names, see BCGM:1.904 [蘭草/釋名].
[2239] XXBC:9.229. According to the older *Supplementary Records of Famous Physicians*, Thoroughwort Herb grew in the marshes of the old state of Great Wu, while Marsh Thoroughwort grew on the edges of large marshes found in Runan 汝南, in present-day Henan province, see XXBC:7.188 and XXBC:9.229, respectively. For the location of Runan, see Hua, Buell, and Unschuld, *Dictionary of the Ben Cao Gang Mu*, 261.
[2240] Again, Tao Hongjing only claims the Aromatic from Douliang was equivalent to Marsh Thoroughwort without asserting the specific region where it was grown. I am inferring its location in Hunan according to the fact that Tao Hongjing, and pharmacological literature previous to him, considered Thoroughwort Herb a product of eastern China around the old state of Wu, which in the context of the two Douliang mountain ranges would point to the region around Jiangsu.
[2241] The *Records of Jingzhou*, as cited by Hong Chu, uses the term "Thoroughwort Herb," yet the same passage preserved in the Chinese Buddhist canon only cites generic thoroughwort (*lan*), see T2128:651c06.

The mid-seventh century editors of the *Newly Revised Materia Medica* apparently understood the comments of Li Dangzhi and Tao Hongjing differently than I have above, but nonetheless seem to arrive at a similar conclusion. They ultimately read Tao Hongjing (through Li Dangzhi) as espousing that the Aromatic from Douliang was *synonymous* with Thoroughwort Herb, to which they comment that he was "not deeply knowledgeable" (*bu shenshi* 不深識).[2242] The fact that the Tang editors disagree with Tao Hongjing's reputed stance only potentially underscores the fact that Thoroughwort Herb was not considered equivalent to the Aromatic from Douliang, at least in pharmacological circles up through the seventh century. This perspective seems to have changed with the *Supplement to the Materia Medica*, published in 739, which manifestly claims that the Aromatic from Douliang was Thoroughwort Herb which grew on the banks of marshes and had glossy leaves.[2243]

In any regard, the precise identification of the Aromatic of Douliang was lost by the publication of the *Systematic Materia Medica* in the sixteenth century. There the Aromatic of Douliang is listed as a synonym for both Thoroughwort Herb (citing the authority of Li Dangzhi, inaccurately in my view) and Marsh Thoroughwort (citing the authority of Tao Hongjing).[2244] While Thoroughwort Herb (*lancao*) is now widely identified as a species of

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[2242] As stated by the editors under the entry for Marsh Thoroughwort, "Tao claimed the Aromatic from Douling was simply Thoroughwort Herb" 陶云都梁香，乃蘭草爾。XXBC:9.230. Additionally, they state: "In Tao's notes to Thoroughwort Herb, he furthermore claims that it [i.e. Thoroughwort Herb] is called the Aromatic from Douliang; this is not deeply knowledgeable," 陶注蘭草，複雲名都梁香，並不深識也。XXBC:9.230. In the entry to Thoroughwort Herb, the editors more accurately restate the pertinent information, asserting that "Li [Dangzhi] claims the [Aromatic from] Douliang approximates it [i.e. Thoroughwort Herb]" 李雲都梁香近之。XXBC:7.188. Yet the editors nonetheless finish by saying, "This is in the end not knowledgeable" 終非的識也。XXBC:7.188. Ultimately, the *Newly Revised Materia Medica* never positively identifies the Aromatic from Douliang.

[2243] BCGM:1.904 [蘭草/集解]. It should be noted the editors of the *Supplement to the Materia Medica* do not indicate where Douliang is located, only that the Aromatic from Douliang should be equated with Thoroughwort Herb, not Marsh Thoroughwort, and thus contrary to Tao Hongjing.

[2244] See BCGM:1.903 [釋名] and 1:906 [釋名], respectively.

Eupatorium, Marsh Thoroughwort (*zelan*), in addition to being identified as a species of *Eupatorium*, is also identified as *Lycopus lucidus*, a tuberous marshland perennial with hirsute leaves in the mint family.[2245] Modern sources will often treat the Aromatic from Douliang as *Eupatorium*, but it is worth noting that Tao Hongjing clearly identified the plant as synonymous with Marsh Thoroughwort, thus suggesting it might have originally referred to *L. lucidus*, commonly known as bugleweed, or possibly another plant in the mint family.[2246]

There is another issue of identification that has not yet been adequately addressed. Specifically, there appears to have been a parallel, if not older, tradition where *douliang* 都梁, Late Han Chinese **ta-liaŋ*, was treated as foreign exotica. This is suggested by the fact that *douliang* is also found in early medieval sources listed among other aromatics that are not native to China. This includes, for example, a questionably old, anonymous "Han" era *yuefu* 樂府, where this unknown *douliang* is paired with *midie* (rosemary?, HC#42) and tree moss/Indian dill [HC#18].[2247] *Douliang* is also cited in the mid-to-late third century *Treatise on Strange Things of the Southern Regions* as having a similar appearance to Malayan patchouli [HC#38a].[2248] The gazetteer section of the *Grand Purity Scripture on the Divine Elixir of Golden Liquor* (*Taiqing jinye shendan jing* 太清金液神丹經; DZ880), which dates

[2245] Hua, Buell, and Unschuld, *Dictionary of the Ben Cao Gang Mu*, 435 (#1446), Nanjing zhongyiyao daxue, *Zhongyao da cidian*, (#3100).
[2246] *L. lucidus*, however, does not naturally occur in or around Hunan, making such an identification far from certain. For the identity of the Aromatic from Douliang as *Eupatorium*, see Nanjing zhongyiyao daxue, *Zhongyao da cidian*, (#2884). Notably, Tao Hongjing's description of Marsh Thoroughwort as having a square stem, a characteristic copied by later materia medica authors, is typically a hallmark of the mint family, see XXBC:9.230.
[2247] T2122:573c04–06; TPYL:8.982.862.
[2248] TPYL:8.982.863. The fact that Wan Zhen, writing in the mid-to-late third century (and thus roughly contemporaneous to Li Dangzhi), uses *douliang* as a botanical analogue to foreign Malayan patchouli is rather curious. It suggests that *douliang* was native to China, or at least, was easily recognized by his audience.

to between the early fourth and early sixth centuries, also treats *douliang* as a foreign plant.[2249] Notably, the first two sources reliably predate the *Records of Jingzhou* and none of these works use the "aromatic" (*xiang*) suffix, suggesting the term *douliang* did not originally refer to a plant from either of the Douliang regions in China and thus was not likely considered thoroughwort (or bugleweed). *Douliang* is also found in a late fifth or early sixth century *yuefu* cited by Hong Chu above as an "ancient poem" (34c) where it is paired with Yu Gold (Indian saffron or turmeric, HC#7) and Mediterranean storax [HC#5] – both foreign exotica.[2250]

The foreign nature of early *douliang* is also reinforced by its occurrence in early Chinese translations of Indian Buddhist scriptures. For example, *douliang* appears in two Buddhist translations that likely date to around the fifth century. First, it is found in the revised *Madhyamāgama* translated by Saṃghadeva and Saṃgharakṣa as part of a list of scented pastes applied to the body along with aloeswood [HC#3], sandalwood [HC#4], storax, and cloves [HC#8].[2251] Second, it is found in the **Mahāsattva Sutra* attributed to the monk Shengjian of the Western Qin (385–431) by the Taishō editors, but listed as anonymous in the sixth century catalog by Sengyou.[2252] There, *douliang* is listed as an ingredient for preparing the scented five-colored waters (*wuse shui* 五色水) used to bathe the statue of the Buddha during his birthday celebrations.[2253] Douliang is one among a total of

[2249] DZ880:3.17b. This text clearly mirrors the *Treatise on Strange Things of the Southern Regions*, treating *douliang*, not Malayan patchouli, as a product of the Malay Peninsula. Based on this citation, I do believe *douliang* is necessarily from this region, but simply that it is a plant that was perceived as foreign. I translate and discuss this passage in Chapter 5, Section 7.
[2250] For a brief discussion on the former *yuefu* see Liu, *Songdai Xiangpu*, 21; for a discussion of the latter *yuefu* see references noted in HC#125a.
[2251] T26:519a28, trans. Bingenheimer, Anālayo, and Bucknell, *Madhyama Āgama*, 479 (rendering *douliang* as eupatorium).
[2252] T2145:29a17.
[2253] T696:798b13 (and summarized by Daoshi, see T2122:543.b05–06 and T2123:77a29).

seven ingredients including Indian bay leaf [HC#38], tree moss/Indian dill, Indian saffron, *qiulong* 丘隆 (camphor?, HC#1), nutsedge [HC#26], and dark water (*xuan shui* 玄水; described as freshly drawn well water [*jinghua* 井華]). The directions explain that *douliang*, Indian bay leaf, and tree moss/Indian dill produced water of a dark greenish color, saffron produced vermilion water, *qiulong* produced white water, nutsedge produced yellow water, and that dark water produced black water, thus creating water of five colors. The contexts of *douliang* in these Buddhist texts do tell us something important about this aromatic's principal usage in the medieval olfactory imagination: it was used as cleansing agent and as an ingredient for scenting bathing water. This overlaps considerably with the view of native Chinese thoroughwort which was also soaked for cosmetic and balneotherapeutic use [34e].

Ultimately, I am unable to identify the Indian/South Asian *douliang*. We have two descriptions available to us. First, the **Mahāsattva Sutra* tells us that *douliang* is to be mixed with tree moss/Indian dill and Indian bay leaf, and then crushed and steeped in water (*zi* 漬). This will produce a scented water that, as noted earlier, is dark greenish in color.[2254] Second, the *Treatise on Strange Things of the Southern Regions* reports that *douliang* is similar to Malayan patchouli, thus suggesting the importance of the plant's leaves for producing perfumes. These passages point to an herbaceous plant with fragrant volatile oils that can be leached in water, but this leads to a broad assortment of botanical possibilities. On one hand, it is possible that *douliang* referred to an Indian species of *Eupatorium*, but I find this unlikely since thoroughwort plants were not widely attested as viable aromatics in medieval Indian perfuming culture, unlike China, where numerous tropical species of plants grew in the wild. Otherwise, it is possible that *douliang*, maybe as a transcription, referred to a plant

[2254] T696:798b13–14.

in the cinnamon genus (*Cinnamomum*) or mint (*Lamiaceae*) family, such as Indian bay leaf [HC#38] or a type of Indian patchouli, but this remains mere conjecture until more feasible options are explored.

35) Plate Aromatic (onycha) 甲香[2255]

[35a] The *Tang Materia Medica* states, "It is a type of mollusk that lives in the Southern Seas. It is as large as a small fist[2256], greenish-yellow in color, and four to five *cun* in length. One takes the operculum and incinerates it into ash for use. The people in the south also boil the flesh [of the mollusk] and eat it.

[35b] Nowadays it is often used for blending incense. It is claimed to be able to develop the fragrance [of the incense blend] and repeatedly condense the scented smoke. One must [employ] the processing method of boiling it in alcohol and honey to be able to use it [like this]." See [the recipes] below.

[35a] 唐本草云：蠡[2257]類。生雲南[2258]者，大如掌[2259]，青黃色，長四五寸，取鏖燒灰用之。南人亦煮其肉啖噉。[2260]

[2255] So-called for the rounded shape of the operculum, Latin for "little lid," that closes off the aperture of a gastropod mollusk's shell.

[2256] Hong Chu's text has "as large as [one's] palm," but I have chosen to emend the text according to the received *Newly Revised Materia Medica*. The *Treatise on Strange Things of the Southern Regions* claims the mollusk shell is as large as a small bowl (*ou* 甌), see TPYL:8.982.865.

[2257] Read 蠡 as 螺, following TPYL:8.982.865–66 (citing the *Treatise on Strange Things of the Southern Regions*). *Li* 蠡, a wood eating insect, makes little sense in this context. The *Systematic Materia Medica* explains that *li* was an orthographic variant for *luo* 蠃, primarily meaning wasp, which had the same meaning (and pronunciation) as *luo* 螺 as seen in the *Treatise on Strange Things of the Southern Regions*; see BCGM:2.2545 [海螺/釋名].

[2258] Read 雲南 as 南海, following XXBC:16.437.

[2259] Read 掌 as 小拳, following XXBC:16.437.

[2260] Cf. XXBC:16.437.

[35b] 今合香多用，謂能發香，復來[2261]香烟。須酒蜜煮制方可用，法見下。[2262]

[COMMENTS] The small lid-like covering used by gastropod mollusks to seal their shells, known as an operculum, has long been used by perfumers from Europe to Japan to enhance perfume blends. Opercula are often believed, although not without some controversy, to have been used in the recipe for making the ancient holy incense of the Old Testament, known in Hebrew as *shecheleth* and in Greek translation as onycha.[2263] Early medieval Chinese perfumers also gathered the opercula of various mollusks, sometimes identified as sea snails (*hailuo* 海螺), that were found along the shores of southern China and used them for perfume and incense blends.

Onycha, or in Chinese, Plate Aromatic (*jia xiang* 甲香), is not treated as a fragrant incense unto its own like other materials generally identified as "aromatics" (*xiang*). In terms of Chinese blending arts, onycha was employed as what might be termed a perfume adjuvant to enhance the overall scent quality of a mixture. The earliest Chinese source to identify onycha as a perfumery ingredient is the *Treatise on Strange Things of the Southern Regions*, compiled in the mid-to-late third century. The relevant passage describes a marine mollusk about the size of a small bowl (ou 甌) with a pointy shell whose operculum "can be blended with various aromatics and burned." The text also makes clear that the purpose of this marine derived ingredient is to "cause the enhancement of the fragrance," before offering the warning that "if burned in isolation its smell is foul."[2264] The unpleasant and harsh odor of

[2261] Read 來 as 聚; see citation in Liu, *Songdai Xiangpu*, 275.
[2262] Cf. XXBC:16.437.
[2263] Harold J. Abrahams, "Onycha, Ingredient of the Ancient Jewish Incense: An Attempt at Identification," *Economic Botany* 33, no. 2 (1979): 233–36.
[2264] 可合眾香燒之，皆使益芳，獨燒則臭。TPYL:8.982.865; see also BCGM:2.2546 [海螺/集解].

onycha is easily detected, something which James McHugh describes as "overheated electrical equipment with some marine notes."[2265]

Regardless of this odor (onycha needed to be processed before use), perfumers from various regions of the world have collected the opercula of gastropod mollusks for the material's curious ability to develop the depth and complexity of various blends of resins, woods, and flowers. One eighteenth century British botanist spoke of the ability of onycha to provide a strength and durability to perfume blends that would otherwise be too cloying.[2266] The comments in the *Treatise on Strange Things of the Southern Regions* are more general in nature, only speaking to onycha's ability to "enhance the fragrance" of the other ingredients. The twelfth century pharmacologist Kou Zongshi, a rough contemporary of Hong Chu, claims that onycha is particularly well-suited for controlling (*guan* 管) scented smoke and, moreover, that when blended with camphor [HC#1], musk [HC#2], aloeswood [HC#3], or sandalwood [HC#4], the results are reported as particularly outstanding.[2267] Onycha's effect on burning incense is also noted by Hong Chu who claims that it helps condense (*ju* 聚) the scented plumes of smoke, which we might interpret as preventing the smoke and scent from dissipating too quickly [35b]. Additionally, according to Hong Chu, onycha assists in developing (*fa* 發) the fragrance of the blend. While the specific meaning of this is obscure, it might attest to the ability of onycha to enhance the durability and intensity of the fragrance or amplify the projection of the scent. Overall, within the context of medieval China, it appears as if the function of the mollusk's operculum to protect and seal off the shell was

[2265] McHugh, "Mollusk Opercula," 54.
[2266] McHugh, 55.
[2267] BCGM:2.2546 [海螺/修治].

conceptually transferred over as a property of onycha that allowed it to condense smoke and make its fragrance more intense and long-lasting.

The comments in the *Treatise on Strange Things of the Southern Regions* regarding the use of onycha are important to us for another reason: this passage remains the earliest textual evidence for what we might term the art of perfumery in China.[2268] Yet, even though this is the earliest textual proof, it offers a surprisingly complex view on the state of early medieval perfumery with already established principles on the synergistic effects of combining a foul-smelling substance with favorable ones. The *Treatise on Strange Things of the Southern Regions* also contains the earliest known evidence for a distinction between two (or three) grades of aloeswood [HC#3]. We can presume this careful differentiation was related to a developing perfuming culture which valued a rigorous quality assessment of raw materials.[2269]

Wan Zhen, the compiler of the aforementioned gazetteer, was the governor of the Danyang commandery under the state of Eastern Wu in the coastal south, a region with intimate maritime contact with kingdoms throughout Southeast Asia that were rich with luxury export aromatics.[2270] The early medieval development of a more sophisticated Chinese perfuming arts was most likely motivated by a combination of influences including South Asian scent culture and the importation of its pungent tropical aromatics, as well as native Chinese herbal therapeutic culture and its drug processing techniques. Regional religious practices of southern coastal China may have also played a role, including older techniques of alchemy and the emerging Grand Purity (*taijing* 太清) tradition of the third and fourth

[2268] The importance of this passage is noted by Yamada, *Tōzai kōyaku shi*, 30–31; Yamada, "Chin sunawachi kaori," 10; Guoli gugong bowuyuan, *Xiangju tulu*, 16–17, 111n.30.
[2269] Yamada, *Tōa kōryō shi kenkyū*, 186.
[2270] Wang, "Nanhai Trade," 31–35; see also Chapter 2, Section 4.

centuries. For example, some of the earliest textual evidence for incense mixtures come precisely from this region, such as we find with the adept Ge Hong instructing the prospective alchemist in the *Master who Embraces Simplicity* to "constantly burn the fivefold incense."[2271] The "fivefold incense" (*wuxiang* 五香) here refers to a blend of five aromatics, several recipes of which are preserved in later historical documents.[2272]

Since onycha was considered foul smelling on its own, it was also processed in a special way to reduce its harshness. One of the earliest methods appears to have been boiling it and turning it into what was called an onycha reduction (*jia jian* 甲煎). Hong Chu provides the specific instructions for its preparation by claiming onycha needed to be boiled in both alcohol and honey [35b], thus rendering the final product into something of a paste. We find this product used, for example, by the official and *bon vivant* of ill repute, Shi Chong who purportedly assigned a line of female servants to provide onycha powder (*jiajian fen* 甲煎粉) and aloeswood lotion (*chenxiang zhi* 沈香汁) to his guests who visited the bathroom.[2273] The cosmetic application of onycha reduction was also known in the eighth century where it was mixed with wax and the ashes of flowers and fruit and used as a lip balm.[2274] Onycha reduction is also listed along with jujube paste in the surviving preface to Fan Ye's fifth century blending manual, proving that it had been adopted for use by early medieval perfumers [HC#84]. Moreover, the Tang poet Li Shangyin 李義山 (813–858) again pairs onycha reduction with aloeswood in claiming that both were burned in the imperial palace courtyards.[2275] This might of have been a reference to a story about Emperor Yang of the Sui

[2271] 常燒五香。DZ1185:16.13b; cf. trans. Ware, *Alchemy*, 278.
[2272] These recipes are discussed in Chapter 5, Section 7.
[2273] TPYL:8.984.864; also see Mather, *Shih-Shuo Hsin-Yü*, 493–94.
[2274] BCGM:2.2547 [甲煎/集解]; also see Schafer, *Golden Peaches*, 175.
[2275] BCGM:2.2547 [甲煎/集解].

who reputedly ignited Mountain-Sized Bonfires of Aloeswood [HC#102] before casting onycha reduction into the flames for a New Year's celebration.

When turning to the recipes in the last section of the *Materia Aromatica*, we find onycha was used in just under half of the total, nine out of twenty-two recipes. Because onycha was treated as a stabilizing and harmonizing agent and not as a principal aromatic, it also accounts for relatively small proportion of the total ingredients. After analyzing sixteen of Hong Chu's recipes, Yamada Kentarō calculates that onycha comprised no more than two to three percent of the total mixtures.[2276]

Along with musk, onycha is one of only two aromatics that derive from animals in the *Materia Aromatica*. Because onycha is considered a product of sentient beings, its use was barred in the Buddhist tantric *Susiddhikāra Sūtra* translated into Chinese in the eight century.[2277] This view is further supported by the tenth century Buddhist lexicon *Supplement to the Pronunciation and Meaning of the Complete Canon* (*Xu yiqiejing yinyi* 續一切經音義; T2129), compiled by Xilin, which describes the operculum as deriving from a body part of a sentient life, thus prohibiting its use with other aromatics when conducting esoteric rites.[2278] This was not a proscription followed by all Buddhists, as we find onycha listed as an ingredient in an incense blend taken from the Buddhist Huadu Temple in Chang'an [HC#128]. Moreover, onycha appears in several incense blends scattered throughout the Buddhist canon, including the *Protocol Manual for the Blazing Hūṃ Offering* (*Huo xin gongyang yigui* 火斨供養儀軌; T913) which carefully describes how the opercula needs to

[2276] Yamada, "Chin sunawachi kaori," 5; Yamada, *Tōa kōryō shi kenkyū*, 174–76. Yamada calculates that both onycha and musk constitute, on average, 4.67 percent of the mixtures he examined.
[2277] T893:609c06–07, trans. Giebel, *Two Esoteric Sutras*, 162–63.
[2278] T2129:957a06.

be boiled, mixed with honey, and heated until dry before it can be added to the incense blend.[2279]

36) White Mao Aromatic (lemongrass) 白茅香

The annotations to the *Supplement to the Materia Medica* state, "Its taste is sweet and uniform and is non-toxic. It treats malign *qi*. It causes a person's body to be fragrant. If one boils the liquid [from the plant] and ingest it, this treats cold pain in the abdomen. It grows in Annan[2280] and is like the cogongrass root. Daoists use it to boil in a decoction and bathe with it."

本草拾遺記曰：味甘平，無毒，主惡氣，令人身香。煮汁服之，主腹內冷痛。生安南，如茅根，道家用煮湯沐浴。[2281]

[COMMENTS] Classical *mao* 茅 is a type of native grass that featured prominently in ancient ritual. The plant name was derived from *mao* 矛, "spear" or "lance," due to the shape of its long and narrow leaf blades.[2282] Ultimately, *mao* was incorporated into the names of several different kinds of grasses in the medieval period and distinguishing between them can prove difficult. The comments below attempt to outline distinctions between White Mao (*baimao* 白茅), White Mao Aromatic (*baimao xiang* 白茅香), Mao Aromatic (*maoxiang* 茅

[2279] T913:935c18. Onycha is also barred in the Daoist *Various Accounts of the Essential Elements of the Three Caverns* which cites the now lost *Materia Aromatica of Divine Immortals*, see DZ839:11b.
[2280] Annan 安南, "the secured south," was regional name under the Tang that comprised the southwestern section of old Jiaozhou, covering much of present-day northern Vietnam, see Schafer, *Vermillion Bird*, 5–7; Hua, Buell, and Unschuld, *Dictionary of the Ben Cao Gang Mu*, 51–52.
[2281] Cf. BCGM:1.897 [白茅香/集解, 氣味, 主治].
[2282] As claimed by Li Shizhen, see BCGM:1.810 [白茅/釋名].

香), and Fragrant Mao (*xiangmao* 香茅) with the caveat that these names were most likely used imprecisely between individual authors and across genres in the medieval period.

Most often *mao* is treated as synonymous with White Mao, now widely identified as *Imperata cylindrica* (syn. *Imperata arundinacea*), or cogongrass.[2283] Cogongrass is a hardy rhizomatic grass that occurs across broad swaths of temperate, subtropical, and tropical China in semi-arid soil.[2284] It is easily distinguishable by its long and creeping root system and silky white inflorescences, the latter giving rise to its Chinese name as White Mao. Due to the frequent occurrence of *mao*/cogongrass in early ritual texts and the belief that it was an early type of incense, it is worth reviewing how it was used before turning to other *mao*-related nomenclature.

According to Lu Ji's late third century commentary on the *flora* and *fauna* of the *Book of Odes*, cogongrass is described as having two main ritual uses. First, cogongrass was used in antiquity to wrap gifts and offerings for sacrifice.[2285] This use is attested directly in the *Book of Odes* where it is employed to wrap deer meat.[2286] Moreover, during the enfeoffment ritual for feudal lords or princes, soil from the imperial altar was wrapped in cogongrass and given as symbol of official investiture.[2287] Secondly, cogongrass was used to filter (*suo* 縮) alcohol at elaborate sacrificial banquets during a libation rite that came to be

[2283] Pan, *Shijing*, 48–49; Pan, *Chuci*, 62–63; Hua, Buell, and Unschuld, *Dictionary of the Ben Cao Gang Mu*, 394 (#42); Nanjing zhongyiyao daxue, *Zhongyao da cidian*, (#1459–1461). *I. cylindrica* is also commonly called floss grass or sometimes woolly grass.
[2284] The soil type in which cogongrass grew is noted in *Master Guan*, see Rickett, *Guanzi*, Vol. 2, 261; see also the longer discussion in Needham, Lu, and Huang, *Science and Civilisation,* Vol. 6, Part 1, 49–51.
[2285] 古用包裹禮物。TPYL:8.996.981.
[2286] MSZY:1.615–616 (Mao #23), trans. Waley, *Book of Songs*, 20.
[2287] Needham, Lu, and Huang, *Science and Civilisation,* Vol. 6, Part 1, 86–88n.l. As noted therein, the original graph of *feng* 封, "to enfeoff," depicts a hand offering a plant and soil.

known as *su* 茜 (note the grass radical above the graph for alcohol).[2288] This is suggested in the *Zuo Commentary* (*Zuozhuan* 左傳) where a sacrificial libation could not be performed for lack of this special grass.[2289] Furthermore, the Eastern Han dictionary, *Explaining Graphs and Analyzing Characters*, describes the *su* rite as "symbolic of the spirits enjoying [the alcohol]," suggesting the filtering process was envisioned as a kind of spiritual drinking.[2290]

The overall ritual importance of *I. cylindrica* is underscored in the *Rites of Zhou* (*Zhouli* 周禮) where we are told of a special officer of the fields (*dianshi* 甸師) who was in charge of cultivating and harvesting cogongrass for the sacrifices.[2291] Despite modern claims to the contrary, there is no textual evidence this grass was used as incense.[2292] The leaves of cogongrass are long and slightly toothed, making it well suited for weaving, bundling, and thatching, as well as functioning as a strainer.

There was a third core function of cogongrass in antiquity – its use as an object where spirits could lodge or dwell. This is clearly described in the *Explaining Graphs and Analyzing Characters*, which explains an ancient ritual, called *ba* 軷, performed in preparation for travel:

[2288] 縮酒用之。TPYL:8.996.981. Even within a medical context, *su* still referred to straining liquid through cogongrass, see Harper, *Early*, 342n.5.
[2289] TPYL:8.996.981; CQZZ:12.3891, trans Durrant, Li, and Schaberg, *Zuo Tradition*, 265.
[2290] 象神歆之也。SWJZ:14.392.
[2291] TPYL:8.996.981, ZLZS:4.1427, trans. Biot, *Le Tcheou-li*, Vol. 1, 84–85.
[2292] According to the *Rites of Zhou*, the officer of the fields was also in charge of providing southernwood (*xiao* 蕭) for the sacrifices. To give context for southernwood's use, the commentary of Du Zichun 杜子春 (ca. 1st cent.) cites the "Suburban Sacrifice of a Single Victim" chapter in the *Record of Rites* where it describes the use of southernwood mixed with animal fat as a sacrificial offering. Senior Official Zheng (Zheng dafu 鄭大夫), or Zheng Xing 鄭興 (d. after 35), on the other hand, reads *xiao* as an error for *su* and furthermore reads it as *suo*, "to filter," thus erasing the collection of southernwood from the duties of this office, see ZLZS:4.1427. In either regard, this specialized role for harvesting cogongrass and possibly southernwood is sometimes mistaken by modern scholars as evidence for incense burning during state sponsored sacrificial banquets. This is not how the Han commentarial tradition envisioned the use of these plants, nor how the *Record of Rites* nor *Rites of Zhou* described their use.

> When about to disembark on the road to attend to affairs, one must first make a declaration to the spirits (of the roadway) and establish an altar at the crossroads. Cogongrass is to be planted in order to be a prop for the spirit.[2293]
> 出將有事於道，必先告其神，立壇四通，樹茅以依神。

Here, cogongrass is envisioned as the site where a spirit can reside at a crossroads, thus in addition to its practical applications, cogongrass was a particularly powerful tool in the repertoire of the ritualist. In the medical manuscripts of Mawangdui, one recipe notes that cogongrass could be used as a replacement for slaughtering a suckling pig during a requital rite.[2294] The blurring between the use of this plant as an offering to the spirits and as a prop for them to inhabit is further seen in the *Records of the Grand Historian* (*Shiji* 史記). In the description of the *shan* 禪 sacrifice performed by Emperor Wu, we are informed that "between the Yangze River and the Huai River grows cogongrass with three ridges on it; this was made into spirit mats."[2295] These interwoven mats were used to hold the sacrificial offerings, but they could also represent the presence of spirits during the performance of the sacrificial rites and musical accompaniments. Such uses are also represented in the duties of the male *wu*-shamans outlined in the *Rites of Zhou*. Specifically, these ritual officiants are placed in change of identifying the names of spirits and summoning (*zhao* 招) them by waving cogongrass in the appropriate direction.[2296] Overall, cogongrass was widely available in many parts of China and was assigned a variety of critical ritual uses in antiquity.

Despite the repeated references to White Mao is classical sources, the *Classic of Materia Medica of the Divine Husbandman*, a work compiled up through the Eastern Han,

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[2293] SWJZ:14.378, trans. (with minor changes) Harper, *Early*, 269n.1
[2294] Harper, *Early*, 269. The recipe cuts off before describing how the cogongrass could be utilized.
[2295] 江淮間一茅三脊為神藉。SJ:28.1398, see also SJ:20.475. This specific type of grass was first stipulated by Guan Zhong 管仲 (c. 720–645 BCE), minister to Duke Huan 桓 (r. 685–643 BCE) of Qi, see SJ:28.1361, see also TPYL:8.996.981.
[2296] ZLZS:26.1763, trans. Biot, *Le Tcheou-li*, Vol. 2, 103.

does not provide a separate entry under this name. Instead, it includes an entry for Mao Root (*mao gen* 茅根), underscoring the equal importance of the rhizomatic roots of cogongrass. The later annotations to the *Classic of Materia Medica of the Divine Husbandman* state Mao Root grows in the fields and mountain valleys of the Chu region and was harvested in the sixth month.[2297] In the early sixth century, Tao Hongjing claimed that during his time this plant was called White Mao Reed (*baimao jian* 白茅菅). He further cites a passage from the *Book of Odes* which speaks of Reed Mao (*jianmao* 菅茅) to show the potential antiquity of such a name.[2298] *Explaining Graphs and Analyzing Characters* glosses both *mao* with *jian* and *jian* with *mao*, suggesting they were closely related, if not identical.[2299] The sixteenth century *Systematic Materia Medica* ultimately differentiates between summer blooming *mao* and autumn blooming *jian*, but acknowledges Tao Hongjing did not make this distinction.[2300]

It is worth noting at this point that neither White Mao nor Mao Root were described as being fragrant, nor was smell salient when they were used in medicine, sacrifice, or other rites.[2301] Broadly speaking, unlike other several other native and cultivated grasses, cogongrass is relatively non-odorous. Thus, some confusion arises when Tao Hongjing introduces the term Fragrant Mao in his annotations to the *Classic of Materia Medica of the Divine Husbandman*. As a synonym for Dark Mao (*qingmao* 青茅), he claims this plant was

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[2297] XXBC:8.223. In the *Systematic Materia Medica*, Mao Root is treated as supplementary to White *Mao*, with many of the synonyms originally given for Mao Root now applied to White Mao, see BCGM:1.811 [白茅/釋名, 集解].

[2298] XXBC:8.223, BCGM:1.811 [白茅/集解]. Tao Hongjing additionally notes that Mao Root can be eaten as a medicinal food when people want to wean themselves off grains. It is worth noting that modern commentators consider *jian* 菅, of which I am translating generically as "reed," as a distinctive type of grass, see e.g. Pan, *Shijing*, 188–89 (*Miscanthus sinensis*).

[2299] SWJZ:1.13 and SWJZ:1.14; see also TPYL:8.996.981.

[2300] BCGM:1.810 [白茅/釋名].

[2301] It has been suggested that a flavor may have been infused into meat when steamed inside a cogongrass wrapper or infused into alcohol when filtered through a cogongrass sieve, but ancient and early medieval sources do not assert this.

given as tribute from the region of Jiangnan and specifically used to filter alcohol for ancient sacrifice.[2302] It appears Tao Hongjing considered Fragrant Mao distinct from cogongrass (which he distinguished as White Mao Reed) and, moreover, ascribed a critical ritual function of cogongrass to this aromatic plant. Now is not the time to explore this particular issue, but it appears Tao Hongjing was following upon the authority of the *Book of History* (*Shangshu* 尚書) and the Han exegetical tradition in making this assertion concerning Dark Mao.[2303]

More pertinent to our concerns is that the *Records of Jingzhou*, compiled during the fifth century, speak of a Fragrant Mao that grew in the region of Lingling 零陵 commandery, part of present-day southern Hunan.[2304] This claim may have originated with the "Geographical Treatise" (*dili zhi* 地理志) chapter of the *Records of Wu* (*Wulu* 吳錄), a lost historical work from the Western Jin now partly preserved through later compendia. It places the growth of Fragrant Mao in the regions of Lingling and Quanling 泉陵 and further states the grass was given as tribute in antiquity for filtering sacrificial ale.[2305] Both of these points were recapitulated in the "Geographical Treatise" chapter of the *Book of the Jin* (*Jin shu* 晉書) which further underscores that this *mao* plant was extremely fragrant.[2306] Thus, Tao Hongjing's assertion about Fragrant Mao's use as a filter appears to be substantiated by contemporaneous beliefs espoused in at least two dynastic histories. Additionally, we can

[2302] 江南貢菁[→青?]茅，一名香茅，以供宗廟縮酒。XXBC:7.187. For reasons that are not readily apparent, these comments appear under the entry for *xiangpu* 香蒲, or *Typha angustifolia*, a wetland cattail, see Hua, Buell, and Unschuld, *Dictionary of the Ben Cao Gang Mu*, 431 (#1273).
[2303] TPYL:8.996.980. The plant in question is written with the variant orthography *jingmao* 菁茅.
[2304] 零陵郡有香茅。TPYL:8.996.982.
[2305] 零陵香泉陵有香茅，古貢之縮酒。TPYL:8.996.981.
[2306] JS:15.457 (which cites the region as Quanling 泉陵) and TPYL:8.996.981 (citing Lingling 零陵).

observe that Fragrant Mao grass was strongly associated with the region of Lingling in the early medieval period, a locale also closely associated with the cultivation of sweet basil [HC#20]. To underscore our difficulty in identifying many of these native plants, however, Tao Hongjing reports that some people alternatively called Fragrant Mao the Xun Herb, i.e., sweet basil, while others called Mao Root the root of thoroughwort [HC#29].[2307]

Curiously, Fragrant Mao is never provided its own individual head entry in materia medica literature, thus its botanical identity remains elusive. Given its use for straining alcohol, however, the identification as sweet basil seems unlikely.[2308] It is possible that Fragrant Mao was a type of lemongrass (*Cymbopogon* spp.), and maybe related to White Mao Aromatic (see below), a plant in the later medieval period that was considered native to the Chinese far south, but not necessarily to Lingling (the mountains of Lingling would have been considered the boundary of the far south). To distinguish between these two, and to highlight the medieval connection to the region of Lingling, I have opted to tentatively translate Fragrant Mao as "Lingling lemongrass."[2309]

Two plants with names similar to Fragrant Mao eventually appear in materia medica works: White Mao Aromatic and Mao Aromatic.[2310] The eighth century *Supplement to the Materia Medica* first introduces White Mao Aromatic, the headword for Hong Chu's entry, which for our purposes I translate as lemongrass. As we see in the entry above, this plant is described as growing in Annan in the tropical far south and said to resemble cogongrass root.

[2307] XXBC:7.187 and XXBC:8.223, respectively.
[2308] It is worth underscoring that Tao Hongjing appears to have taken a rather unique stance to the Xun Herb in identifying it as a type of grass, and not among the plants in the herbaceous mint family, see my comments to sweet basil at HC#32.
[2309] Hua, Buell, and Unschuld, *Dictionary of the Ben Cao Gang Mu*, provides no entry for Fragrant Mao; Nanjing zhongyiyao daxue, *Zhongyao da cidian*, identifies Fragrant Mao as *Cymbopogon citratus* (#3506).
[2310] The *Systematic Materia Medica* cursorily treats Fragrant Mao as one among many species in the class of *mao* grass, see BCGM:1.811 [白茅 /集解].

The tenth century *Materia Medica of Overseas Drugs* also preserves a quote purportedly from the *Treatise on the Guang Region*, a lost text from the mid-fifth century, describing lemongrass as growing in the mountain valleys of Guangnan 廣南, a name for the areas around present-day Guangdong, Guangxi, and Hainan. It further claims that the superior quality lemongrass is imported aboard ships and that it is an exceptional ingredient for blending incense.[2311]

If we take the *Treatise on the Guang Region* at face value, this would establish Chinese knowledge of White Mao Aromatic/lemongrass in the Six Dynasties and potentially point to regional trade across the Gulf of Tonkin. I, however, treat the authenticity of this passage with suspicion. The regional name of Guangnan was not introduced until the Northern Song, several centuries after the compilation of the *Treatise on the Guang Region*.[2312] Moreover, the specific claim that White Mao Aromatic was utilized in perfume and incense blends has the stink of anachronism. If authentic to the fifth century, this passage would be among the earliest surviving references to incense blending in China, among which there are surprisingly few that date to the early medieval period.[2313] These critiques are further grounded in the fact that the *Materia Medica of Overseas Drugs* exhibits a tendency to ascribe quotes to early medieval gazetteers that find no supporting parallels in other medieval compendia.[2314] If we are to take this passage concerning lemongrass seriously, it

[2311] HYBC:2.31–32.42; BCGM:1.897 [白茅香/集解].
[2312] Hua, Buell, and Unschuld, *Dictionary of the Ben Cao Gang Mu*, 118.
[2313] There are several other reasons for concern. First, as noted above, White Mao Aromatic only first appears in materia medica literature in the eighth century, at least two centuries after the *Treatise on the Guang Region* was compiled, nor is there any other reference to this plant in medieval works during this early period. Moreover, despite is purported use in incense blending, White Mao Aromatic, is not listed among the most prized ingredients for perfumery by Tao Hongjing, nor counted among the aromatics in the preface to Fan Ye's blending manual [HC#84]. For one of the earliest references to perfuming arts in China, see my comments to onycha at HC#35.
[2314] See my comments to Milky Aromatic at HC#13.

should be understood to reflect the conceptions of the tenth century, when the *Materia Medica of Overseas Drugs* was compiled, not the fifth century. The reputed use of lemongrass for incense ultimately finds support in the *Materia Aromatica* as it appears in two recipes: Incense Paste Offered to the Buddha [HC#131] and a Recipe for Incense Seals [HC#138].

Overall, very little is known about White Mao Aromatic, but given the abundance of *Cymbopogon* species native to Southeast Asia, such as *C. martinii*, or palmarosa, which is known for being redolent of roses, and *C. citratus*, the common lemongrass found in Southeast Asian cuisine, it is possible one of these varieties made their way into Annam where White Mao Aromatic was claimed to grow. The latter is now cultivated across tropical China, while the former is limited to Yunnan and Sichuan. Consequently, *C. citratus* would be a preferred candidate, but modern Chinese sources assign the name Fragrant Mao to this plant. Until a better understanding is reached on these matters, I have chosen to translate White Mao Aromatic as lemongrass, a more-or-less generic term that would cover any species in the *Cymbopogon* genus. It should be underscored that White Mao (cogongrass) is distinct from White Mao *Aromatic*, as the former was not typically identified as having a strong scent and grows in a far larger phytogeographic range across China.[2315]

The second plant with a similar name to Fragrant Mao (Lingling lemongrass) is Mao Aromatic, which is also sometimes understood as *C. citratus*.[2316] Some authorities treat Fragrant Mao and Mao Aromatic as synonyms, perhaps viewed as the product of accidentally transposing their graphs. But based on textual support, Mao Aromatic does not have a strong

[2315] It seems doubtful that White Mao Aromatic should be identified as *Hierochloe borealis* per Hua, Buell, and Unschuld, *Dictionary of the Ben Cao Gang Mu*, 394 (#43); Nanjing zhongyiyao daxue, *Zhongyao da cidian* provides no entry for White Mao Aromatic.
[2316] Hua, Buell, and Unschuld, *Dictionary of the Ben Cao Gang Mu*, 415 (#748).

association with Lingling in the late medieval period and is said in the tenth century to grow principally in the areas covering present-day Yunnan, Guizhou, and Sichuan. In the eleventh century this range is extended to include Shaanxi, Shanxi, and temperate regions further north.[2317] Importantly, these are not regions where *C. citratus* is known to occur; this grass prefers the low-lying tropics and subtropical coastal regions, as with many *Cymbopogon* species. Accordingly, Mao Aromatic more likely pointed to a hardy perennial grass like *Anthoxanthum nitens* (syns. *Hierochloe odorata*, *H. borealis*, *Poa nitens*), commonly known as sweetgrass [HC#21], as it is sometimes identified in modern scholarship.[2318]

There is one last noteworthy point regarding an Indian "Fragrant Mao" grass cited in Chinese sources. As in ancient China, sacred grass played a vital role in Vedic ritual with *kuśa*, *darbha*, and *dūrvā* being three of the most important varieties. These have been identified as *Desmostachya bipinnata* (syn. *Poa cynosuroides*), *Imperata cylindrica* (coincidentally, the same as White Mao), and *Cynodon dactylon* (syn. *Panicum Dactylon*), respectively.[2319] Outside of the common Buddhist citations to Mao Grass (*maocao* 茅草), especially in reference to preparing a seat for meditation, one of the earliest references to a *fragrant* Indian grass is found in Xuanzang's *Great Tang Records of the Western Regions* (*Da Tang Xiyu ji* 大唐西域記), where Fragrant Mao renders *kuśa*, the auspicious grass that surrounds Kuśāgrapura, the ancient home to the kings of Magadha more commonly known as Rājagṛha.[2320] I am unaware of *kuśa* carrying a strong olfactory salience in India – there were plenty of other sweet smelling plants and plant products – and the choice to use Fragrant Mao

[2317] BCGM:1.896 [茅香/集解].
[2318] Nanjing zhongyiyao daxue, *Zhongyao da cidian* identifies Mao Aromatic Root (*maoxiang gen* 茅香根) as *H. odorata* (#2666).
[2319] S. Mahdihassan, "Three Important Vedic Grasses," *Indian Journal of History of Science* 22, no. 4 (1987): 286–91.
[2320] T2087:920c05–08, trans. Li, *Tang Dynasty Record*, 237.

possibly reflects the growing significance of smell in the medieval Chinese imagination to signal the sacred.

In summation of the most salient aspects of nomenclature, White Mao (cogongrass) appears to have been considered the *mao* grass of ancient ritual (and called Mao Root in early materia medica literature), with a parallel early medieval tradition claiming a Fragrant Mao (possibly a type of lemongrass from the region of Lingling) was used for straining ritual ale. In the later medieval period, we first encounter the names for White Mao Aromatic (lemongrass) which is reported as growing in the tropical far south and a native Mao Aromatic (sweetgrass) with broader range that extends into the temperate north. Of course, there is no reason to believe medieval Chinese authors, writing across different time periods, in vastly different genres, and with varying levels of botanical expertise, would have always agreed in their usage of *mao*-related nomenclature. Nevertheless, there appears to have been some identifiable patterns regarding the terminology for scented grass.

37) Bili Aromatic (platycarya?) 必栗香

[37a] The *Orthodox Canon*[2321] states, "Another name is the Transforming Wood Aromatic. It resembles the old Chinese mahogany[2322]."

[37b] The *Materia Medica of Overseas Drugs* states, "Its taste is pungent and warm. It is non-toxic. It treats ghost attachment-illness of heart *qi* and breaks off all malign *qi*. If the leaves fall into water it will cause the fish to suddenly die."

[2321] The *Orthodox Canon* (*Neidian* 內典) is a generic name for the Chinese Buddhist canon, known more formally as the *tripiṭaka*, or the Three Baskets (*sanzang* 三藏).
[2322] The reference to an old mahogany tree possibly alludes to an ancient mahogany in the *Master Zhuang* for which spring and autumn each lasted eight thousand years, see Mair, *Wandering on the Way*, 4.

[37c] “The wood can be used as a roller for scrolls. It will ward off silverfish so they will not damage the scroll.”

[37a] 內典云：一名化木香，似老椿。[2323]

[37b] 海藥本草曰：“味辛溫，無毒，主鬼疰心氣，斷一切惡氣。葉落水中魚暴死。[2324]

[37c] 木可為書軸，辟白魚，不損書。[2325]

[COMMENTS] There is not much known about this tree or its history in China. It was first included in the *Supplement to the Materia Medica*, published in 739, which established most of the information that was reported in the entry above, including what Hong Chu ascribed to the Buddhist *Orthodox Canon*.[2326] The *Systematic Materia Medica* of the sixteenth century provides no additional information on this tree beyond what was already explained by the tenth century in the *Materia Medica of Overseas Drugs* [36b]. Not included in the synopsis of the *Supplement to the Materia Medica*, however, was that *Bili* Aromatic could be boiled and ingested as well as used as incense to drive away insects. Combined with the fact that Hong Chu’s entry above speaks to the ability of the leaves to kill fish, this plant was broadly envisioned as a powerful pesticide and vermifuge along with loosestrife [HC#39] and rue [HC#28].[2327]

The Chinese name for this tree is also difficult to decipher. It appears to be a transcription, and indeed *bilijia* 必栗迦 is a known rendering for Sanskrit *pṛkkā*, sometimes

[2323] I have been unable to locate the specific source text from the Buddhist canon.
[2324] Cf. HYBC:3.61–62.84; cf. BCGM:2.1952 [必栗香/集解]. The *Systematic Materia Medica* lists the alternative name as Floral Tree Aromatic (*huamu xiang* 花木香), see BCGM:2.1951 [必栗香/釋名].
[2325] Unattributed quote from the *Supplement to the Materia Medica*, cf. BCGM:2.1952 [必栗香/集解].
[2326] HYBC:3.61n.1; BCGM:2.1951 [必栗香].
[2327] Joseph Needham does not discuss this plant among the known pesticidal plants of pre-modern China, see Needham, Lu, and Huang, *Science and Civilisation,* Vol. 6, Part 1, 478–501.

identified as *Trigonella corniculata*, or fenugreek. This identification does not seem particularly relevant here. One could argue that the tree's fearsome ability to kill fish might call for a literal translation of the name, giving something like Certain Trembling Aromatic (*bili xiang* 必栗香).[2328] In any regard, modern sources consider this plant to be part of the walnut family and identify it as *Platycarya strobilacea* (syn. *Fortunea chinensis*), a small tree found throughout most of eastern and southern China.[2329] The modern Chinese nomenclature for *P. strobilacea* is Transforming Fragrance Tree (*huaxiang shu* 化香樹), similar to the alternative name for *Bili* Aromatic as Transforming Wood Aromatic (*huamu xiang* 化木香)[37a]. Notably, *P. strobilacea* leaves are considered toxic.[2330]

38) Doulou Aromatic 兜婁香 [=Huo Aromatic 藿香 (Malayan patchouli / Indian bay leaf → Chinese patchouli)]

[38a] The *Treatise on Strange Things* [*of the Southern Regions*] states, "It is exported from [southern] coastal countries and is like *douliang* [HC#34]."

[38b] The [*Tang*] *Materia Medica* states, "Its nature is slightly warm. It cures cholera and heart pain. It treats poison swelling caused by wind and sweat and [treat] malign *qi*. It halts vomiting with counterflow[2331]. It is also used for blending incense."

[38c] Its stems and leaves resemble betony[2332]."

[2328] *Li* 栗 also refers to the chestnut.
[2329] Hua, Buell, and Unschuld, *Dictionary of the Ben Cao Gang Mu*, 396 (#91). This was earlier identified in Read, *Chinese Medicinal Plants*, 201 (#620a); it is not listed in Stuart and Smith, *Chinese Materia Medica*.
[2330] Nanjing zhongyiyao daxue, *Zhongyao da cidian*, (#955).
[2331] Zhang and Unschuld, *Dictionary of the Ben Cao Gang Mu*, 514.
[2332] *Stachys japonica*, Hua, Buell, and Unschuld, *Dictionary of the Ben Cao Gang Mu*, 425 (#1087).

[38a] 異物志云：出海邊國，如都梁香。[2333]

[38b] 本草曰：性微溫，療霍亂，心痛，主風水毒腫，惡氣，止吐逆。亦合香用。[2334]

[38c] 莖葉似水蘇。[2335]

[COMMENTS] Patchouli (*Pogostemon cablin*, syn. *P. patchouli*) is an herbaceous perennial plant in the mint family that grows in hot, tropical climates across South and Southeast Asia, but is considered indigenous to the Philippines, the Indonesian Archipelago, and the Malay Peninsula.[2336] A closely related species, *P. heyneanus*, also known as Indian patchouli, grows in abundance along the Western Ghats of southwestern India and in parts of Sri Lanka.[2337] Both plants have intensely scented leaves, but the former is primarily used in modern commerce to produce an aromatic distillate known as patchouli oil. The essential oil has a characteristic spicy, earthy scent, distinct from the fresh, cool smell of the typical mint. Because *P. cablin* was originally known to the early medieval Chinese as a product of the

[2333] Cf. T2122:573c08–10, cf. TPYL:8.982.863, cf. BCGM:1.900 [藿香/集解].

[2334] Cf. XXBC:12:356, cf. BCGM:1.900–901 [藿香/氣味, 主治, 發明]. This information is a combination of the treatments ascribed to a group of six substances (aloeswood, frankincense, cloves, elemi, liquidambar, and patchouli), the treatments ascribed to just patchouli, and a treatment ascribed to red bean plant (see discussion in in commentary).

[2335] According to the *Systematic Materia Medica*, Zhang Yuxi 掌禹錫 (990–1060), compiler of the now lost *Materia Medica of the Jiayou Era* (*Jiayou bencao* 嘉祐本草), attributes this information to the *Treatise on Strange Things of the Southern Regions*, cf. BCGM:1.900 [藿香/集解]; cf. TPYL:8.982.863 (where this statement is missing). More specifically, Zhang Yuxi claims the stems of Huo Aromatic resembled *douliang* and its leaves resembled betony; see also Laufer, "Malabathron," 27–28. The *Records of Jiaozhou* curiously claims Huo Aromatic resembles storax, to which Li Shizhen defends by claiming this must refer to their smell, not their outward appearance, see TPYL:8.982.863, BCGM:1.900 [藿香/集解]; see also Laufer, "Malabathron," 31–32.

[2336] Due to the cultivation and commercial trade in patchouli by Chinese settlements on the Malay Peninsula in the nineteenth century, botanists speculated the plant originated in southern China, but historical records demonstrate the plant was introduced into southern China in the medieval period, see also R. Murugan and C. Livingstone, "Origin of the Name 'Patchouli' and Its History," *Current Science* 99, no. 9 (2010): 1275–76.

[2337] It has been noted that *P. heyneanus* also grows on the Malay Peninsula, see Laufer, "Malabathron," 38 and Schafer, *Golden Peaches*, 319n.185. Importantly, *P. cablin* is currently cultivated in India, but it was only introduced in the mid-nineteenth century, see Murugan and Livingstone, "Patchouli," 1275.

Malay Peninsula, I will call it Malayan patchouli to distinguish it from *P. heyneanus*, or Indian patchouli, as well as a native Chinese patchouli (see below), but *P. cablin* is now commercially cultivated in many tropical regions, including both India and China. The English term patchouli is derived from Tamil, *paccilai*, "green leaf," and the plant became familiar in Europe through imported Indian shawls in the 1840s that were perfumed with patchouli's characteristic scent.[2338]

Hong Chu's entry presents an enigma. The headword, Doulou Aromatic, is unattested in earlier works and, moreover, the glosses Hong Chu provides appear elsewhere as descriptions of Huo Aromatic (*huo xiang* 藿香, also 霍香), or what I will identify, following Berthold Laufer, as Malayan patchouli.[2339] The sixteenth century *Systematic Materia Medica* unexpectedly cites *douloupo* 兜婁婆 as a gloss for Malayan patchouli, presumably based on Hong Chu's rather peculiar usage of Doulou(po) Aromatic in the *Materia Aromatica*. It have elsewhere tentatively suggested that *douloupo* was originally intended as a transcription for *dūrvā*, a type of Indian grass.[2340] Other than significant textual corruption, it is unclear why Hong Chu truncated the name *douloupo* and ascribed to it the characteristics of Malayan patchouli.[2341]

[2338] Schafer, *Golden Peaches*, 173, Murugan and Livingstone, "Patchouli," 1275. *Paccilai* first referred to native *P. heyneanus*.
[2339] Laufer, "Malabathron," 38.
[2340] For more on this specific identification, see my comments to *turuṣka* at HC#76. Furthermore, we have confirmatiroy evidence that *douloupo* did *not* refer to Malayan patchouli (Huo Aromatic) in the medieval period. A perfume blending recipe preserved in the *Essential Priceless Prescriptions for All Urgent Ills* lists *douloupo* and Huo Aromatic as two separate ingredients in an eleven-ingredient blend for fumigating garments, see DZ1163:17.12a–12b.
[2341] Hong Chu's entry for Doulou Aromatic is copied into Chen Jing's *Newly Compiled Materia Aromatica* with the appended note: "Nowadays, I submit that this aromatic [i.e. Malayan patchouli?] is not the same as Doulou Aromatic" 今按此香與今之兜婁香不同。SKQS:844.250b15.

In addition to *douloupo*, the *Systematic Materia Medica* provides two further Sanskrit transcriptions for patchouli: *duomoluoba* 多摩羅跋, or *tamālapattra*, from the *Lotus Sutra*, and *bodaluo* 鉢怛羅, or *pattra* (a typical abbreviation for *tamālapattra*), from the *Sutra of Golden Light*.[2342] It seems Li Shizhen understood all three transcriptions – *douluopo*, *duomoluoba*, and *baduolo* – as referred to the same underlying plant. This may have been an attempt to bring Hong Chu's odd nomenclature of Doulou Aromatic into alignment with more widely-known and clearly defined terminology. For example, the eighth century translator of the *Sutra of Golden Light*, Yijing, notes that *pattra* is translated as Huo Aromatic (we will return to the potential equation of *tamālapattra* and patchouli below).

The complexities of terminology do not end here. Huo Aromatic, the medieval name for Malayan patchouli, was later applied to a native Chinese plant in the mint family now identified as *Agastache rugosa* (syn. *Lophanthus rugosus*), or Chinese patchouli.[2343] In contrast to both Malayan patchouli and Indian patchouli, this plant thrives in more temperate northern climates and is thus found wild in Manchuria, the Korean Peninsula, and Japan.[2344] The original Chinese meaning of *huo* 藿, however, referred to yet another plant. It specifically indicated the leaves of a bean plant, possibly the red bean plant (*chi xiaodou* 赤小豆; *Vigna umbellata),* which occurs widely in the Chinese far south.[2345] We find *huo,* for

[2342] BCGM:1.900 [藿香/解釋名]; for the relevant Buddhist scriptural passages, see T262.21c22 and T665:435a06, respectively.
[2343] Hua, Buell, and Unschuld, *Dictionary of the Ben Cao Gang Mu*, 408 (#489); Nanjing zhongyiyao daxue, *Zhongyao da cidian*, (#5922); see also Laufer, "Malabathron," 35.
[2344] Stuart and Smith's claim that *A. rugosa* "does not seem to be indigenous to China" is based on their misunderstanding of the fact that Huo Aromatic referred to the tropical *P. cablin* in the early medieval period, which indeed was not indigenous to China, see Stuart and Smith, *Chinese Materia Medica*, 247. Schafer reiterates this error concerning *A. rugosa*, see Schafer, *Golden Peaches*, 319n.187.
[2345] XXBC:19, BCGM:1.900 [藿香/釋名]; see also Hua, Buell, and Unschuld, *Dictionary of the Ben Cao Gang Mu*, 398 (#158).

example, cited in the second century BCE medical manuscripts recovered from Mawangdui, in present-day Hunan, and thus this nomenclature might have reasonably referred to the leaves of this regionally available plant.[2346] The red bean plant, however, is not found among the many citations to scented *flora* in ancient or medieval documents. Consequently, the adoption of *huo* to later identify patchouli plants must be found through the emphasis on the plants' leaves, not necessarily their shared anatomical morphology nor scent.

The first appearance of Huo Aromatic/Malayan patchouli in Chinese sources comes during the Three Kingdoms when the state of Eastern Wu was looking to establish commercial relations with the thriving ports of Southeast Asia. Specifically, patchouli is noted in the *Traditions of Foreign Lands during the Wu* (*Wu shi waiguo zhuan* 吳時外國傳), compiled by the Wu emissary Kang Tai (ca. 250) who travelled to Funan, present-day Cambodia, between 245 and 250.[2347] It reports the scented plant can be found in Doukun 都昆, an unknown polity (or local ethnic group) located on the Malay Peninsula, where it grows in the mountains.[2348] A slightly different description is found in the mid-to-late third century *Treatise on Strange Things of the Southern Regions* [38a] which claims Malayan patchouli can be found in Quxun 曲遜 (read Dunxun 頓遜), another unknown polity or ethnic group on the Malay Peninsula, closer to the southern edge of present-day Myanmar.[2349] The full

[2346] Harper, *Early*, 257n.4. While Harper claims *huo* was a general term for the leaves of bean plants, the red bean plant is also known through the Manwangdui medical manuscripts. It is specifically cited as a metrological standard for pills, see Harper, *Early*, 223n.5. The identification of a different kind of bean plant can be found in GY:10.793–794.
[2347] Editions of Kang Tai's work circulated under several titles, see Pelliot, "Fou-nan," 275; Wheatley, "Malay Peninsula as Known to the Chinese," 3.
[2348] 都昆在扶南，山有霍香。TPYL:8.982.862; cf. T2122:573c07–08 (omits "mountains"). The specific location of Doukun remains unknown, but it was opposite Funan on the Gulf of Thailand, see comments in Pelliot, "Fou-nan," 266n.2; Laufer, "Malabathron," 24–25, 25n.2; Wheatley, "Malay Peninsula as Known to the Chinese," 10–11; 20; see also Hua, Buell, and Unschuld, *Dictionary of the Ben Cao Gang Mu*, 93.
[2349] TPYL:8.982.863; for the emendation of the text, see Laufer, "Malabathron," 28; Wheatley, "Malay Peninsula as Known to the Chinese," 9; Wolters, *Indonesian Commerce*, 272–73n.77. Dunxun occupied a

passage also reveals that the plant "can be worn inside the clothes [as a perfume]."[2350] When we turn to the mid-fifth century *Treatise on the Guang Region*, it reports that Malayan patchouli was "exported from Rinan and various countries," thus suggesting its cultivation further east in present-day central Vietnam.[2351]

At some point in the long medieval period, a Malayan patchouli cultivar was introduced into southern China. In the eleventh century, Su Song notes that patchouli can be found all over the Lingnan region, representing present-day Guangdong, Guangxi, and northern Vietnam, due to the efforts of local people who continually replant it.[2352] We might push the Chinese cultivation of Malayan patchouli much earlier depending on one's view regarding the authenticity of the *Prospect of the Plants and Trees of the Southern Regions*, a work often dated to the first decade of the fourth century, but with a questionable history.[2353] Nevertheless, the relevant passage uses appropriately antiquated regional nomenclature of the Three Dynasties to define the new boundaries of Malayan patchouli as Jiaozhi 交阯, Wuping 武平, Xinggu 興古, and Jiuzhen 九真, all administrative districts of present-day northern Vietnam and far southern China.[2354] It also provides additional information regarding how the plant is processed, reporting that people collect it in the fifth and sixth months and dry the

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strategic position on the Malay Peninsula where merchants would portage ship cargo over the isthmus; see discussion in Laufer, "Malabathron," 28–29; Wheatley, "Malay Peninsula as Known to the Chinese," 5–9; Wheatley, "Tun-Sun," 17–30; Wolters, *Indonesian Commerce*, 44–48. For further speculation on the identity and location of Dunxun, see Mahdi, "Some Austronesian Maverick Protoforms," 212–13n.82.

[2350] 可以著衣服中。TPYL:8.982.863; T2122:573c09–10; also noted in Laufer, "Malabathron," 27; Schafer, *Golden Peaches*, 173.

[2351] 出日南諸國。TPYL:8.982.862; cf. T2122:573c07 (uses 自 for 日); see also Laufer, "Malabathron," 28n.1, 30. We may presume this describes the domestic growth of *P. cablin* after cultivars were introduced from the Malay Peninsula into present-day Vietnam and surrounding areas.

[2352] BCGM:1.900 [藿香/集解]; see also Laufer, "Malabathron," 30; Schafer, *Golden Peaches*, 172.

[2353] See the relevant footnote at HC#41a.

[2354] TPYL:8.982.863; for more on these locations, see Hua, Buell, and Unschuld, *Dictionary of the Ben Cao Gang Mu*, 163–64, 175, 310, 330–31. Notably, this passage is not preserved in the received version of the *Prospect of the Plants and Trees of the Southern Regions*, see Li, *Fourth Century Flora*, 75–76.

leaves under the sun, whereby they becomes increasingly fragrant. At some point in time, possibly well after the medieval period, the name Huo Aromatic was then applied to northern Chinese patchouli (*A. rugosa*), leaving the imported cultivar of the south, *P. cablin*, to be renamed "Huo Aromatic of the Guang Region" (*guanghuo xiang* 廣藿香) in modern Chinese scientific literature.

As noted by above, Huo Aromatic was used to translate (*tamāla*)*pattra* in Buddhist scriptures. This Sanskrit term is most often identified as the leaves of the *Cinnamomum tamala* (or related *Cinnamomum* spp., such as *C. bejolghota*, syn. *C. obtusifolium*), a tree native to the northern Indian border along the Himalayas, especially around Assam.[2355] The leaf, commonly known as Indian bay leaf, has a notable warm pepper-like odor with a strong clove-like taste.

The identification of *tamālapattra* as leaves from the *C. tamala* tree has been disputed. Most notably, Berthold Laufer has argued for the identification of *tamālapattra* as Malayan patchouli (*P. cablin*). Laufer's basic thesis claims that the Roman import known as malabathron, a generally undisputed Hellenization of *tamālapattra*, originated not in India, but from an enterprising tribe in present-day northern Vietnam who took cultivars of patchouli from the Malay Peninsula and grew them for the purpose of commerce with India and China.[2356] The fact that Chinese Buddhists used Huo Aromatic, i.e. Malayan patchouli, to translate *tamālapattra* appears to support this claim. A full analysis of Laufer's argument is beyond the scope of this commentary, but a few points are in order.

[2355] Casson, *Periplus*, 241. Christian Lassen (1800–1876) was the first to suggest *tamālapattra* was a native *Cinnamomum* spp. under the laurel family, see Laufer, "Malabathron," 14–15.
[2356] The majority of Laufer's essay is spent counterarguing previously proposed identifications for malabathron, *tamālapattra*, and Huo Aromatic. His final thesis can be found at Laufer, "Malabathron," 38–40.

First, the claims of Laufer rest on his belief that Malayan patchouli was cultivated in northern Vietnam during the first century. This is when malabathron was reported as being exported from Indian ports into Roman territories.[2357] Yet, if we look for evidence of this early trade in Chinese sources we find nothing comparable. Malayan patchouli is not cited in surviving Chinese texts until the middle of the third century when Kang Tai travels to Funan and, moreover, describes the plant as growing on the Malay Peninsula, not in the region of the Red River Delta. Given the relative importance of the malabathron trade in India, it is curious Chinese authorities did not report similar activity on the empire's borders directly to the south in Jiaozhou where Laufer's believes the plant was actively cultivated for international trade during the first century.[2358]

Second, Laufer argues that Roman authors who were familiar with imported cassia and cinnamon (also *Cinnamomum* spp.) would have easily identified *Cinnamomum tamala* leaves if they were traded under the name of malabathron.[2359] Consequently, as Laufer argues, *tamālapattra*/malabathron could only have been taken from a plant that was otherwise unknown to Roman trade. In this case, Laufer's stance presumes an unlikely aspect of early commerce. There is no reason to believe Roman authorities knew more about the physical appearance of the entire cassia or cinnamon plant than the selective parts that drove their commercial trade, namely the scented tree bark. The fact that imported leaves and bark

[2357] Laufer interprets the *Periplus Maris Erythraei* as describing malabathron traders arriving from somewhere south of China, which he then endeavors to show refers to the Red River Delta region of Jiaozhou, in present-day northern Vietnam, see Laufer, "Malabathron," 8, 29–30, 39–40. Lionel Casson, on the other hand, reads the geographic descriptions in the *Periplus Maris Erythraei* with far less precision, treating the "borders of China" as referring to any location between India and China, see Casson, *Periplus*, 91–93, 220, 241–43. For Casson, this includes Assam, where the *C. tamala* occurs in the wild.
[2358] Laufer's argument further assumes Ptolemy's Kirradia referred to the Red River Delta region, but this is now recognized as referring to the Kirāta, a generic name in Sanskrit literature that referred to peoples living in northeastern India, see Laufer, "Malabathron," 39–40 and Casson, *Periplus*, 234, respectively.
[2359] Laufer, "Malabathron," 15.

were not identified by the Romans as deriving from the same tree should not be viewed as sufficiently surprising.[2360]

Lastly, Laufer argues that Chinese authors would have also easily identified *C. tamala* leaves based on the fact that native cassia trees grow in China (unlike in the Roman Empire).[2361] The problem here rests with the fact that there is no evidence *tamālapattra*/ malabathron formed an important part of Chinese trade. The force of Laufer's argument to this point falls on the Chinese translation of *tamālapattra* as Huo Aromatic, such as seen in the eighth century *Sutra of Golden Light* noted above.

The question that presents itself is this: Is it possible Chinese translators would use the same nomenclature, Huo Aromatic, for the aromatic leaves of two different plants, i.e. Malayan patchouli (*P. cablin*) and Indian bay leaf (*C. tamala*)? In Laufer's reasoning, if Huo Aromatic is to be identified as *P. cablin* – a view I find convincing – then when Huo Aromatic is used to translate *tamālapattra*, *tamālapattra* must also be *P. cablin*. Such linguistic and botanical simplicities are hardly ever the case, and indeed we have good evidence the Chinese knew of *tamālapattra* as distinct from *P. cablin* even though translators sometimes used the same nomenclature for both.

The relevant evidence can be found in the Chinese Buddhist canon. While *tamālapattra* or *pattra* was most often transcribed in scriptural sources, it was also infrequently translated as "copper leaf" (*chitong ye* 赤銅葉). Laufer was aware of this translation, but dismissed it as a poor philological gloss for *tamāla*, namely *tāmra*,

[2360] Lionel Casson raises a similar objection, noting that while early Romans knew of malabathron as a product of India, they believed cinnamon/cassia came from the Arabian Peninsula and Africa, see Casson, *Periplus*, 241.
[2361] Laufer, "Malabathron," 36–38.

"copper."[2362] This overlooks how the term was used in context, however. "Copper leaf" was one of the numerous analogies used for describing the characteristic bodily marks of the Buddha. For example, the southern version of the *Mahāparinirvāṇa Sutra* (*Da banniepan jing* 大般涅槃經; T375), completed in the fifth century, uses "copper leaf" to describe the slender appearance and color of the Buddha's body.[2363] The oxidized leaves of the *C. tamala* turn a rich, ruddy brown and have an easily identifiable elongated linear shape. Thus, Indian bay leaf (*C. tamala*), not the obtuse patchouli leaf (*P. cablin*), is far preferable for approximating the Buddha's idealized physical appearance, as tall and lean with "golden" skin tones. I believe this to be fairly strong evidence for connecting *tamālapattra* to *C. tamala* in the medieval period, *contra* Laufer's proposal.

Generally, within the context of Buddhist translation, Huo Aromatic indicates Indian bay leaf (as to when Malayan patchouli made its way into India is up for review). This appears to be the case, for example, in the early medieval recipe for preparing the scented lustration water poured over the image of the Buddha.[2364] As prescribed in the **Mahāsattva Sutra*, dating at a minimum to the sixth century, the three ingredients of tree moss/Indian dill [HC#18], Indian *douliang* [HC#34], and Huo Aromatic are to be crushed and steeped in water to tint it a dark greenish color. If we compare the list of aromatics found in the two subsequent translations of this ritual, we again find Huo Aromatic in the eighth century rendition, while *tamāla*(*pattra*) is listed in the version attributed to Maṇicinta (d. 721).[2365]

Outside of Buddhist translation, however, Huo Aromatic generally appears to indicate Malayan patchouli. For example, Huo Aromatic appears in the mid-fifth century preface to

[2362] Laufer, "Malabathron," 21.
[2363] T375.680a03; see a similar usage at T272.345a17.
[2364] I discuss these directions in more detail in my commentary to HC#34.
[2365] T698.800b18 and T697.99b05, respectively.

Fan Ye's perfuming manual, likely compiled between 433 and 446, where it is listed among the *flora* regionally available to China [HC#84]. This is corroborated by the contemporaneous *Treatise on the Guang Region*, noted above, that reports Huo Aromatic as an export of Rinan and surrounding territories. This could only be Malayan patchouli. Given its importance to Fan Ye, when Tao Hongjing cites Huo Aromatic as one of the six most prized ingredients for Chinese perfumers in the early sixth century, he is also most likely referring to patchouli, not Indian Bay leaf.[2366]

In review of the pertinent terminology, *huo* originally referred to the medicinal leaves of a southern bean plant (possibly *V. umbellata*) before being adopted by the middle of the third century to refer to the scented leaves of the Malayan patchouli (*P. cablin*). Early medieval Buddhist translations also used Huo Aromatic to refer to Indian bay leaf, known in India as *tamālapattra* and to the Romans as malabathron. We have evidence that by the fifth century Malayan patchouli was being cultivated in present-day central Vietnam and by the eleventh century at the latest, was cultivated all around southern China. At some undetermined point in time, perhaps well after the medieval period, Huo Aromatic started to refer to northern Chinese patchouli (*A. rugosa*), its principal modern referent.

39) Cart-Halting Aromatic (loosestrife?) 藿車香

[39a] The *Supplement to the Materia Medica* states, "Its taste is pungent and warm. It treats ghost *qi* and drives away stench as well as insects, fish, and vermin."

[39b] "It grows in Pengcheng[2367]. It has a height of several *chi* and has white flowers."

[2366] XXBC:12.313. The list of six aromatics includes aloeswood, frankincense, cloves, patchouli, elemi, and liquidambar.

[2367] An old commandery that covered parts of present-day northern Jiangsu, eastern Anhui, and southern Shandong, see Hua, Buell, and Unschuld, *Dictionary of the Ben Cao Gang Mu*, 234–35. The *Systematic*

[39c] The *Approaching Elegance*[2368] states, "Loosestrife is *qiyu*[2369]."

[39d] The annotation [by Guo Pu][2370] states, "It is a fragrant plant."

[39a] 本草拾遺曰：味辛溫，主鬼氣，去臭及蟲魚蛀物。[2371]

[39b] 生彭城，高數尺，白花。[2372]

[39c] 爾雅云：藒車，芑輿。[2373]

[39d] 注曰：香草也。[2374]

[COMMENTS] *Qiche* 藒車 (also *qiche* 揭車 and *qiche* 蕲車) is ancient *flora* that has proven difficult to identify. The *locus classicus* for this plant is the virtual herbarium of the south, the *Songs of Chu*, and is specifically found in the poem "Encountering Sorrow," long attributed to the enigmatic Qu Yuan of the Warring States period. In a relevant passage of the poem, a shaman figure (who can also be read as a loyal court minister) tends to her garden for which she claims she has "kept separate the plots of *liuyi* and *qiche*."[2375] *Liuyi* 留夷 is

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Materia Medica cites this passage as saying Xuzhou 徐州 , which was the seat of administration for Pengcheng, see Hua, Buell, and Unschuld, *Dictionary of the Ben Cao Gang Mu*, 234–35, 334.

[2368] *Approaching Elegance* (*Erya* 爾雅) is the earliest known Chinese lexicographical work. It was compiled as early as the Warring States, but was continuously edited through the Western Han, see Zheng et al., *Dictionary of the Ben Cao Gang Mu*, 120.

[2369] The gloss here for loosestrife is not so much a definition, but a pair of synonyms for each individual graph. *Qi* 芑, itself considered a variant for *qi* 芑, and *qi* 藒 are both the names of aromatic plants. *Yu* 輿 and *che* 車 are both terms denoting carts or carriages.

[2370] I.e., the annotation by Guo Pu on *Approaching Elegance*, see EY:13.3526, TPYL:8.983,872, BCGM:1.898 [藒車香/集解].

[2371] Cf. BCGM:1.898 [藒車香/氣味, 主治].

[2372] Unattributed, paraphrased quote from the *Treatise on the Guang Region*; cf. BCGM:1.898 [藒車香/集解]. This formed part of the passage attributed to the *Supplement to the Materia Medica*. See also TPYL:8.983.872 (which cites Xuzhou 徐州, not Pengcheng 彭城).

[2373] Cf. EY:13.3526, cf. BCGM:1.898 [藒車香/集解]. This formed part of the passage attributed to the *Supplement to the Materia Medica*. See also TPYL:8.983.872.

[2374] Cf. EY:13.3526, cf. BCGM:1.898 [藒車香/集解]. This formed part of the passage attributed to the *Supplement to the Materia Medica*. See also TPYL:8.983.872.

[2375] 畦留夷與藒車。CC:1.10, trans. Sukhu, *Shaman*, 98; see also TPYL:8.983.872.

now identified as the peony, a perennial shrub with intensely fragrant flowers.[2376] Because these two plants were separated in the garden, *qiche* was possibly envisioned as lower ranking aromatic and thus symbolic of lesser virtue. According to Gopal Sukhu, *qiche* may have been seen as an invasive weed that needed to be kept away from the ornamental peony.[2377] Later in "Encountering Sorrow," the shaman-minister expresses regret at how easily Sichuan pepper and thoroughwort [HC#34] lose their fragrance, plants that are envisioned as of the highest caliber of aromatic. This functions as an allusion to the loss of a minister's virtue and esteemed position at court. The poem then rhetorically asks how much worst the case must be for *qiche*, a point that only makes sense if this plant was initially considered of inferior quality.[2378]

The exegetical notes provided by Wang Yi, part of the earliest surviving full commentary on the *Songs of Chu* anthology known as the *Commentary on the Songs of Chu* (*Chu ci zhangju* 楚辭章句), simply glosses *qiche* as a scented plant (*fangcao* 芳草) and provides the variant name *qiyu* 芑輿.[2379] This is same information we glean from the ancient dictionary *Approaching Elegance* [39c] and its third century commentary by Guo Pu [39d]. The Northern Song exegete Hong Xingzu 洪興祖 (1090–1155), who consulted the long commentarial tradition on this anthology and its *flora*, only adds the relevant information from the eighth century *Supplement to the Materia Medica* [39a].[2380]

Despite the literary origins of *qiche* during the Warring States, there is very little surviving information from the early medieval period about the plant's physical

[2376] Pan, *Chuci*, 32–33.
[2377] Sukhu, *Shaman*, 99.
[2378] Sukhu, 90
[2379] CC:1.10.
[2380] CC:1.10.

characteristics which could help in identification. The principal description is provided in the mid-fifth century *Treatise on the Guang Region* which is unattributed by Hong Chu above [39b]. We learn that *qiche* grows around Pengcheng 彭城, a coastal region in present-day Jiangsu, and is relatively small, only growing a few feet high, with white flowers. Other citations to the *Treatise on the Guang Region* add that *qiche* has yellow flowers and replaces Pengchen with Xuzhou 徐州, the administrative seat for Pengcheng.[2381]

The lost tenth century *Materia Medica of Overseas Drugs*, claims *qiche* grows in the mountain valleys of tropical Hainan.[2382] It furthermore cites the sixth century *Essential Techniques for All People* stating that *qiche* can be boiled and the aromatic decoction can be sprayed onto trees as a powerful insecticide for termites. This passage, however, is not present in the received version of the *Essential Techniques for All People*, but corresponds to *qiche*'s apparent use as insect repellent according to the *Supplement to the Materia Medica*.[2383] Lastly, the *Materia Medica of Overseas Drugs* also claims *qiche* is excellent for perfuming (*xun*$_1$) garments, possibly in reference to pest fumigation given the plant's use as an insecticide, but the passage's import is ultimately unclear.[2384]

As with many ancient plants that have only minimal textual presence in the medieval period, it is difficult to know what to make of the above information. According to *Encountering Sorrow*, *qiche* was actively being cultivated in the state of Chu, yet later

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[2381] TPYL:8.983.872; BCGM:1.898 [蘧車香/集解].
[2382] HYBC:2.37.50. While the island of Hainan was well-known for producing aromatics in the late medieval period, I know of no other reference to *qiche* growing there. This is one of many questionable citations reputedly drawn from early medieval sources found in the *Materia Medica of Overseas Drugs*.
[2383] For passing comment on this missing passage in the *Essential Techniques for All People*, see QMYS, p. 1048n.1. The editors suggest this citation may have alternatively be drawn from Li Chunfeng's 李淳風 (602–670) *Expanded Essential Techniques for All People* (*Yan qimin yaoshu* 演齊民要術). Joseph Needham does not discuss this plant among the know pesticidal plants of pre-modern China, see Needham, Lu, and Huang, *Science and Civilisation,* Vol. 6, Part 1, 478–501.
[2384] BCGM:1.898 [蘧車/集解, 主治].

medieval commentators claim it could be found further east (although Pengcheng did fall to Chu forces in the Eastern Han) and, possibly, further south. David Hawkes, the first to translate *Encountering Sorrow* into a Western language, elected to coin the neologism "cart-halting flower" for *qiche*, a term that was subsequently adopted by David Knechtges.[2385] More recently, Pan Fujun identified *qiche* as *Lysimachia clethroides* (syn. *L. eleutheroides*), a hardy herbaceous perennial that grows in damp regions all over southwestern, southern, and southeastern China.[2386] If we take this suggestion seriously, this makes *qiche* a type of loosestrife that roughly matches the description in *Treatise on the Guang Region* as a relatively small plant with a white corolla.

40) Douna Aromatic (sal dammar? / platycarya?) 兜納香

[40a] The *Treatise on the Guang Region* states, "It grows in the (city-)states of the Piao[2387]."

[40b] The *Abridged Account of the Wei* states, "It is exported from the Roman Empire."

[40c] The *Supplement to the Materia Medica* states, "Its taste is warm and sweet. It is non-toxic. It drives away malign *qi* and heat spells. It dispels sudden chills.

[40a] 廣志曰：生剽國。[2388]

[2385] Hawkes, *Songs of the South*, 69, 77 and Knechtges, *Wen Xuan*, Vol. 2, 86–87

[2386] Pan, *Chuci*, 36–37. According to Pan, the leaves of *L. clethroides* are yellowish in color and contain essential oils, see also the description in Stuart and Smith, *Chinese Materia Medica*, 252; Nanjing zhongyiyao daxue, *Zhongyao da cidian*, (#3154); cf. Hua, Buell, and Unschuld, *Dictionary of the Ben Cao Gang Mu*, 409 (#523) ("unidentified fragrant plant").

[2387] Piao 剽 referred to a collection of city-states under control of the Pyu peoples located along the Irrawaddy River in present-day Upper Myanmar, see Pelliot, "Deux itinéraires," 172–75; Hua, Buell, and Unschuld, *Dictionary of the Ben Cao Gang Mu*, 236.

[2388] Cf. HYBC:2.20.25 (it grows in the Western Sea [*xihai* 西海]); cf. T2122:573c02 ("Western Regions"); cf. BCGM:1.899 [兜納香/集解]. According to the *Systematic Materia Medica*, the *Materia Medica of Overseas Drugs* states the place of origin was "Piao of the Western Sea." O.W. Wolters uses this citation as evidence for identifying the Western Sea as including the Bay of Bengal, see Wolters, "Po-Ssŭ Pine Trees," 341. Wolters was evidently unaware of Daoshi's citation to the Western Regions, which I believe to be the correct reading of the *Treatise on the Guang Region*. The Western Sea is likely a copyist error for Western Regions.

[40b] 魏略曰：出大秦國。[2389]

[40c] 本草拾遺曰：味溫甘，無毒，去惡氣，溫中，除冷[2390]。[2391]

[COMMENTS] The *locus classicus* of *douna* 兜納 (or 兠納) is the mid-third century *Abridged Account of Wei* [39b]. It is listed among approximately one dozen other aromatics that were considered exports of the Roman Empire.[2392] Unfortunately, we are provided minimal additional information in the medieval period that might help identify this plant.

The *Treatise on the Guang Region*, compiled during the mid-fifth century, alternatively gives the origin of the aromatic as Piao, a collection of small city-states located in present-day Upper Myanmar [39a]. This is also the same reputed origin given for *aina*, which I tentatively identify as tree moss or Indian dill [HC#18]. Daoshi's citation of the *Treatise on the Guang Region*, however, reports its origin as the Western Regions more broadly.[2393] The most interesting information about this aromatic is recorded in the *Materia Medica of Overseas Drugs* which describes its therapeutic and apotropaic properties. It claims that if Douna Aromatic is burned, the smell will drive away malign *qi* both near and far. If it is worn on one's belt-sash at night while walking, it will strengthen one's gall (*dan* 膽) and settle the spirits. Lastly, if Douna Aromatic is boiled into a decoction with both

[2389] Cf. SGZ:30.861; cf. T2122:573c02.
[2390] Read 冷 as 暴冷, following BCGM:1.899 [兜納香/主治].
[2391] Cf. BCGM:1.899 [兜納香/氣味,主治].
[2392] SGZ:30.861. See also Table 2.2 in Chapter 2.
[2393] T2122:573c03–02. I believe Daoshi's citation to be accurate. Later citations to the *Treatise on the Guang Region* where *douna* is cited as originating in Piao are likely conflations with the reported origins of *aina*, a plant with a similar name.

sweetgrass [HC#21] and willow branches, it can be used as a bath for young children that help them grow.[2394]

Paul Pelliot has suggested that *douna*, Middle Chinese **təu-nâp*, may have originally been a transcription for the Sanskrit *dhūnaka*, which generically refers to tree resins.[2395] If we follow Pelliot's lead, *douna* might otherwise refer more specifically to *dhūṇa*, which has been identified as sal dammar from the *Shorea robusta* tree [HC#33].[2396] Such a proposal, however, necessarily remains speculative.

Despite the lack of quality information regarding the identification of Douna Aromatic, it is identified in modern scholarship as *Platycarya strobilacea*, the same as *Bili* Aromatic [HC#37] and *Huai* Aromatic [HC#31].[2397]

41) Geng Aromatic (lemongrass?) 耕香

[41a] The *Prospect of the Plants and Trees of the Southern Regions*[2398] states, "*Geng*

[2394] HYBC:2.20.25; BCGM:1.899 [兜納香/主治].
[2395] Pelliot, "Deux itinéraires," 173n.3; Monier-Williams, *A Sanskrit English Dictionary*, 518.
[2396] Monier-Williams, *A Sanskrit English Dictionary*, 518.
[2397] Hua, Buell, and Unschuld, *Dictionary of the Ben Cao Gang Mu*, 400 (#245). An earlier identification of Douna Aromatic to *P. strobilacea*, possibly the first, is in Read, *Chinese Medicinal Plants*, 288 (#890); this aromatic is not discussed in Stuart and Smith, *Chinese Materia Medica*.
[2398] The *Prospect of the Plants and Trees of the Southern Regions* (*Nanfang caomu zhuang* 南方草木狀) is botanical treatise attributed to the official Ji Han (or Xi Han) 嵇含 (263–306) of the Western Jin. This work is purportedly the earliest known botanical treatise, covering eighty medicinal plants from the areas of present-day Guangdong, Guangxi, and northern Vietnam, see Zheng et al., *Dictionary of the Ben Cao Gang Mu*, 204–05, 335. There is considerable debate over the authenticity of this work, with almost all scholars agreeing that it did not reach its final form until the twelfth century. Ma Tai-Loi believes the entire text was forged in the twelfth century, between 1108 and 1194, from older works, noting that no bibliographical record cites the title until the Song, see Ma, "Nan-Fang Ts'ao-Mu Chuang," 221–25, 245–46. Hui-Lin Li, who produced an English translation of the received edition, reviews past scholarly debates, including that of Ma, and notes that while there are "a few textual problems…the authenticity of the present text of [Ji Han's] work cannot be readily determined," Li, *Fourth Century Flora*, 29. Joseph Needham, Lu Gwei-djen, and Huang Hsing-tsung believe the text is an authentic early fourth century work, although admitting "there may have been some later interpolations," see Needham, Lu, and Huang, *Science and Civilisation,* Vol. 6, Part 1, 450. Overall, all modern scholarship finds anachronisms in the work, but, except for Ma, rarely account for those issues when discussing the botanical history of China. I treat all discussions regarding aromatics in the *Prospect of the Plants and Trees of the Southern Regions* as twelfth century products, a dating parameter that often clearly aligns with other textual evidence. As a final note in reference to the entry on Geng Aromatic, Ma claims the earliest reference to

Aromatic has stems that grow delicate leaves."

[41b] The *Supplement to the Materia Medica* states, "Its taste is pungent and warm. It is non-toxic. It treats stench and ghost *qi*. It harmonizes the center. It grows in the state of Wuhu[2399].

[41a] 南方草木狀曰：耕香莖生細葉。[2400]

[41b] 本草拾遺曰：味辛溫，無毒，主臭鬼氣，調中。生烏滸國。[2401]

[COMMENTS] There is very little known about Geng Aromatic. Even by the sixteenth century, the editors of the *Systematic Materia Medica* resorted to appending Geng Aromatic to a type of lavender plant (*paicao xiang* 排草香; *Anisochilus carnosus*) simply due to the fact that the former seemed to have "the appearance of grass" (*cao zhuang* 草狀).[2402] No

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the *Prospect of the Plants and Trees of the Southern Regions* can be found in the *Library Catalogue of the Suichu Hall* (*Suichutang shumu* 遂初堂書目), compiled the book collector You Mao 尤袤 (1127–1194), Ma, "Nan-Fang Ts'ao-Mu Chuang," 222, 246. The citation to the *Prospect of the Plants and Trees of the Southern Regions* in the *Materia Aromatica* would predate this work, but there is reason to believe Hong Chu's citation may be in error. A plant with a similar name, Beng Aromatic (discussed below), is reported by the Tang-era monk Daoshi as named in the *Prospect of the Plants and Products of the Southern Regions* (*Nanfang caowu zhuang* 南方草物狀), a work with a similar name to the *Prospect of the Plants and Trees of the Southern Regions*, but with a better documented historical pedigree. Ma outlines the longstanding conflation of the titles of these two works, see Ma, "Nan-Fang Ts'ao-Mu Chuang," 225–29. As evidence to the contrary, however, the information cited by Hong Chu above is different (albeit minimally) from the information cited by Daoshi, calling into question if Hong Chu (or later editors of the *Materia Aromatic*) miscopied the title of the text and its information or if Hong Chu accurately cited a *Prospect of the Plants and Trees of the Southern Regions* that was in circulation during his lifetime. The received *Prospect of the Plants and Trees of the Southern Regions* does not contain either Geng Aromatic or Beng Aromatic.

[2399] Wuhu 烏滸 refers to a group of non-Chinese peoples who lived deep in the mountains of southern China just north of Jiaozhou, see Schafer, *Vermilion Bird*, 53. Wuhu should not be confused with Wuxu 烏許, a country in the Western Regions near the Amu Darya, see Hua, Buell, and Unschuld, *Dictionary of the Ben Cao Gang Mu*, 312.

[2400] Cf. T2122:573c20 (citing the *Prospect of the Plants and Products of the Southern Regions*); cf. TPYL:8.982.864 (citing the *Prospect of the Plants and Trees of the Southern Regions*).

[2401] Cf. BCGM:1.897–898 [排草香/附錄].

[2402] BCGM:1.898 [藒車香/集解]. For *paicao xiang*, see Hua, Buell, and Unschuld, *Dictionary of the Ben Cao Gang Mu*, 418 (#834); for *geng xiang*, which is listed as unidentified, see Hua, Buell, and Unschuld, *Dictionary of the Ben Cao Gang Mu*, 403 (#352).

further information is given under that entry other than what can be gleaned from the eighth century *Supplement to the Materia Medica* [41b].

Daoshi's seventh century catalogue of flowers and aromatics cites the *Prospect of the Plants and Products of the Southern Regions* (note the different title from Hong Chu's entry) under the name Beng Aromatic (*beng xiang* 稘香).[2403] The description is laconic, simply noting that it is comprised of "stalks that grow in Wuhu."[2404] If we leap ahead to the publication of the *Cart of Aromatics* (*Xiang sheng* 香乘) in 1641, we find this note: "Mao Aromatic (sweetgrass), White Mao Aromatic (lemongrass), *paicao xiang* (*A. carnosus*), Ping Aromatic (*ping xiang* 瓶香[2405]), and Geng Aromatic should all be in the same classification."[2406] By grouping the latter three aromatics, about which very little in known, with the much more famous sweetgrass and lemongrass, the editors of the *Cart of Aromatics* were attempting to connect the latter group with the fragrant grasses of the *Cymbopogon* "lemongrass" genus growing in the tropics.

All of this aligns with the very little we know of Geng Aromatic, namely that it grows in Wuhu 烏滸, a name that during the Tang referred to a region and group of people who lived in the mountains around the northern parts of present-day Guangdong and Guangxi. According to Edward Schafer, the Wuhu lived "deep in the mountains" and also traded in pearls and kingfisher feathers.[2407] Thus, we may speculate Geng Aromatic was a regional

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[2403] T2122:573c20. Neither passage nor plant name is found in the received *Prospect of the Plants and Products of the Southern Regions*, see Li, *Fourth Century Flora*.
[2404] 莖生烏滸。T2122:573c20. The *Imperial Readings of the Taiping Era* clarifies that this is exported from Wuhu, see TPYL:8.982.864.
[2405] An unidentified plant from the Southern Seas, see Hua, Buell, and Unschuld, *Dictionary of the Ben Cao Gang Mu*, 418 (#847). This plant is found in the *Materia Medica of Overseas Drugs*, see HYBC:2.35.47.
[2406] 茅香白茅香排草香瓶香耕香，當是一類。SKQS:844.389a.
[2407] Schafer, *Vermilion Bird*, 53.

name for a lemongrass species that was included among the trade items of the people of Wuhu.

42) Wood Honey Aromatic (aloeswood / hovenia / Himalayan cedar) 木蜜香

[42a] The *Orthodox Canon* states, "Its appearance is like the Chinese scholar tree[2408]."

[42b] The *Treatise on Strange Things*[2409] states, "Its leaves are like the Chinese mahogany[2410]."

[42c] The *Records of Jiaozhou*[2411] states, "The tree resembles aloeswood."

[42d] The *Supplement to the Materia Medica* states, "Its taste is sweet and warm. It is non-toxic."

[42e] "It is a treatment for warding off malignities and driving away evil ghost attachment-illness. It grows in all the mountains of the Southern Seas. Five or six years after planting, it will then yield the aromatic."[2412]

[2408] *Styphnolobium japonicum*, syn. *Sophora japonica* (Chinese scholar tree or pagoda tree), Hua, Buell, and Unschuld, *Dictionary of the Ben Cao Gang Mu*, 406 (#433).

[2409] For more on the difficulty of identifying this text, see my comments to this entry.

[2410] The leaves of the Chinese mahogany (*Toona sinensis*, syn. *Cedrela sinensis*) and many *Aquilaria* spp. are lanceolate, but the leaflets of the former grow pinnately, while the latter grow alternately. Elsewhere, the analogy is made more generally to the tree, not just its leaves, see HC#3c.

[2411] The *Records of Jiaozhou* (*Jiaozhou ji* 交州記) is a lost gazetteer written by Liu Xinqi 劉欣期 (d.u.) of the Eastern Jin, see Zheng et al., *Dictionary of the Ben Cao Gang Mu*, 223, 301. This work described the administrative region of Jiaozhou 交州, comprising present-day Guangdong, Guangxi, and northern and central Vietnam, see Hua, Buell, and Unschuld, *Dictionary of the Ben Cao Gang Mu*, 164.

[2412] This description is not entirely accurate. Aloeswood does not simply form after a certain number of years, it requires the tree to be injured or infected. One might instead read this passage as saying that after a few years of being buried underground, thus allowing aloeswood to form, can pieces can be retrieved.

[42a] 內典云：狀若槐樹。[2413]

[42b] 異物志云：“其葉如椿。[2414]

[42c] 交州記云：“樹似沈香。[2415]

[42d] 本草拾遺曰：“味甘溫，無毒，[2416]

[42e] 主辟惡，去邪鬼疰。生南海諸山中，種五六年，便有香也。[2417]

[COMMENTS] There are a trio of medieval aromatics with partly overlapping names that deserve our attention here: Wood Honey Aromatic (*mumi xiang* 木蜜香), Wood Aromatic (*muxiang* 木香, HC#16), and Honey Aromatic (*mixiang* 蜜香). All three referred to aloeswood [HC#3] at one time, but each also referred to different aromatic materials, making the identification of their botanical referents complex and context specific.

Let us first start with Wood Aromatic. Among the earliest clear descriptions of aloeswood harvesting is found in the now lost *Treatise on Strange Things of the Southern Regions* by Wan Zhen in the mid-to-late third century. In a quote preserved by the Buddhist monk Daoshi in the seventh century, Wan Zhen states that “Wood Aromatic” is exported from Rinan, in present-day central Vietnam, and provides the following information:

> Those who desire to harvest [aloeswood] must first chop and break apart the tree and pile [the logs] on the ground, storing them for a long time until the outer white [sapwood] decays and

[2413] Cf. BCGM:2.1939 [蜜香/集解]; cf. HYBC:3.52.7. This formed part of the passage attributed to the *Supplement to the Materia Medica* and the *Materia Medica of Overseas Drugs*. The original passage is taken from Kuiji’s *Profound Panegyric to the Lotus Sutra*, see T2123:726c18–20 and my comments below.
[2414] Cf. BCGM:2.1940 [蜜香/集解]; cf. HYBC:3.52.7. This formed part of the passage attributed to the *Supplement to the Materia Medica* and the *Materia Medica of Overseas Drugs*.
[2415] Cf. BCGM:2.1940 [蜜香/集解]; cf. HYBC:3.52.7. This formed part of the passage attributed to the *Materia Medica of Overseas Drugs*.
[2416] CF. BCGM:2.1940 [蜜香/氣味, 主治].
[2417] Unattributed, paraphrased quote from the *Materia Medica of Overseas Drugs*; cf. HYBC:3.52.71; cf. BCGM:2.1940 [蜜香/集解].

> rots. At this point the heartwood is solid and can be placed in water to [verify] that it is Sinking Aromatic.[2418]
> 欲取當先斫壞樹。著地積久。外白朽爛。其心中堅者置水則沈香。

This passage describes the harvesting of *Aquilaria crassna*, one of the aloeswood producing species native to Vietnamese Central Highlands and surrounding forest regions. If not simply an early copyist's error, Wan Zhen's passage proves Wood Aromatic was used as an early Chinese name for aloeswood.[2419] He not only describes the specific methods for cutting apart the tree and leaving the wood to rot, but also identifies the recovered material as Sinking Aromatic, the nomenclature for aloeswood that eventually becomes standard throughout East Asia. Ultimately, however, Wood Aromatic was far more commonly used to designate both native and imported types of scented root plants, including costus [HC#16], a point we will return to shortly. Consequently, this passage from the *Treatise on Strange Things of the Southern Regions* is a rather unique in regards to how it uses the name Wood Aromatic.

Another early medieval reference to harvesting aloeswood, reported under the name of Wood Honey Aromatic, is also copied by Daoshi and is found in the *Treatise on Strange Things*:

> Wood Honey Aromatic [i.e., aloeswood] is called the Fragrant Tree. [The tree] grows for a thousand years and its roots are extremely large. First [the tree] is felled, then after four or five years one can return and inspect [the wood]. After many months' time the roots deteriorate and rot. Only the interior gnarled segments are solid and it is solely these that are fragrant.[2420]

[2418] T2122:573c24–29; cf. TPYL:8.982.865 (citing *chenmu xiang* 沉木香, "Sinking Wood Aromatic," for *muxiang* 木香 ,"Wood Aromatic"; citing *pi* 皮, "bark," for *bai* 白, "white"). Immediately following the above passage, Wan Zhen describes three different grades of aloeswood, see my comments to Jian Aromatic at HC#22.

[2419] Given the overall rarity in having Wood Aromatic refer to aloeswood in the medieval period, it is possible that at an early time "sinking" (*chen* 沈) was miscopied as "wood" (*mu* 木) in the transmission of the *Treatise on Strange Things of the Southern Regions*. The editors of the *Imperial Readings of the Taiping Era* emend the passage to read "Sinking Wood Aromatic," see preceding footnote.

[2420] T2122:573c15–18; cf. TPYL:8.982.863–864 (citing *mumi*, "Wood Honey"); cf. BCGM:2.1940 [蜜香/集解] (containing the comment, "its leaves are like the Chinese mahogany," as cited by Hong Chu [42b]); see also Yamada, *Tōa kōryō shi kenkyū*, 189.

> 木蜜香，名曰香樹。生千歲，根本甚大。先伐僵之，四五歲乃往看。歲月久，樹根惡者腐敗。唯中節堅貞[→直]，芬香獨在耳。

As in the previous passage, the techniques described clearly refer to the aloeswood harvesting process. But based on the abbreviated title of this text, however, it is impossible to confirm the identity of the text or its author. Since we can exclude the *Treatise on Strange Things of the Southern Regions*, there are at least two other good candidates for a potential match. On one hand, it could refer to the *Treatise on Strange Things of Jiaozhou* (*Jiaozhou yiwu zhi* 交州異物志) by Yang Fu 楊孚 (ca. 75–90), the earliest known regional history of southern China and northern Vietnam. On the other hand, it may refer to the *Treatise on Strange Things of Funan* (*Funan yiwu zhi* 扶南異物志) by Zhu Ying 朱應 (ca. 250), which reports on the territory further south around present-day Cambodia and southern Vietnam, as well as regional imports. Both texts are lost and exist only as quotations preserved in later compendia.[2421] I believe an attribution to the *Treatise on Strange Things of Funan* better reflects contemporary third century knowledge about aloeswood, as there is no other surviving Chinese references to aloeswood or its methods of harvesting in the first or second

[2421] The "Bibliographic Treatise" section of the *Book of Sui* attributes both a single *juan Treatise on Strange Things* and a single *juan Treatise on Strange Things of Jiaozhou* to Yang Fu, see SShu:33.983 and SShu:33.984, respectively. Most presume these titles referred to the same work; for brief comments on Yang Fu's treatise, see Needham, Lu, and Huang, *Science and Civilisation,* Vol. 6, Part 1, 446 and Zheng et al., *Dictionary of the Ben Cao Gang Mu*, 571. A single *juan Treatise on Strange Things of Funan* is attributed to Zhu Ying, see SShu:33.984; for brief comments on this work, see Pelliot, "Fou-nan," 276–77, 303; Wheatley, "Malay Peninsula as Known to the Chinese," 3. There are only two other works cited in the "Bibliographic Treatise" with "Treatise on Strange Things" in their titles: Shen Ying's 沈瑩 (d. 280) single *juan Treatise on Strange Sea and Land Creatures of Linhai* (*Linhai shuitu yiwu zhi* 臨海水土異物志) and the anonymous single *juan Treatise on Strange Things of Liangzhou* (*Liangzhou yiwu zhi* 涼州異物志), see SShu:33.984 and SShu:33.985, respectively. For more on the former work, see Campany, *Strange Writing*, 47–48. Neither Linhai, an old commandery in present-day Zhejiang, nor Liangzhou, comprising part of present-day Gansu, are regions where *Aquilaria* trees occur in the wild, thus I have excluded them from consideration. Nevertheless, further research will have to determine if either of these two above texts, or other similar works appearing in later bibliographic catalogues, are better candidates.

centuries.[2422] In either case, this work most likely pre-dates Wan Zhen's *Treatise on Strange Things of the Southern Regions*. If treated as the work of Zhu Ying, this situates the earliest Chinese knowledge regarding aloeswood harvesting as originating from the Mekong Delta region where the *A. crassna* occurs. Because Funan was important entrepôt connecting China with India and other maritime polities of Southeast Asia, Zhu Ying's report may have alternatively described aloeswood harvesting in other regions where suitable *Aquilaria* trees grow.

To the point of our concern here, the report in the ambiguously titled *Treatise on Strange Things* attests to the fact that in the early medieval period Wood Honey Aromatic was indeed used as an early Chinese name for aloeswood. This use is further supported by Guo Yigong's mid-fifth century *Treatise on the Guang Region*, which provides the following description:

> The Wood Honey Tree is called the Thousand Year Tree and its roots are extremely large. Once felled, after four or five years one can harvest the non-rotten [wood], for this is fragrant.[2423]

[2422] It is worth noting that the *Records of Beihu* (*Beihu lu* 北戶錄), compiled by Duan Gonglu 段公路 (ca. mid-9th cent.), cites a different quote regarding aloeswood attributed to Yang Fu's *Treatise on Strange Things of Jiaozhou*: "Honey Aromatic. Those who desire to harvest [aloeswood] [must] first cut apart the roots. After several years pass the outer layers rot and the interior heartwood and gnarled segments are solid and black. If [a piece] sinks when placed in water it is called Sinking Aromatic. Furthermore, if placed in water and it does not sink, but is level with the water's surface, then it is called Jian Aromatic. The smallest and crude pieces are called Qian Aromatic." 蜜香，欲取先斷其根，經年，外皮爛，中心及節堅黑者，置水中則沉，是謂沉香。次有置水中不沉，與水面平者，名棧香。其最小麤者，名曰斲香。As cited in Yamada, *Tōa kōryō shi kenkyū*, 215n.25; Yang, *Xiang shi*, 127. Yang Zhishui considers this to be an authentic to Yang Fu's first century treatise, while Yamada believes it is a later redaction copying the passage in Wan Zhen's *Treatise on Strange Things of the Southern Regions*. Yamada is correct and, in fact, this passage is clearly a pastiche of the mid-to-late third century *Treatise on Strange Things of the Southern Regions* and the fifth century *Treatise on Nanyue* (discussed below). I know of no other source that attributes such a passage to Yang Fu until the ninth century *Records of Beihu*.

[2423] TPYL:8.982.864. The *Imperial Readings of the Taipin Era* cites this passage in the *Treatise on the Guang Region* as quoted by the *Treatise on Flowers and Trees by the Ruler of Wei* (*Wei wang huamu zhi* 魏王花木志); for more on this latter text, see Zheng et al., *Dictionary of the Ben Cao Gang Mu*, 504. The *Systematic Materia Medica* omits reference to the *Treatise on the Guang Region* and ascribes the passage to the *Treatise on Flowers and Trees by the Ruler of Wei*, see BCGM:2.1940 [蜜香/集解]. In contrast, the *Essential Techniques for All People* ascribes the passage directly to the *Treatise on the Guang Region*, omitting the secondary reference to the *Treatise on Flowers and Trees by the Ruler of Wei*, see QMYS:92.140.1. It should be noted that

木蜜樹，號千歲樹，根甚大。伐之四五歲乃取，木[→不]腐者為香。

It would seem Guo Yigong copied most of this passage from the *Treatise on Strange Things*, but he nevertheless kept the name Wood Honey relevant for aloeswood. This nomenclature was also adopted for some Buddhist translations. For example, by the end of the third century, we find the prolific translator from Dunhuang, Dharmarakṣa, pairing Wood Honey Aromatic with sandalwood in his translation to the *Lotus Sutra*.[2424] Even without a description of harvesting, we can be relatively sure the term Wood Honey Aromatic referred to aloeswood because sandalwood and aloeswood often formed a complementary pair in early Indic Buddhist sources. Ultimately, Buddhists also developed a relatively unique orthography for this particular aloeswood nomenclature, using several homophonic variants for "Wood Honey": *mumi* 木櫁, *mumi* 木榓, *mumi* 木樒, and *mumi* 木密.

It should be noted that Wood Honey (*mumi* 木蜜), without the suffix "aromatic," was also considered in the early strata of Chinese medical literature as a synonym for both bees' honey (*shimi* 石蜜) and the hovenia tree (*zhi* 枳), *Hovenia dulcis*, a small deciduous tree that has a wide distribution throughout East Asia.[2425] As noted in the *Newly Revised Materia Medica*, this alternative name for hovenia was reported by Lu Ji in his late third century commentary on the *flora* and *fauna* of the *Book of Odes*. The *Newly Revised Materia Medica* also report this tree's fruit, which are very sweet with honey-like taste, are eaten by people,

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the description as quoted by the *Imperial Readings of the Taipin Era* above is inaccurate. The rotten wood is the non-resinous sapwood that is typically carved away, thus leaving the darker fragrant aloeswood. The graph *mu* 木 should be emended to *bu* 不, following QMYS:92.140.1. The passage in the *Treatise on the Guang Region* ends by noting that the tree's branches (*zhi* 枝) are edible, see TPYL:8.982.864. This description was likely confused with the native Chinese *Hovenia dulcis* (discussed below), also known as the Wood Honey, that was reported to have sweet tasting branches. That both *H. dulcis* and aloeswood have edible branches is noted in the *Essential Techniques for All People*, see QMYS:92.140.1.

[2424] T263:71a27 and 120a16.

[2425] See XXBC:16.401 and XXBC:14.356, respectively.

perhaps leading to the belief that aloeswood was edible.[2426] We will have reason to revisit hovenia again in our discussion below.

The last term under review is Honey Aromatic. According to the *Supplementary Record by Famous Physicians*, complete by the early fifth century, Honey Aromatic was an alternative name for Wood Aromatic, the name we encountered for aloeswood in the report of Wan Zhen.[2427] Notably, however, both the *Classic of Materia Medica of the Divine Husbandman* and the *Supplementary Record by Famous Physicians* fail to provide a physical description of the plant to which Honey Aromatic and Wood Aromatic refer and, moreover, the latter specifies it grew in the mountain valleys of Yongchang in present-day Yunnan. A species of aloeswood producing *Aquilaria* tree, *A. yunnanensis*, grows sparsely in Yunnan, but no other medieval Chinese authorities ever speak of a trade in Yunnan aloeswood, even when aloeswood comes to dominate medieval scent culture. More critically, in the early sixth century, pharmacologist Tao Hongjing reads the aforementioned Wood Aromatic as referring to Indian costus root (i.e. Dark Wood Aromatic) or a similar unknown root plant growing in Yunnan.[2428] As noted above, it was far more common for medieval authorities to treat Wood Aromatic as a type of scented root, thus the synonymy with Honey Aromatic as reported in the *Supplementary Record by Famous Physicians* remains curious. It might be the case that Wan Zhen's unique use of Wood Aromatic for aloeswood allowed the connection to be made

[2426] XXBC:14.356–357. Edible aloeswood branches are notes in TPYL:8.982.864; QMYS:92.140.1 (see footnote above).
[2427] XXBC:6.172; cf. T2122:573c18–19; cf. TPYL:8.982.864 (the latter two texts only cite a generic *Materia Medica*).
[2428] As I suggested earlier in my comments to costus root at HC#16, if we consider Yongchang a regional emporium for items coming from northeastern India, such as with Himalayan costus, we may also speculate that aloeswood was not harvested in Yunnan, but in Assam where *Aquilaria malaccensis* occurs.

to Honey Aromatic, a term that clearly and consistently refers to aloeswood in medieval sources.

The name Honey Aromatic appears to have originated with the first generation of Buddhist translators at the end of the Eastern Han.[2429] A passage preserved from the *Treatise on Nanyue*, a lost text of the Liu Song, also clearly establishes this connection between aloeswood and Honey Aromatic:

> Jiaozhou has the Honey Aromatic Tree. Those who desire to harvest [aloeswood] must first cut apart the roots [of the tree]. After several years pass the outer layers rot and decay, but the heartwood and gnarled segments are solid and black. The kind that sinks in water is called Sinking Aromatic.[2430]
> 交州有蜜香樹。欲取，先斷其根，經年后，外皮朽爛，木心與節堅黑，沉水者為沉香。

Just as we have seen with the *Treatise on Strange Things of the Southern Regions*, and the ambiguous *Treatise on Strange Things*, this work describes a similar process for obtaining aloeswood. The *A. crassna* is known to occur in the region of present-day northern Vietnam, an area which comprises part of the territory of early medieval Jiaozhou.

Many of the sources above also refer to aloeswood as Sinking Aromatic, a name attested by at least the end of the third century by Wan Zhen and adopted by Buddhists by at least the end of the fourth century. The shift in nomenclature in Buddhist translation appears to have caused some confusion for later generations of scholars. For example, Daoshi lists Sinking Aromatic and Wood Honey Aromatic as two distinct entries in his record of aromatics, even though his citations for both describe the rather unique harvesting process for aloeswood.[2431] This practice was echoed in medieval materia medica literature, when the

[2429] For more information, see my comments to aloeswood at HC#3.
[2430] TPYL:8.982.863, cf. BCGM:2.1940 [蜜香/集解]. The passage continues on to describe Chicken Bone Aromatic and Jian Aromatic, see [HC#22].
[2431] T2122:573c22–574a04 and T2122:573c15–19, respectively.

eighth century *Supplement to the Materia Medica* created a new entry for Honey Aromatic separate from the Sinking Aromatic entry that was first introduced by Tao Hongjing.[2432] This practice is also found in Hong Chu's *Materia Aromatica*.[2433]

The confusion caused by the change in terminology is also exemplified by the new translation of the *Lotus Sutra* by Kumārajīva in the early fifth century that is worth exploring in more detail. In a *gāthā* describing the construction of shrines to the Buddha, sandalwood, Sinking in Water [Aromatic], and Wood Honey are all listed as possible construction materials, using what appears to be two different translations for aloeswood.[2434] In Dharmarakṣa's translation just over a century earlier, he lists only sandalwood and "Wood Honey Aromatic."[2435] At first blush it may appear that Kumārajīva "doubled" the translation for aloeswood using both the new and old terminology. We apparently find this, for example, in the late fourth century translation work of the monk Zhu Fonian who pairs sandalwood with "Sinking in Water Wood Honey" (*chenxiang mumi* 沈水木槌), a rather long and inelegant rendering.[2436] The situation is more complex regarding the *Lotus Sutra*, however. The underlying Sanskrit as attested in Hendrik Kern and Bunyiu Nanjio's Sanskrit edition of the *Lotus Sutra* provides three different construction materials for the devotional shrine: *canda* (sandalwood), *aguru* (aloeswood), and *devadāru*. This last term is understood as the

[2432] BCGM:2.1939 [蜜香] and BCGM:2.1936 [沉香], respectively.
[2433] It should be noted that the taxonomic imperative for grouping items under the same name in the genre of encyclopedia limits an author's ability to cross-reference. Nevertheless, no medieval author of which I am aware cites these different names for aloeswood as synonymous.
[2434] T262:8c21–22.
[2435] T263:71a27.
[2436] See e.g. T212:657c26. This terminology is found in the Chinese translation of the *Udanavarga* (*Chuyao jing* 出曜經; T212). Later in the same work we find sandalwood paired with just Wood Honey, see T212:658a07. Notably, in a translation of the *Madhyamāgama* (*Zhong ahan jing* 中阿含經; T26) that was completed at roughly the same time as the *Udanavarga*, we find a very similar pairing of terms: "Wood Honey Sinking in Water" (*mumi chenshui* 木蜜沈水), see T26.519a28. It seems such a phrase was circling among the northern Chinese translation teams in the late fourth and early fifth centuries.

Himalayan cedar, or the *Cedrus deodara*.[2437] For reasons that are not altogether clear, Kumārajīva appears to have used Wood Honey, which as we noted above was also an alternative name since the third century for hovenia, to render *devadāru*. The towering evergreen of the Himalayas, for which the Sanskrit name translates as the "wood of the gods," bears no resemblance to the broad leaved, ornamental hovenia.[2438]

Kumārajīva's translation choice would befuddle later commentators. In the seventh century, the monk Kuiji 窺基 (632–682) would address this issue in his *Profound Panegyric to the Lotus Sutra* (*Falianhuajing xuanzan* 法蓮華經玄贊). Citing the now lost Jin-era lexicographical work, the *Forest of Graphs* (*Zilin* 字林), Kuiji notes that Wood Honey was glossed as a fragrant tree (*xiangmu* 香木). He then provides a further explanation, reporting:

> The tree resembles the Chinese scholar tree and is fragrant and extremely large. Five years after felling one can begin to use [the aromatic]. If one harvests the aromatic, grind it all beforehand and after a while a fragrance will be emitted.[2439]
> 樹似槐而香極大。伐之五年始用。若取其香皆預研久乃香出。

Kuiji is summarily describing the harvesting procedure of aloeswood that takes place over the course of several years. It remains unclear, however, if Kuiji considered this wood distinct from Sinking in Water Aromatic, a term for which he provides no commentary. This contrasts with the exegesis by Jizang 吉藏 (549–623) a few years earlier. After noting that Wood Honey trees "resembled white sandalwood and possessed a light fragrance," Jizang comments that "I have personally seen them in Chang'an."[2440] This could only refer to

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[2437] Kern and Nanjio, *Saddharmapuṇḍarīka*, 407 (lines 1–2).
[2438] Elsewhere *devadāru* appears to have been rendered as Heavenly Wood Aromatic (*tianmu xiang* 天木香) in the fifth century when describing the cremation of the Buddha's body, see e.g. T374:366c02.
[2439] T1723.726c18–20.
[2440] 木樒者。形似白檀微有香氣。長安親見之。T1721:505a12–13.

hovenia trees, as *Aquilaria* trees would never grow (without considerable effort) in the temperate alluvial plains of the Guangzhong basin.

In summation, based both on descriptions and explicitly stated name equivalents, it appears that Wood Aromatic, Honey Aromatic, and Wood Honey Aromatic all referred, at least in some contexts, to aloeswood. The earliest recorded Chinese name for aloeswood appears to be Honey Aromatic as used by Han Buddhist translators, a term that not long after was recorded in the *Supplementary Record by Famous Physicians* as synonymous with Wood Aromatic and pointing to a (now unknown) root plant from Yunnan. By the mid-to-late third century, Wood Honey Aromatic starts appearing in both regional gazetteers (presuming our identification of the *Treatise on Strange Things* is correct) and Buddhist translations as a new name for aloeswood, but this nomenclature was also used (minus the "aromatic" suffix) to refer to the native hovenia tree, per materia medica literature, as well as Himalayan cedar in some Buddhist circles. Also in the third century, we find Wood Aromatic used (in a single text) to identify aloeswood, but by this period Sinking Aromatic was also used (in the same text), signaling a shift to what would soon become the standard nomenclature for the prized aromatic wood for the remainder of the medieval period.

43) Midie Aromatic (rosemary?) 迷迭香

[43a] The *Treatise on the Guang Region* states, "It is exported from the Western Regions."

[43b] Emperor Wen (r. 220–226) of [Cao]-Wei wrote a rhapsody.[2441]

[43c] It can also be used as an ointment.

[2441] Emperor Wen, also known by his personal name, Cao Pi 曹丕 (187–226), composed the "Rhapsody on *Midie*" (*Midie fu* 迷迭賦). For a discussion and translation of this work, see Milburn, "Midiexiang," 26–44.

[43d] The *Supplement to the Materia Medica* states, "Its taste is pungent and warm. It is non-toxic. It treats malign *qi*. It scents people's garments. Burn it to drive away malignities."

[43a] 廣志云：出西域。[2442]

[43b] 魏文帝有賦。[2443]

[43c] 亦嘗用。[2444]

[43d] 本草拾遺曰：味辛溫，無毒，主惡氣，令人衣香，燒之去邪。[2445]

[COMMENTS] *Midie* 迷迭, Late Han Chinese **meidet*, and similar variants, *mimi* 迷迷 and *misong* 迷送, are now commonly treated as *Salvia rosmarinus* (syn. *Rosmarinus officinalis*), the common rosemary native to the Mediterranean.[2446] This plant is often traced to an anonymous "Yuefu Song" (*Yuefu ge* 樂府歌) where it appears with two other foreign aromatics, the unknown *douliang* [HC#34] and *aina*, possibly tree moss or Indian dill [HC#18]. The poem is as follows:

Travelling foreigner, from where have you come?	行胡從何來。
What have you brought from abroad?	列國持何來。
"Woolen textiles, woolen carpets, Fivefold Wood Aromatic,	氍毹毾㲪五木香，
Midie, aina, and *douliang*."	迷迭艾納及都梁。[2447]

Given the popularity of the so-called Music Bureau (*yuefu* 樂府) genre of poetry during the Han, this work is often treated as a product of that era, but imitations were produced

[2442] Cf. T2122:574a06–07, cf. TPYL:8.982.866, cf. BCGM:1.898 [迷迭香/集解]. All of these sources claim this aromatic is exported from the Western Sea (*xihai*).
[2443] I understand this passage as a personal observation of Hong Chu.
[2444] I understand this passage as a personal observation of Hong Chu.
[2445] cf. BCGM:1.898 [迷迭香/氣味, 主治]
[2446] Nanjing zhongyiyao daxue, *Zhongyao da cidian*, (#3613).
[2447] T2122:573c04–06; cf. TPYL:8.982.862 (replacing 五木 with 五味); see also trans. Milburn, "Midiexiang," 28.

throughout the medieval period and thus dating this work with any precision is difficult. The earliest work to preserve this anonymous rhapsody to my knowledge is Daoshi's *Forest of Pearls in the Garden of the Dharma* completed in 668, the version of which I cite above.

Notably, this poem includes some hallmarks of early Han trade through the Tarim Basin, including foreign woolen textile (*qushu* 氍毹) and woolen carpets (*tadeng* 毾㲪). The latter is seen, for example, in Ban Gu's letter to his younger brother, Ban Chao, asking him to procure horses, storax, and woolen carpets in exchange for Chinese silk in the late first century when he was stationed in Khotan and Kashgar.[2448] In addition, both Chinese terms are found in Xu Shen's second century *Explaining Graphs and Analyzing Characters*. Yet, none of the aromatics noted above are included in Xu Shen's dictionary.[2449] Outside of "Yuefu Song," *midie* first appears in works of the early third century (discussed below), *duliang* in the *Treatise on Strange Things of the Southern Regions* of the mid-to-late third century, and *aina* in a Buddhist apocryphon from around the turn of the fifth century.[2450] The "Fivefold Wood Aromatic" (*wumu xiang* 五木香), is otherwise unattested, but a similar term, Fivefold Aromatic (*wuxiang* 五香), came to be used later in the medieval period as an arcane Daoist alias for costus root or an unknown native root plant [HC#74]. Equally, by the fifth century, a rumor was circulating in China about a chimerical foreign tree that could produce several

[2448] This letter is discussed in my comments to storax at HC#5. Both *tadeng* and *qushu* refer to woven and knotted wool textile carpets, blankets, or shawls. Laufer suggests *tadeng* may be related to the Middle Persian **tāptān*, ultimately related to the English taffeta; see Laufer, *Sino-Iranica*, 492–93. *Tadeng* is sometimes described in Chinese sources as being placed on the ground in front of a couch, see Yu, *China and the Ancient Mediterranean*, 99n.211. *Qushu* is sometimes described as having patterns depicting animals, humans, or other objects, see Yu, *China and the Ancient Mediterranean*, 161. For more on woolen textiles as objects of early long-distance commerce, see Hulsewé, *China in Central Asia*, 106n.218; Yu, *China and the Ancient Mediterranean*, 145, 147n.456–458.

[2449] SWJZ:8.216. Both Chinese terms are classified as kinds of "colorful felt (or wool) textile" (*zhan tian* 氈緂).

[2450] SGZ:30.861, TPYL:8.982.863, and T309:1015c29, respectively. The passages are discussed under the relevant entries in the *Materia Aromatica*.

different kinds of aromatics. The earliest account reports six as deriving from a single tree, including cloves (the tree's flowers), frankincense (resin), costus (knotty joints), sandalwood (roots), aloeswood (heartwood), and Malayan patchouli (leaves), but later medieval accounts regularly report five (minus costus).[2451]

If we accept the "Yuefu Song" as authentic to the Han, it is the *locus classicus* for all four of these aromatic exotica (counting the Fivefold Wood Aromatic as a single item). I provisionally accept this work as a late Han composition since it does not manifestly change the patterns of foreign aromatic imports known to the Chinese of the era, but also acknowledge this may be a much later product of the Six Dynasties, possibly of the fifth century, if not later, based on plant nomenclature alone.

The particular fame of one of the above aromatics, *midie*, is predicated upon a series of five rhapsodies from the early third century which took the scented plant as the main subject. These works have been studied in detail by Olivia Milburn and Xurong Kong and I direct the interested reader to their detailed analysis.[2452] It is worth noting that the traditional identification of *midie* as rosemary is questioned by Milburn who underscores the inherent uncertainties of identifying ancient plants. For this reason Milburn leaves the Chinese term untranslated. Kong, on the other hand, feels more confident in the traditional identification, suggesting the Late Han **meidet* may have reflected an ancient Mediterranean term for mint, such as Greek *minthe*, Latin *mentha*, or most likely Linear B *mi-ta*. Despite this direct connection to the mint plant, Kong argues that rosemary, known to Dioscorides as *libanoitis*, could have been conflated with mint through a variant name of the latter, *labiatae*. In

[2451] See discussion in my comments to Jian Aromatic at HC#22.
[2452] See Milburn, "Midiexiang," 26–44 and Kong, *Fu Poetry Along the Silk* Roads, 22–35.

addition she notes that the Chinese already had a name for a native mint, *bakuo* 茇藿 (or *bohe* 薄荷), suggesting that *midie* must have been a new type of plant previously unknown.[2453]

Turning briefly to the series of poems, we see that Cao Pi 曹丕 (187–226), the Emperor Wen cited by Hong Chu above [43b], clearly identifies midei as a foreign and rare plant and seems to place a special emphasis on its delicate and lengthy stems that emit a strong fragrance, calling to mind sprigs of rosemary.[2454] Unexpectedly, Cao Pi reports the plant was successfully growing in his courtyard, presumably at Ye, in present-day Hebei. This seems unlikely and the Mediterranean plants certainly would not have survived their first winter in the climate of northern China. There is power in claiming to have such strange and rare plants flourishing in one's garden, certainly as political allegory for one's virtuous conduct. China had a long tradition of mythic plants that grew in response to the moral and just actions of the ruler, such as we see with Wei Aromatic [HC#60], and even though Cao Pi had not yet founded the Cao-Wei Dynasty, his virtue could be evoked though his possession of a thriving plant like rosemary.

[2453] Kong, *Fu Poetry Along the Silk Roads*, 21. Kong's contention that a team of Macedonian merchants, led by Maes Titianus, arrived in Luoyang in the year 100 is not convincing and is predicated on a brief passage in the *Book of Later Han* that uses two obscure toponyms for kingdoms offering tribute: Mengqi 蒙奇 and Doule 兜勒, see HHS:4.118 and HHS:88.2910. These terms have been often identified as Macedonia and Tyre (a Mediterranean port) without much evidence, but I believe the suggestion by Taishan Yu as Margiana (a recently independent satrap of Parthia) and Tukhāra (Bactria) are a better fit for the precariously positioned kingdoms at the edge of the Parthian Empire who were likely looking to establish relations with the Han emperor, see Yu, *China and the Ancient Mediterranean*, 56n.65–66.

[2454] For a translation of Cao Pi's rhapsody, see Milburn, "Midiexiang," 33–34, Kong, *Fu Poetry Along the Silk Roads*, 24–25. Both Milburn and Kong believe this poem was composed around the year 216.

[II] Strange Aromatics 香之異

[Section Two: Thirty-Eight Entries[2455]]

44) Douyi Aromatic 都夷香

The *Records of Cavern Darkness*[2456] [states], "This aromatic is like jujube pits. By eating a single bolus one will experience months without hunger. Or by tossing it into water it will immediately fill a large basin."

洞冥記：香如棗核，食一顆歷月不饑，或投水中，俄滿大盂也。[2457]

[COMMENTS] The longer version of the above anecdote prefaces this passage by introducing a mysterious foreign figure who was in possession of this anomalous aromatic. The passage reads as follows: "Batushe was a barbarian. He trimmed his hair, bared his body, and did not eat grains; he only drank fresh water and ate Douyi Aromatic."[2458] Batushe 跋途闍 is an otherwise unknown figure and his name is most likely an example of pseudo-Sanskrit, an informal method of borrowing Chinese graphs that were commonly used to transcribe Sanskrit phonetics in order to invent new nomenclature. This was a literary

[2455] Individual entries are distinguished according to the table of contents of the Huacheng xylographic edition of the *Baichuan* held by Harvard University.

[2456] The *Records of Cavern Darkness* (*Dongming ji* 洞冥記) is an abbreviated title for the *Records of Emperor Wu of the Han and the Cavern Darkness of Separate Realms* (*Han Wudi bieguo dongming ji* 漢武帝別國洞冥記), an tales of the strange anthology attributed to the master of esoterica Guo Xian 郭憲 (ca. 1st cent.), courtesy name Ziheng 子橫, a member of the imperial court under Emperor Guangwu 光武 of the Han (r. 25–57), see Zheng et al., *Dictionary of the Ben Cao Gang Mu*, 106, 162. Anachronistic elements and its late citations in Tang era texts suggest this work was compiled considerably later, possibly in the sixth century. This is a collection of anecdotes organized chronologically around the life of Emperor Wu of Han. For an analysis of this work, see Smith, "Ritual," 274–334; for additional comments building on the work of Smith, see Campany, *Strange Writing*, 95–96, 144–146, 318–321.

[2457] Cf. TPYL:8.981.855, cf. trans. Smith, "Ritual," 597.

[2458] 跋途闍者，胡人也，剪發裸形，不食穀，惟飲清水，食都夷香。TPYL:8.981.855.

convention signaling the non-Chinese origin of a person or object. For the same reason, *douyi* 都夷 would have also carried the same cultural connotations of foreignness.[2459] The perceived scarcity and inaccessibility of such objects – the marvels that existed on the margins of the known world – would have also emboldened conceptions about their enhanced powers and capacity to elicit supermundane effects in the world.

Interestingly, in spite of his foreign "barbarian" origin, Batushe is represented as a paradigmatic seeker of immortality. Notably, he has abstained from eating grains, thus providing important context for the use of Douyi Aromatic as a miraculous food substitute. The aromatic food is so satiating, we are told, that it will keep a person full for months, a proclamation that is mirrored by the visual image of throwing a single pellet into a basin and expanding to fill the entire container.[2460] Furthermore, the comparison to jujube pits not only offers a reference for the size of this substance, but also connects it to the immortal Queen Mother of the West who was noted elsewhere in the *Records of Cavern Darkness* as personally gifting jujube pits to Emperor Wu of the Western Han.[2461]

Within these broader religious and cultural contexts, Douyi Aromatic should be envisioned less as an incense or perfume and more as a miraculous medicine that helps one on the path to attaining immortality.[2462] Such associations are built upon the growing esoteric body of medieval knowledge concerning special dietary regimens, herbal medicines, and

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[2459] Douyi was also used in Chinese Buddhist translations as part of a transcription for the name of an Indian village, see T2130:1040a20. Indian scholars also employed arcane names for aromatics, creating what James McHugh has termed an "exotic linguistic opacity" that supported the "aura of their exotic origin"; see McHugh, *Sandalwood and Carrion*, 175.

[2460] Religious adepts living on the fringes of society, often in mountain forests where access to staple foods was restricted or outright shunned, were regularly prescribed special "famine foods" comprised of various vegetal, mineral, and even some animal ingredients. Douyi Aromatic fits within this mold of alternative cuisines; for more one these special dietary practices, see Campany, *Heaven and Earth*, 25–30.

[2461] See TPYL:8.965.740; cf. trans. Smith, "Ritual," 606.

[2462] Thomas Smith has identified at least nine strange substances and elixirs that have some relation to Emperor Wu which have the effect of staving off hunger, see Smith, "Ritual," 309.

alchemical elixirs that conferred long life, all practices that may be grouped under what Robert Campany has called "salvation by ingestion."[2463] Such practices also informed medieval Chinese Buddhist ideas as we see in the drug recipe entitled "Avalokiteśvara Bodhisattva's Method for the Utmost Marvelous Incense Pill" (*Guanyin pusa zuisheng miao xiangwan fa* 觀音菩薩最勝妙香丸法), a text preserved in a pair of manuscripts found in the Dunhuang cache.[2464] The recipe describes the preparation of a pill for those suffering from extreme hardships and hunger and when eaten over the duration of many years will make the body impervious to injury and illness and ultimately cause Awakening and the attainment of a lifespan without measure.

45) Tuwu Aromatic 荼蕪香

[45a] Wang Zinian's *Uncollected Records*[2465] [states], "King Zhao of Yan (r. 311–279 BCE) [received as tribute] two dancers from the country of Guangyan[2466]. The emperor took fragments of Tuwu Aromatic and spread it on the ground four to five *cun* [deep] and made the dancers stand on top of it. After an entire day there was no trace of footprints. This aromatic is an export of the country of Boyi[2467]. If soaked into the ground then the earth and rocks all became fragrant. If placed in contact with rotten trees and decayed grass then they

[2463] Campany, *Heaven and Earth*, 22.
[2464] See P.2637 and P.2703; this recipe is translated and discussed in Chapter 4, Section 8.
[2465] The *Uncollected Records* (*Shiyi ji* 拾遺記) is a ten *juan* anthology of strange tales compiled by the master of esoterica Wang Jia 王嘉 (d. before 393), courtesy name Zinian 子年, and revised by Xiao Qi 蕭綺 (d.u.) during the Liang, who also appends short commentarial notices to the ends of individual sections, see Zheng et al., *Dictionary of the Ben Cao Gang Mu*, 418, 498. The text is chronologically organized around the succession of legendary figures and dynastic eras ending with the Jin. For an analysis and partial translation of this work, see Foster, "Wang Chia's *Shih-I*"; for an analysis on the allegorical structure of this work, see Campany, *Strange Writing*, 64–67, 306–18.
[2466] I have been unable to identify this country.
[2467] I have been unable to identify this country.

would all flourish and thrive. If used to perfume dried bones then muscles and flesh would all grow."

[45b] This is also excerpted from the *Treatise on the Singularly Strange*[2468].

[45a] 王子年拾遺記：燕昭王廣延國二舞人，帝以荼蕪香屑鋪地四五寸，使舞人立其上，彌日無跡。香出波弋國，浸地則土石皆香，著朽木腐草，莫不茂蔚，以薰枯骨，則肌肉皆生。[2469]

[45b] 又出獨異志。

[COMMENTS] Similar to Hengwu Aromatic below [HC#65], it is unlikely Tuwu Aromatic was intended to identify a real plant. Those well-versed in the ancient *flora* of China would recognize the name as pastiche of two formerly distinct botanical terms: *tu* 荼 and *wu* 蕪. By the early medieval period, *tu* was firmly identified as a bitter vegetable, which modern scholarship now claims to be the yellow flowering *Sonchus oleraceus*, or sowthistle.[2470] *Wu* carried the meaning of "overgrown thicket," but also forms part of the binomial compound for the extraordinarily fragrant leaves and sprouts of the Sichuan lovage plant known in the ancient and early medieval period as *miwu* [HC#20c]. In contrast, the received version of the *Uncollected Records* (*Shiyi ji* 拾遺記) preserves the name of this anomalous aromatic as *quanwu* 荃蕪, with *quan* 荃 not only being close orthographically to the graph *tu*, but itself also referring to a classically known Chinese plant, *Acorus calamus* (modern *changpu* 菖蒲),

[2468] The *Treatise on the Singularly Strange* (*Duyi zhi* 獨異志) is a lost ten *juan* tales of the strange anthology compiled by Li Kang 李亢 (d.u.) (or Li Yuan 李元) at the end of the Tang, see Zheng et al., *Dictionary of the Ben Cao Gang Mu*, 116, 277. Only three *juan* of the original ten are extant.
[2469] Cf. SYJ:4.91; cf. TPYL:4.388; cf. trans. Smith, "Ritual," 601n.55.
[2470] Pan, *Shijing*, 70–71; see also Bretschneider, *Botanican Sinicum*, Part 2, 33–34 (#24).

commonly known as sweet flag.[2471] The rhizomatic sweet flag possessed a fragrant root and was considered one among the medieval drugs for achieving immortality.[2472] In either case of *tuwu* or *quanwu*, the peculiar name would have signaled to Chinese audiences a scented plant that was likely native to China.

But such an expectation would have been overturned in reading the above anecdote. As we learn, this plant was not cultivated in China, but was imported from an unknown foreign country called Boyi, hinting a connection with two historical regions that provided medieval Chinese markets with valuable perfumes, Barus (Polü), a famous producer of camphor and camphor oil, and Bosi, an unknown polity (or people) of the Southern Seas that reputedly exported frankincense among other exotica.[2473]

If we turn to other details of the story above, we find that Tuwu Aromatic not only possess a strong fragrance that could miraculously be transferred to other objects, but also caused regrowth in things dead or dying. This combination of foreign origin, perfuming strength, regenerative health properties, and fecundity will reappear in other stories of strange aromatics collected in the *Materia Aromatica*. The relationship between the pair of dancers and Tuwu Aromatic is somewhat ambiguous in Hong Chu's clipped presentation, but the in the *Uncollected Records* we see the lack of footprints in the fragments spread over the ground was due to the lightness and nimbleness of the foreign dancers, not a special characteristic of the aromatic itself.[2474] A similar story is retold elsewhere in *Uncollected*

[2471] Pan, *Chuci*, 66–67.
[2472] Stephen R. Bokenkamp, "The Herb Calamus and the Transcendent Han Zhong in Taoist Literature," *Studies in Chinese Religions* 1, no. 4 (2015): 293–305. Notably, sweet flag was also employed in ancient state sacrifice for receiving poured libations, see Sukhu, *Shaman*, 225n.11. *Quanwu* is also found in the version of this story preserved in the *Imperial Readings of the Taiping Era*, see TPYL:4.388.
[2473] Different sources provide different names for the country cited as Boyi here, see Smith, "Ritual," 601n.54. For more on Barus and Bosi of the Southern Seas, see HC#12 and HC#13a, respectively.
[2474] SYJ:4.91.

Records concerning the late third century official Shi Chong, who sprinkled aloeswood chips over ivory beds and rewarded those who left no visible trace with strings of pearls.[2475] Stories involving the many extravagances of Shi Chong may strain the limits of believability, but they are generally couched within the known historical conditions of international trade during the third and fourth centuries. Such appropriately contemporaneous framing is not the case for the story of King Zhao of the ancient state Yan under consideration here. The anecdote of Tuwu Aromatic flows from the imagination rooted in the medieval tribute and trade of luxury aromatics, it should not be taken as a historical relic of the late Warring States period as it presents itself.

In claiming the Tuwu Aromatic was an export of Boyi, the *Uncollected Records* builds an intra-textual association with a similarly named aromatic, also claimed to originate from Boyi, that is described in the *Records of Cavern Darkness*. The anecdote in that text reads as such:

> In the second year of *yuanshuo* (127 BCE), the country of Bozhi, also called Boyi, presented a divine fragrant plant as tribute. One name for it was *quanmi* 荃麋, another name was *chunwu* 春蕪. A single root had five hundred stems. The joints of the branches were like bamboo segments, soft and flexible. Its epidermis was like silk threads and could be made into cloth called Chunwu Cloth. It was also called Fragrant Quan Cloth. It was firm and dense like white silk. If a single *jin* was clasped, the entire palace was filled with perfume. Women who wore it [on their belt-sash] became completely fragrant.[2476]
> 元朔二年，波祗國，亦名波弋國。獻神精香草，亦名荃蘼，亦名春蕪。一根五百條，其間如竹節，柔軟，其皮如絲，可以為布，所謂春蕪布，亦名香荃布，堅密如紈也。握之一斤，滿室皆香，婦人帶之，彌有芬馥。

Notably, this episode takes place one-hundred and fifty years after the reign of King Zhao of Yan, during the reign of Emperor Wu of the Han. In the collective pseudo-historical

[2475] SYJ:9.215. For more on Shi Chong's use of aloeswood powder, see Chapter 4, Section 5. For his extravagant use of onycha, see my comments to onycha at HC#35.
[2476] TPYL:8.983.875; cf. trans. Smith, "Ritual," 601–602. Thomas Smith suggests Boshi refers to Zebak in present-day Afghanistan, see Smith, 596n.33.

imagination of our medieval authors, this means that the country of Boyi had likely continued trade, first with the pre-imperial state of Yan in the far north and then with the famed emperor of the Western Han, for nearly two centuries. While there is a similarity in the names of the fragrant exports over this time span (*tuwu*/*quanwu* above and *quanmi* or *chunwu* in the passage here) the reputed properties have changed. Nevertheless, this substance retains its extraordinary perfuming capabilities and is even described as being used a bodily perfume, perhaps envisioned no different than how wild angelica root [HC#30] and sweet basil [HC#32] were tied to a garment belt-sash in the *Songs of Chu*. Notably, *quanmi* is described in a very similar way to sweet flag root, with a long, knotty rhizome that has numerous branches and nodes. The religio-therapeutic efficacy of sweet flag root seems to have been tied to its number of nodes, thus a root segment of *quanmi* with five hundred branches would not have only been good for weaving into a special cloth, but also seen as a sign of its exceptional medicinal virtues.

Elsewhere in the *Records of Cavern Darkness*, we are told the Emperor Wu also burned a *Mili* Aromatic (*mili zhi xiang* 靡離之香) on top of a pavilion constructed for summoning immortals. Burning a piece of the aromatic the size of a grain of millet (*su* 粟) created an odor that did not fade for three months.[2477] While this edition of Hong Chu's *Materia Aromatica* does not have an entry for *mili*, it represents yet another fragrant material from the *Records of Cavern Darkness* with a striking olfactory potency, even if used in only the smallest amount.

[2477] See TPYL:8.981.855 (reading 靡 as 蘼), trans. Smith, "Ritual," 605–06 (who notes other editions instead using the name Incense of Various Treasures [*zabao zhi xiang* 雜寶之香]).

46) Expelling Coldness Aromatic 辟寒香

[46a] Warding Off Evil Aromatic, Auspicious *Lin* Aromatic, and Golden Phoenix Aromatic are all tributes from strange countries.

[46b] The [*Miscellaneous*] *Compilation from Duyang*[2478] states, "From the two Han Dynasties up through the emperors of the Tang, empresses and princesses have ridden in carriages with seven jewels and which are embellished on four sides with five-colored jades and scenting sachets. These sachets are filled with the above four aromatics. On every trip the streets are filled with fragrant perfumes."

[46a] 辟邪香，瑞麟香，金鳳香，皆異國所獻。[2479]

[46b] 杜陽編云：自兩漢至皇唐，皇后，公主乘七寶輦，四面綴五色玉香囊，囊中貯上四香，每一出遊，則芬馥滿路。[2480]

[COMMENTS] This Tang-era tale of the strange describes the use of four different tribute aromatics during imperial processions, each of which was contained within an aromatic pouch attached to the carriage transporting the women of the court. It was more typical to find scenting sachets worn on the body, but larger pouches suitable for hanging on bed posts or furniture also have a long history in China [HC#97]. This particular anecdote underscores the close association of powerfully fragrant perfumes with imperial authority as well as with

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[2478] The *Miscellaneous Compilation from Duyang* (*Duyang zabian* 杜陽雜編) is a three *juan* tales of the strange anthology compiled by Su E 蘇鶚 (fl. 886), see Zheng et al., *Dictionary of the Ben Cao Gang Mu*, 115, 438. The work records anomalous tales between the reigns of Emperor Daizong 代宗 (r. 762–779) and Emperor Yizong 懿宗 (r. 859–873) from the frontier regions and foreign countries. The title is derived from the place where Su E lived, Duyang 杜陽, in present-day Shaanxi.

[2479] This line is treated as a separate entry in Shen Li's catalogue of aromatics, see Liu, *Songdai Xiangpu*, 476 (#52) and Liu, 468 (#625).

[2480] Cf. DYZB:3.26.

femininity. While the former seems to have blossomed in importance during the Han, especially in terms of imperial protocols around perfumed courtiers [HC#87], the latter association seems to have grown in importance throughout the medieval period.[2481] In the context of the *Miscellaneous Compilation from Duyang*, this anecdote is told in relation to the activities of Princess Tong Chang 同昌 (849–870), who later appears in Hong Chu's entry for the Spirit Ascending to Heaven Incense [HC#70].[2482]

The above entry introduces us to yet another convention for devising nomenclature for anomalous aromatics, what we might simply call transparent efficacy. While Douyi Aromatic was an example of arcane pseudo-Sanskrit [HC#44], and Tuwu Aromatic recycled and recombined older names for Chinese plants [HC#45], Expelling Coldness Aromatic boldly proclaims its specific effects. While the *Siku quanshu* edition of Hong Shu's *Materia Aromatica* groups Expelling Coldness Aromatic with three other aromatic specimens, it was likely an individual entry in Hong Chu's original manuscript.[2483] A reconstructed entry for Expelling Coldness Aromatic, including an explanation of its use, possibly appeared as such:

> The *Records Narrating the Strange* states, 'This is an export of the country of Dandan[2484]. It came as tribute in the time of Emperor Wu of the Han. Upon every arrival of a great cold spell [people] burned it in their chambers. Warm air would gather and come inside and everyone would take off some of their garments.[2485]

[2481] Textual accounts of perfumed bodies, especially in the south during the pre-imperial period, are often linked to female *wu*-shaman, but many of the noted individuals at the end of the Eastern Han who are presented as draped in perfumes are men with ties to the imperial family or who wield political and economic power. In time, such stories of strongly perfumed men generally fall away in favor of stories of women who have a special affection for aromatics.

[2482] DYZB:3.26. In contrast to Hong Chu's citation of this passage, it was only Princess Tong Chang who rode in such a carriage, thus underscoring the particular association of perfumes and aromatics with this imperial figure.

[2483] Shang, "Xiang houpu," 15.

[2484] The country of Dandan 丹丹 (also 單單) was possibly located on the Malay peninsula, see Milburn, "Aromas," 461–62n.92.

[2485] As reconstructed by Zhang Haipeng 張海鵬 (1755–1816), see Shang, "Xiang houpu," 15; also see translation in Milburn, "Aromas," 461–62; see also Wolters, *Indonesian Commerce*, 262.

述異記曰：丹丹國所出，漢武帝時入貢。每至大寒，於室焚之，暖氣翕然而入，人皆減衣。

In this case, the miraculous warming effects of burning Expelling Coldness Aromatic are made apparent. Such an explanation is not otherwise provided for Warding Off Evil Aromatic, but "warding off evil *qi*" (*bi xieqi* 辟邪氣) was commonly encountered in medieval medical literature as a virtue of powerful therapeutic drugs, included several aromatics recorded by Hong Chu such as musk [HC#2], Indonesian lakawood [HC#17], and sweet grass [HC#21]. The final two substances listed in the entry above, Auspicious Lin Aromatic and Golden Phoenix Aromatic, refer to auspicious animals that appear during the reigns of virtuous emperors, thus underscore the association with imperial prestige and authority.

If we return to the episode preserved in the *Miscellaneous Compilation from Duyang,* it notes that each of the sachets also contained a mixture of camphor [HC#1] and gold flakes. Such a mixture underscores the perceived economic and social value of luxury aromatics since they are combined, with no apparent olfactory purpose, with precious treasure.[2486] The episode then continues with the following anecdote:

> At that time, the imperial concubines were purchasing wine at the Guanghuaqi Pavilion and they suddenly said to one another, 'How very strange is the smell that comes to us?' A companion said, 'Is it not camphor?' Another said, 'It is not. From youth I have served in the imperial palace of the concubines. Therefore, I have always smelled this, yet even today I do not know from where it comes.[2487]
> 是時中貴人買酒於廣化旗亭，忽相謂曰，坐來香氣何太異也。同席曰，豈非龍腦耶。曰，非也。余幼給事於嬪御宮，故常聞此，未知今日由何而致。

[2486] It is also possible to read the passage as stating the sachets contain "golden chips of camphor" 龍腦金屑。DYZB:3.26. Yet, crystalline camphor was more commonly described as being white like snow.
[2487] DYZB:3.26.

This story probably reflects a real confusion about the place of origin for many of the most valuable luxury aromatics that made their way to the imperial court and to the homes of the Tang Chinese elite. Conflicting information about the source of various commodities, not to mention unscrupulous merchants who hawked adulterated goods, certainly seeded confusion about the true origin of many foreign aromatics.[2488]

A stripped down version of the above anecdote is also found in an anonymous Daoist commentary, entitled the *Commentary on the Scripture of Perpetual Purity and Clarity Spoken by the Highest Lord Lao* (*Taishang laojun shuo chang qingjing jing shu* 太上老君說常清靜註; DZ756), perhaps dating to the Yuan.[2489] This text lists only three aromatics: Expelling Coldness Aromatic, Warding Off Evil Aromatic, and Dispelling Dirt Aromatic (*pichen xiang* 辟塵香).

47) Incense from Yuezhi 月支香

The *Charts of Auspicious Correspondences*[2490] [states], "In the second year of *tianhan* [99 BCE[2491]], the Yuezhi presented Spirit Incense as tribute and Emperor Wu took it and inspected it. Its appearance was like swallows' eggs. Altogether there were three pellets as

[2488] In the case of the tale above, the shop owner reveals that one of Princess Tong Chang's carriage attendants traded a piece of brocade for wine and the scent the imperial concubines smelled was coming from that piece of cloth, see DYZB:3.26.
[2489] DZ756:22a–b; for dating of this text, see Schipper and Verellen, *The Taoist Canon*, 728.
[2490] The *Charts of Auspicious Correspondences* (*Ruiying tu* 瑞應圖) is a lost apocryphon (*weishu* 緯書) by Sun Rouzhi 孫柔之 (d.u.) of the Jin, see Zheng et al., *Dictionary of the Ben Cao Gang Mu*, 376–77, 445.
[2491] Other dates include: third year of *tianhan* (98 BCE), T2122:574a29–b06; sixth year of *yanhe* 延和 (the *yanhe* reign era only lasted four years from 92–89 BCE), TPYL:8.983.874; and the third year of *zhenghe* 征和 (90 BCE), see Smith, "Ritual," 548. O. W. Wolters understands the different dates as indicating different epidemic episodes, see Wolters, "Po-Ssŭ Pine Trees," 327n.3.

large as jujubes. The emperor did not burn them and had them placed in the outer storehouse. Afterwards there was a great epidemic in Chang'an and the people of the palace became sick. Many envoys pleaded to burn a single piece [of the incense] in order to dispel the miasma. The emperor burned it and those who were ill within the palace were cured. [Everyone] within a hundred *li* of Chang'an could smell this incense and the accumulation [of smoke] did not disperse for nine months."

瑞應圖：大[2492]漢二年，月支國貢神香，武帝取看之，狀若燕卵，凡三枚，大似棗。帝不燒，付外庫。後長安中大疫，宮人得疾，眾使者請燒一枚以辟疫氣，帝然之。宮中病者差，長安百里內聞其香，積九月不散。[2493]

48) Rousing the Numina Aromatic 振靈香

The *Records of the Ten Continents*[2494] [states], "On the continent of Juku there are large tress that resemble liquidambar and the fragrance of their leaves can be smelled for several hundred *li*. They are called Soul Summoning trees. Place its root inside a jade cauldron and boil the juice until it is like syrup. It is called Startling the Spirit Aromatic, or Rousing the Numina Aromatic, or Returning to Life Aromatic, or Horse Spirit Aromatic, or Retreating from Death Aromatic. This single item has five names. It is a numinous thing. Its fragrance

[2492] Read 大 as 天, following T2122:574a24.

[2493] Cf. T2122:574a24–28, cf. TPYL:8.981.855. Also cf. BWZ:2.25–26.

[2494] The *Records of the Ten Continents* (*Shizhou ji* 十洲記) is an abbreviated title for the *Records of the Ten Continents of the Inner Seas* (*Hainei shizhou ji* 海內十洲記; DZ598), a one *juan* tales of the strange anthology attributed to the master of esoterica Dongfang Shuo 東方朔 (154–93 BCE). This text is of considerably later vintage, perhaps dating to between the fourth and sixth century. The work is organized around the description of ten legendary islands and forms part of a larger overarching narrative concerning Han Wudi and his encounters with the strange, see analysis and translation in Thomas E. Smith, "Record of the Ten Continents," *Taoist Resources* 2, no. 2 (1990): 87–119; and Smith, "Ritual," 195–226, 536–62; for a brief synopsis of its contents, see Campany, *Strange Writing*, 53–54; Schipper and Verellen, *The Taoist Canon*, 115. For more on the medieval mythology of Dongfang Shuo, see Smith, "Ritual," 138–94, 439–59.

can be smelled for several hundred *li* and the buried corpses that smell it will be promptly revived."

十洲記：聚窟洲有大樹如楓，而葉香聞數百里，名曰返魂樹。根於玉釜中，煮汁如飴，名曰驚精香，又曰振靈香，又曰 返生香，又曰馬精香，又名卻死香。一種五名，靈物也。香聞數百里，死屍在地聞即活。[2495]

49) Thousand Mu Aromatic 千畝香

The *Records Narrating the Strange*[2496] states, "Rinan commandery[2497] has a forest of Thousand *Mu* Aromatic. The famed aromatic is exported from within [this region]."

述異記曰: 南[2498]郡有千畝香林，名香往往[2499]出其中。[2500]

[COMMENTS] Unlike the previous anomalous aromatics listed in this division of Hong Chu's *Materia Aromatica*, several entries culled from the *Records Narrating the Strange* (*Shuyi ji* 述異記), a work of the late fifth century, focus on mundane geographical concerns

[2495] Cf. DZ598:8b; cf. T2122:574a29–b06; cf. TPYL:8.983.874; cf. trans. Smith, "Ritual," 547–48.
[2496] Two works circulated under this name *Records Narrating the Strange* (*Shuyi ji* 述異記), a lost ten *juan* compilation by the astronomer Zu Chongzhi 租冲之 (429–500) and a shorter two *juan* compilation by Liang dynasty official Ren Fang 任昉 (460–508), see Zheng et al., *Dictionary of the Ben Cao Gang Mu*, 371, 424–25, 693–94. The editors of the *Imperial Readings of the Taiping Era*, unlike Hong Chu, cite this specifically as from the work of Ren Fang, see TPYL:8.981.855. For more in the work of Ren Fang, see Campany, *Strange Writing*, 84–85.
[2497] Rinan 日南, literally "South of the Sun" (i.e. south of the Tropic of Cancer), was the southernmost Chinese commandery first administered under the Western Han comprising present-day central Vietnam, see Zheng et al., *Dictionary of the Ben Cao Gang Mu*, 259. Rinan fell to Cham invaders in the second century, and while Chinese troops would intermittently regain control of the region in the following centuries, it was never much more than an isolated frontier outpost. In addition to having critical ports for international commerce, Rinan was also an early producer of valued aloeswood. For more on the early medieval history of Rinan, see Wang, "Nanhai Trade," 26–27, 40–41; Schafer, *Vermillion Bird*, 16–17, 18–20.
[2498] Read 南 as 日南, following TPYL:8.981.856.
[2499] Omit 往往, following TPYL:8.981.856.
[2500] Cf. TPYL:8.981.856.

that appear to corroborate historical facts while at the same time adding a layer of detail not known from other historical documentation. For the medieval Chinese elite, the "famed aromatic" from Rinan cited in this entry would call to mind the aloeswood forests in the mountains behind the coastal plains of present-day central Vietnam. This region has an abundance of *Aquilaria crassna* trees that can produce the fragrant oleoresin infused wood so coveted by medieval merchants, perfumers, and religious practitioners. Moreover, based on the gazetteer of Wan Zhen, we know Rinan exported high quality aloeswood by at least the late third century.[2501]

The Buddhist monk Zhu Fazhen, in the late fifth century, also attests to the exportation of aloeswood from Bijing 比景 county, an administrative division of Rinan.[2502] Thus, judging from our limited knowledge of early medieval trade, is seems the regional aloeswood forests of Rinan played an important role in the development of local Fragrance Markets [HC#86], a separate entry Hong Chu reserves for the next division of the *Materia Aromatica* on the "Affairs of Aromatics."

More detailed knowledge on the politics and economies of aloeswood trade on the Indochinese Peninsula appears in the thirteenth century *Treatise on the Barbarians*. This work describes aloeswood from the kingdom of Champa (Zhancheng), the state in control of the Vietnamese Central Highlands and surrounding areas, as second only in quality to the products exported from the Khmer Empire (Zhenla 真臘), controlling much of present-day Cambodia.[2503] The text furthermore reports that the Cham government levied an excise tax on

[2501] T2122:573c24–29 (passage discussed in comments to Wood Honey Aromatic at HC#42).
[2502] TPYL:8.982.865 (emending 北景 to 比景; passage discussed in comments to aloeswood at HC#3).
[2503] Hirth and Rockhill, *Chau Ju-Kua*, 204.

aromatics harvested in the mountains (again, most likely aloeswood). Only when the tax was paid in full was an individual allowed to engage in trade.[2504]

Importantly, even though Hong Chu interprets "Thousand Mu" as the name of an aromatic, the context of the *Records Narrating the Strange* demonstrates it describing a forest of aromatic trees that covered an area of a thousand *mu*, or in other words, the Aromatic Forest of a Thousand Mu (*qian mu xianglin* 千畝香林). Reading the head entry as Hong Chu presents it, however, the name would imply the great distance over which the fragrance of this aromatic would travel, as we see with the subsequent entry below. This parsing of the passage consequently justifies this item's inclusion among the "Strange Aromatics" of the *Materia Aromatica*.

50) Ten Li Aromatic 十里香

The *Records Narrating the Strange* states, "The Thousand Year Pine Aromatic is smelled for ten *li*."

述異記曰: 千年松香聞於十里。[2505]

[COMMENTS] This entry is so named for the ability of the Thousand Year Pine Aromatic (*qiannian song xiang* 千年松香) to project its fragrance over a distance of ten *li*. The practice of deriving the names of aromatics from their perceived ability to perfume at great distances was not unusual, as for example we also find Seven *Li* Aromatic (*qili xiang* 七里香,

[2504] Hirth and Rockhill, 48.
[2505] Cf. TPYL:8.981.856.

Symplocos sumuntia[2506]), Nine *Li* Aromatic (*jiuli xiang* 九里香; *Osmanthus fragans*[2507]), and Thousand Pace Aromatic [HC#63]. Such arcane nomenclature is a product of a common naming convention that highlights a quality or effect of the particular aromatic substance.

Thousand Year Pine Aromatic remains a *hapax legomenon* and thus we know nothing else about its purported origins or esoteric attributes.[2508] More generally, in contrast to deciduous trees, as a class of evergreen, pine trees became natural candidates for Chinese lore concerning longevity. Consequently, pine tree products such as pine nuts and pine resin (*songzhi* 松脂) were often viewed as stock ingredients for dietary regimens of adepts seeking immortality. We would assume such aspirations for longevity would be evoked through the image of a Thousand Year Pine, noting also that the term "aromatic" could be read "drug," and thus call to mind a powerful panacea. Pine trees and advanced age are also connected through another medieval belief about pine resin. One tradition holds that when pine resin falls to the ground, after a thousand years, it will transform into *fuling* 茯苓 (or 伏苓), a fungus now often identified as *Poria cocos*. This is yet another pine-related dietary substitute for immortality seeking adepts.[2509] This belief appears to have it origins in older lore which can be dated to the *Records of the Grand Historian* from the first century BCE. This text

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[2506] Nanjing zhongyiyao daxue, *Zhongyao da cidian*, (#338); For more on this plant, see my comments to Yun Aromatic at HC#28.

[2507] Nanjing zhongyiyao daxue, *Zhongyao da cidian*, (#3754); for more on this plant, see Cynthia L. Chennault, "The Reclusive *Gui* –Cinnamon or Osmanthus?," *Early Medieval China* 12 (2006): 166.

[2508] It is possible to read the preserved passages of *Records Narrating the Strange* as reporting this tree's growth on the island of Hainan, as does Edward Schafer, see Schafer, *Shore of Pearls*, 41. This is due to the sequential nature of several passages, the previous of which to Thousand Year Pine Aromatic mentions the "Aromatic Isle" of Hainan [HC#90].

[2509] See discussion of *fuling* in Greatrex, *Bowu Zhi*, 123, 244–45n.61 (translated as "Indian bread") and Campany, *Heaven and Earth*, 25, 310n.73. The Tang editors of the *Supplement to the Materia Medica* explain that pine resin turns into *fuling*, and then after another thousand years turns into amber (*hubo* 琥珀), and then after another thousand years turns into *yi* 瞪, which may refer to the black mineral jet. When either of these latter two substances are burned, so is claimed, they emit the scent of pine, see XXBC:12.301; see also passing comments in Schafer, *Golden Peaches*, 149; Bokenkamp, "Calamus," 298; Steavu, "Marvelous Fungus," 363–64.

specifically claims that "*fuling* 伏靈 are the roots of the Thousand Year Pine; those who eat them will not die."[2510]

Ancient pine trees appear elsewhere in classical Chinese works. For example, a thousand year pine tree (*qiansui songshu* 千歲松樹) is described in the fourth century *Master who Embraces Simplicity* as having branches that extend upwards on all sides, in contradistinction to ordinary trees. Consequently, when viewed from a distance, the pine appears as if inverted. In addition to this anomalous appearance, a menagerie of strange long-lived animals are said to live in the crown of its uppermost branches.[2511]

Even though the *Records Narrating the Strange* only highlights the powerful projective smell of Thousand Year Pine Aromatic, this substance would have evoked ideas about powerful occult transmutations and esoteric dietary practices. A similar view is presented with strange substance known as Douyi Aromatic [HC#44].

51) Bīrzai Aromatic (galbanum) 醓齊香[2512]

The *Miscellaneous Morsels from Youyang* states, "Exported from Persia. In the Byzantine Empire[2513] it is called *halbanītā*. It is more than one *zhang* in length and about one *chi* in circumference. Its skin is green in color, thin, and exceptionally glossy and clean. Its leaves resemble asafetida and three leaves grow from every branch end. It does not have flowers or

[2510] 伏靈者，千歲松根也，食之不死。SJ:128.3226.
[2511] DZ11853.2b–3a, trans. Ware, *Alchemy*, 55–56. A thousand year pine (*qiannian zhi song* 千年之松) is noted in the received edition of the *Master of Huainan*, but has been determined to be a later interpolation, see commentary at HNZ:16.1121–1122 (also see Major et al., *Huainanzi*, 638, where reference to the pine tree is omitted).
[2512] Read 醓 as 酖, following YYZZ:18.1350.
[2513] The toponym Fulin 拂林 (or 拂菻) appeared in Chinese documents in the sixth century as a name for the Eastern Roman Empire, also known as the Byzantine Empire (330–1453). It was likely a transcription of the Sogdian Frōm (Rome), see Diego M. Santos, "A Note on the Syriac and Persian Sources of the Pharmacological Section of the *Yǒuyáng Zázǔ*," *Collectanea Christiana Orientalia* 7 (2010): 48, 50.

bear fruit. People in the Western Regions regularly prune it in the eighth month, yet through winter it still sprouts new [stems] which are exceptionally dense and lush.[2514] If they were not cut and removed, [the plant] would wither and die. In the seventh month they cut the stems which produce a yellowish resin. Its appearance is like honey and it has a slightly fragrant aroma. It is used in medicine and cures the hundred diseases."

酉陽雜俎曰：出波斯國，拂林呼為頂[2515]勃梨咃。長一丈餘，圍一尺許，皮色青，薄而極光淨，葉似阿魏，每三葉生於條端，無花結實。西域人常八月伐之，至冬更抽新條，極滋茂。若不剪除，反枯死。七月斷其枝，有黃汁，其狀如蜜，微有香氣，入藥療百病。[2516]

[COMMENTS] Frederich Hirth and Bernard Laufer identified this substance as galbanum, the oleogum of the umbelliferous *Ferula gummosa* (syn. *F. galbaniflua*) herb found in the mountains of present-day Iran and Turkmenistan.[2517] The gum is known for its bright, fresh, "green" scent.

The original headword in the *Miscellaneous Morsels from Youyang* uses the *bieqi* 䅺齊, while the *Materia Aromatica* uses the rare orthographic variant **bieqi* 藊齊.[2518] This is a transcription of the Persian *bīrzai*. The above entry also lists *hanbolita* 頇勃梨咃 (miscopied

[2514] Laufer understands this sentence as referring to the leaves of the tree, not its stems, see Laufer, *Sino-Iranica*, 363.
[2515] Read 頂 as 頇, following YYZZ:18.1350.
[2516] Cf. YYZZ:18.1350.
[2517] Laufer, *Sino-Iranica*, 363–66. Other *Ferula* species also produce an oleogum, see Howes, *Vegetable Gums and Resins*, 161.
[2518] For comment on the uncommon graph **bie* 藊, see relevant footnote at HC#82d.8.

in the *Materia Aromatica* as *dingbolita* 頂勃梨咃[2519]), approximating the Syriac *halbanītā*. Both *bīrzai* and *halbanītā* refer to the *F. gummosa*.[2520]

The description of the plant's leaf morphology in the *Miscellaneous Morsels from Youyang* is fairly accurate, but the text is otherwise mistaken in claiming the *F. gummosa* does not flower nor bear fruit. A tapping process to recover the galbanum exudate is also properly described, but it should be noted that the *F. gummosa* is not a woody tree but a small, herbaceous plant, thus such incisions would have been made at the root, similar to how asafetida resin is collected.[2521] Unlike camphor [HC#1] and gum guggul [HC#6], both of which were also described in the *Miscellaneous Morsels from Youyang*, very little is known about the importation of galbanum into China until the modern period.[2522] The relative scarcity of this oleogum likely accounts for its inclusion in the "Strange Aromatics" division of the *Materia Aromatica*.

52) Tortoiseshell Aromatic (cassia?) 龜甲香

The Records Narrating the Strange states, "This is the excellent kind of cassia."

述異記曰：即桂香之善者。[2523]

[COMMENTS] The full passage from the *Records Narrating the Strange* provides additional information regarding the variant nomenclature and geographic origin of this aromatic:

[2519] The fact that *Bīrzai* Aromatic is not found in the *Imperial Readings of the Taiping Era* and that the same miscopied transcription is found in the *Extensive Record of the Taiping Era* suggests Hong Chu was working from the latter text to compile his catalogue, see also YYZZ:18.1351n2.
[2520] For a more recent study on these linguistics issues, see Santos, "Yǒuyáng Zázǔ"; and older discussion can be found in Laufer, *Sino-Iranica*, 363–64; Schottenhammer, "Xiangyao," 137.
[2521] Howes, *Vegetable Gums and Resins*, 161.
[2522] See Schottenhammer, "Xiangyao," 138–39.
[2523] Cf. TPYL:8.983.875.

> This is the excellent kind of cassia. Another name is Purple Wood Aromatic, another is Gold Du Aromatic, and another is Mi Herb Aromatic. It is exported from the two commanderies of Cangwu and Guilin. Nowadays, the [old state of] Wu has Mi Herb which resembles indigo and is extremely fragrant.[2524]
> 即桂香之嘉者。一名紫木香，一名金杜香，一名蘼草香。出蒼梧，桂林二郡界。今吳中有麋草，似藍而甚芳香。

Cangwu and Guilin are part of present-day Guangxi in the far south. Thus, the identification of Tortoiseshell Aromatic as the "excellent kind of cassia (*gui* 桂)" remains plausible since the *Cinnamomum cassia* tree grows throughout the tropical south. Given there is no entry for cassia elsewhere in Hong Chu's work, let us briefly turn to the "Chinese cinnamon tree."[2525]

The strongly scented interior bark (and non-scented wood) of the *gui* was well known to the medieval Chinese through its frequent appearance in the *Songs of Chu* anthology.[2526] For example, in "Encountering Sorrow," curled cassia bark (*jungui* 菌桂) was used with sweet basil [HC#32] to create a scented belt-charm.[2527] In the poem "Mountain Spirit" woven cassia bark is flown as a banner by a descending spirit.[2528] We also find cassia infused ale (*guijiu* 桂酒) used as a sacrificial offering, while cassia wood was reputedly turned into oars

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[2524] TPYL:8.983.875.

[2525] A problem in modern terminology arises through the fact that the common term "cassia" refers not only to the individual East Asian *Cinnamomum* species *Cinnamomum cassia* but also to the entire genus *Cassia*, which falls under a different family. Moreover, modern culinary "cinnamon" (at least in the United States) is primarily sourced from the *C. cassia*, see Chennault, "Reclusive *Gui*," 156. The terminological confusion between cinnamon and cassia extends back into Western writings of antiquity, where both terms are used in a seemingly interchangeable manner. Lionel Casson argues the distinction in terms was not botanical, but related to quality: "cinnamon was the finer," Casson, *Periplus*, 123. I will use the term cassia to refer to East Asian *C. cassia*, and reserve "cinnamon" for the *Cinnamomum* species of India, Sri Lanka, and Southeast Asia.

[2526] *Gui* came to refer to two very different kinds of plants, the tall *C. cassia* evergreen on one hand, and the smaller *Osmanthus fragans* shrub of the olive family on the other. While the former was used for its fragrant bark and leaves, the latter was used principally for its scented flower buds, see Pan, *Chuci*, 28–29, 124–25; Chennault, "Reclusive *Gui*," 166–67 and sources cited therein.

[2527] CC:1.13, trans. Sukhu, *Songs of Chu*, 37. According to materia medica literature, *jun* was the name of a kind of bamboo, thus *jungui* referred to cassia bark that was curled into a tubular shape like bamboo. Tao Hongjing notes that a tri-fold roll of cassia was the best, see XXBC:12.304.

[2528] CC:2.79, trans. Sukhu, *Songs of Chu*, 18.

and a boat hull.[2529] Moreover, cassia is the most frequently cited ingredient in the second century BCE medical manuscripts of Mawangdui, found a total of twenty-three times in surviving recipes.[2530] Unsurprisingly, cassia bark was also recovered from Tomb 1 at Mawangdui, found in both large herbal pouches stored in the western compartment and in the two smaller scenting sachets clutched in the hands of the tomb occupant.[2531] Scientific analysis on the bark reveled that it was not the *C. cassia* of the tropical south, but *C. japonicum* (syn. *C. chejiangenese*, *C. pedunculatum*), a different species of cassia that occurs in the eastern coastal regions around present-day Fujian, Jiangsu, and Jiangxi.

The culinary utility of cassia was long recognized in China. The *Record of Rites* describes the use of crushed cassia and ginger as suitable seasonings for dried meat and alcohol, including for when a person in mourning falls ill.[2532] More pointedly, the *Master Zhuang* (*Zhuangzi* 莊子) employs cassia as a primary counterexample for the ultimate value in uselessness: "Cassia can be eaten, therefore the trees that yield it are chopped down…Everybody knows the utility of usefulness, but nobody knows the utility of

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[2529] CC:2.56, trans. Sukhu, *Songs of Chu*, 6; CC:2.62, trans. Sukhu, 10; and CC:2.60, trans. Sukhu, *Songs of Chu*, 9, respectively. Notably, the *gui*-infused ale as cited in the "August of the East, the Great Unity" also appears in a Western Han Music Bureau hymn, see my comments in Chapter 2, Section 3. Based on comments in the sixteenth century *Systematic Materia Medica*, David Knechtges believes only osmanthus blossoms were used for scenting alcohol in ancient China, see Knechtges, "New Study," 315. I see no reason to exclude cassia bark from consideration as both textual and archaeobotanical evidence from the Western Han supports its use. On one hand, as noted below, *gui* is cited frequently in the medial manuscripts of Mawangdui. When it is physically described in recipes it could only refer to lengths of cut tree bark. For example, one recipe requires the use of *gui* "six *cun*" in length, another "one-*chi* long," and another "three *chi*" in length, see Harper, *Early*, 272, 342, and 347, respectively (this is in addition to the use of *jungui* to refer to curled cassia bark, see Harper, 268n.3). Pulverized *gui* is also added to liquor in three recipes, see Harper, 223, 276, and 279, respectively. Notably, *gui* is never identified as a kind of flower in any recipe from the Mawangdui texts. On another hand, pieces of cassia bark were recovered from the Mawangdui tombs, yet no osmanthus blossoms were found. Given the significance of cassia bark at Mawangdui and the reported use of *gui* to flavor liquor as part of contemporary therapeutic remedies, I find no reason to exclude cassia from consideration as an early flavor additive for sacrificial alcohol.

[2530] Harper, *Early*, 103n.1, 105n.2.

[2531] See discussion in Chapter 2, Section 3.

[2532] LJZY:7.2777; see also LJZY:28.3181 (crushed cassia and ginger can be sprinkled on dried meat); Yamada Kentarō, "Tōzai kōtsū shijō no nikki," *Nagoya gakuin daigaku ronshū* 12, no. 1/2 (1975): 274.

uselessness."[2533] Despite this characterization of the tree's untimely demise, cassia was also associated in early Chinese imagination with regeneration and immortality, likely due to its year-round growth as an evergreen tree. For example, one old legend places a cassia tree on the moon (an object that periodically regenerates each month) alongside the elixir-pounding hare. Equally, cassia was used by numerous medieval adepts seeking to lengthen their life.[2534]

Such practical uses and symbolic deployments are conjoined the in the frequent textual citations to cassia as a woodworking and building material, such as in the *Songs of Chu*. One of the most famous construction projects reportedly involving cassia was the Cassia Palace (*gui gong* 桂宮) of Emperor Wu of the Han, who built the structure in 101 BCE. As noted by Martin Kern, however, similar to the modifying word "jade," the literary use of cassia was symbolic of moral integrity, and thus such ambitious projects need not be understood literally.[2535] This is clear, for example, in the "Lady of the Xiang River" (Xiang furen 湘夫人) of the *Songs of Chu* where cassia is used as a ridgepole and thoroughwort as rafters in the construction of a house.[2536] While *C. cassia* might be able to provide short lengths of timber, it is unlikely to have been used as a roof support. Of course, the herbaceous plant thoroughwort (*Eupatorium* spp.) could have never been used as a construction material. Buildings named after precious aromatics materials would continue to be made through the medieval period, including the famed Aloeswood Pavilion of the Tang [HC#104].

[2533] 桂可食，故伐之…人皆知有用之用，而莫知無用之用也。ZZ:1.4.163, trans. (with minor changes) in Mair, *Wandering on the Way*, 41.
[2534] Campany, *Heaven and Earth*, 25, 173n.135 and sources cited therein.
[2535] As cited in Chennault, "Reclusive *Gui*," 164n.32. For more on the Cassia Palace, see SFHT:2.157–161 and Knechtges, Wen Xuan, Vol. 1, 130n.254–55.
[2536]CC:2.67, trans. Sukhu, *Songs of Chu*, 11

In spite of the fact that cassia was commonly cited in ancient and medieval Chinese works, the alternative names provided above by the *Records Narrating the Strange* – Purple Wood Aromatic, Gold Du Aromatic, and Mi Herb Aromatic – do not corroborate the identification of Tortoiseshell Aromatic as a species of *Cinnamomum*. Further confusing this issue is the fact that several of these alternative names, with slight orthographic variations, appear in a subsequent entry of the *Materia Aromatica* under Purple Shu Aromatic [HC#59]. It appears there has been a conflation between the graphs *mu* 木, *zhu* 术 (or 朮), and *shu* 述, and that Purple Shu Aromatic was at one time the same as Purple Wood Aromatic (*zimu xiang* 紫木香), noted above. The resolution of these issues will have to await further research comparing textual recensions.

As a final point, it is worth underscoring that cassia (or "Chinese cinnamon") is distinct from the South Asian cinnamon tree, *Cinnamomum verum* (syn. *C. zeylanicum*), or true cinnamon. Linguistic antecedents to "cassia" and "cinnamon" are found in works of Western antiquity, including Herodotus (484–424 BCE) and Theophrastus (371–287 BCE), and such products were well known to later Roman commerce.[2537] There has been much debate as to the original botanical referents of cassia and cinnamon and three hypotheses have emerged: as an import from southern China (from the *C. cassia*), as an import from India, Sri Lanka, or southeast Asia (from the *C. verum* and related species), or as an import from East Africa.

Roman sources of the first century identify East Africa as the origin point of cassia and thus modern scholars are left to decide if cassia originally referred to a different aromatic

[2537] Laufer, *Sino-Iranica*, 541–43; Yamada, "Tōzai kōtsū shijō no nikki," 255–56; Casson, *Periplus*, 122–24; Chennault, "Reclusive *Gui*," 154–55. A more comprehensive survey of the classical cinnamon and cassia trade can be found in Yamada, "Tōzai kōtsū shijō no nikki"; Yamada, *Tōa kōryō shi kenkyū*, 408–88.

material native to the African continent or if East African markets were simply regional entrepôts mistaken as producers by Roman authorities.[2538] The latter is most often assumed and based on the fact that neither Greek nor Roman authors report an Indian trade in cinnamon or cassia it was commonly believed a century ago their origin could have only been China. Berthold Laufer was the first to reject these claims as baseless pointing to the lack of basic understanding regarding the limitations of early Chinese maritime trade in cassia.[2539]

Yamada Kentarō is among many scholars who believe cassia and cinnamon were applied to products originating in India, such as the bark of *C. verum* or other Indian *Cinnamomum* species, such as *C. tamala*, *C. iners*, *C. obtusifolium*, or possibly from the Malay Peninsula, including *C. iners*, *C. obtusifolium*.[2540] Yamada leaves open the possibility that older terminology originally referred to a native African "cinnamon," as of yet unidentified.[2541] Richard Haw has recently suggested the *Cassia abbreviata* as a potential African candidate that also corresponds to early Roman descriptions of a shrub, not a tree.[2542] In either regard, almost all Sinologists, especially after Laufer, reject the possibility of Chinese cassia forming part of the early commercial trade of Greece or Rome. More to this

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[2538] For example, the *Periplus Maris Erythraei* cites East Africa as the origin of cassia (it makes no mention of cinnamon), see Casson, *Periplus*, 123.
[2539] Laufer, *Sino-Iranica*, 542–43; see also similar comments in Haw, "Cinnamon, Cassia, and Ancient Trade," 13. While many of Laufer's observations are generally correct, his view that cassia bark was not used in Chinese medicine prior to the fifth century is demonstrably wrong, as is evidenced by the second century BCE Mawangdui medical manuscripts; see also comments in Yamada, "Tōzai kōtsū shijō no nikki," 260–61.
[2540] Yamada, "Tōzai kōtsū shijō no nikki," 264–65, 278–79n.12, 279–82n.13, 303–05; Yamada, *Tōa kōryō shi kenkyū*, 427–33, 458–75. Another perspective was proposed by J. Innes Miller who conceived of the "Cinnamon Route" and envisioned a trade network of Malayan/Austronesia sailors who brought Southeast Asia cinnamon and Chinese cassia to Madagascar, which was subsequently traded in East African markets. See summary, and ultimate rejection, of this view in Yamada, "Tōzai kōtsū shijō no nikki," 286–90; see also Haw, "Cinnamon, Cassia, and Ancient Trade," 6, 6n.12, 9–10.
[2541] Yamada, "Tōzai kōtsū shijō no nikki," 303–05.
[2542] Haw, "Cinnamon, Cassia, and Ancient Trade," 11–12. The argument against an "African cinnamon" is that this plant, which one supplied Greece and Rome, mysteriously vanishes in the later medieval period, see e.g. Casson, *Periplus*, 123.

point, Yamada argues that up through the middle of the sixteenth century, Chinese merchants had still not yet started exporting *C. cassia* to the West in any sizable capacity.[2543]

53) Doumo Incense 兜末香

[53a] The *Supplement to the Materia Medica* states, "Burning it drives away malign *qi* and dispels illnesses and epidemics.

[53b] The *Tales of Emperor Wu of Han*[2544] states, "The Queen Mother of the West descended and the Highest [i.e. Emperor Wu of the Han] burned this incense which was presented as tribute from the state of Douqu[2545]. It resembled large beans and when it was used to paint the palace gates its fragrance was smelled for a hundred *li*. There was a great epidemic in Guangzhong[2546] and the dead were piled atop one another. By burning this incense the epidemic then ceased."

[53c] The *Esoteric Biography* [*of Emperor Wu of the Han*][2547] [states], "The dead were all raised. This is Numinous Incense. It is not what China produces.

[2543] Yamada, "Tōzai kōtsū shijō no nikki," 278n.12; Yamada, *Tōa kōryō shi kenkyū*, 465–70.

[2544] The *Tales of Emperor Wu of Han* (*Han Wudi gushi* 漢武帝故事) is written loosely in the genre of "precedents" (*gushi* 故事) concerned with the reigns of previous emperor and straddles the tales of the strange genre with a particular focus on Emperor Wu. The text may have been completed by the early third century and there is good evidence to show that it was already circulating by the end of the fifth century, see discussion in Campany, *Strange Writing*, 30, 48–49, 318–321 and Smith, "Chinese Administrative Practices." For an analysis and translation of this work see Smith, "Ritual," 100–37, 384–438.

[2545] For conjecture on the identity of this polity as Tukhāra or even Tuṣita Heaven, see Smith, "Ritual," 415n.108. I understand this name as pseudo-Sanskrit.

[2546] Literally designating a region "within the passes," this specifically referred to the Guangzhong plateau in present-day Shaanxi, but it conventionally referred to the region around the capital of Chang'an, see Hua, Buell, and Unschuld, *Dictionary of the Ben Cao Gang Mu*, 116.

[2547] The *Esoteric Biography of Emperor Wu of Han* (*Han Wudi neizhuan* 漢武帝內傳; DZ292) shares many of the hallmarks of the tales of the strange genre and was likely a part of single text along with the *Records of the Ten Continents* and much of the *Exoteric Biography of Emperor Wu of Han* (*Han Wudi wai zhuan* 漢武帝外傳; DZ293), the latter of which completed in the fifth century. An analysis and translation of the *Esoteric Biography of Emperor Wu of Han* can be found in Schipper, *L'Empereur Wou*, and Smith, "Ritual," 196–272, 479–535.

[53a] 本草拾遺曰：燒去惡氣，除病疫。[2548]

[53b] 漢武帝故事曰：西王母降，上燒是香。兜渠國所獻，如大豆，塗宮門，香聞百里。關中大疫，死者相枕，燒此香，疫則止。[2549]

[53b] 內傳曰：死者皆起。此則靈香，非中國所致。[2550]

54) Sinking Light Incense 沈光香

The *Records of Cavern Darkness* [states], "A tribute from the country of Tuhun[2551], when burned indoors it produces light. It is solid and firm and difficult to crush. The imperial physicians, using an iron pestle, crushed it into powder and burned it."

洞冥記：塗魂國貢，門中燒之有光，而堅實難碎，太醫以鐵杵舂如粉而燒之。[2552]

[COMMENTS] Similar to the following entry for Sinking Elm Incense, the name Sinking Light Incense is a play on the seemingly anomalous Chinese name for aloeswood, Sinking in Water Aromatic [HC#3]. High-quality aloeswood, when sufficiently saturated with oleoresin, would sink in water. The reference to Sinking Light Incense being solid and firm might suggest how decay-resistant aloeswood was harvested from rotting *Aquilaria* trees or to the increasing circulation of hardened tree resins and gums in the medieval period.

According to the full account found the *Records of Cavern Darkness,* this fictitious aromatic was among several kind of exotic incense that were burned by the master of

[2548] Cf. BCGM [返魂香/附錄].
[2549] Cf. TPYL:8.983.874, trans. Smith, "Ritual," 414–15.
[2550] I have been unable to find a parallel passage in the received version of this text.
[2551] I have been unable to identify this country.
[2552] Cf. trans. Smith, "Ritual," 609. According to Smith, most of this passage from the *Records of Cavern Darkness* is solely preserved in Hong Chu's *Materia Aromatica*, see Smith, "Ritual," 609n.23, 609n.24.

esoterica Dongfang Shuo 東方朔 (154–93 BCE) for Emperor Wu of the Han. This item is listed together with Scenting the Flesh Incense [HC#63], Spirits and Demons Incense [HC#71], Jin Midi Incense [HC#73], and Bright Court Incense.

55) Sinking Elm Incense 沈榆香

The *Record of the Feng and Shan Sacrifices*[2553] [states], "The Yellow Emperor arranged jade tablets atop mats of thoroughwort straw and burned Sinking Elm Incense. He crushed various gems into bits and combined them with Sinking Elm [gum[2554]] so as to resemble a paste. He used it to distinguish between the ranks of seniors and juniors, the Chinese and barbarians." 封禪記：黃帝列珪玉於蘭蒲蓆上。然沈榆香，舂雜寶為屑，以沈榆和之若泥，以分尊卑華戎之位。[2555]

[Comments] The fourth century *Uncollected Records* preserves this anecdote extracted from the otherwise unknown *Record of the Feng and Shan Sacrifices*. The *Uncollected Records* is organized chronologically, beginning with the exploits of the mythical sage-ruler Fu Xi 伏羲 at the earliest stages of the world and concludes with the ruler Shi Hu 石虎 (295–349) of the Jin-era.[2556] The Yellow Emperor is the third figure addressed in this compilation and by the medieval period he was considered among the cultural heroes of antiquity, often portrayed as the creator of a centralized Chinese state and a patron of the esoteric arts.

[2553] I have been unable to identify this text. This text is cited as the origin of the story in the *Uncollected Records*, see SYJ:1.9
[2554] *Jiao* 膠, tree gum or resin, is specified in the *Uncollected Records*, see SYJ:1.9.
[2555] Cf. SYJ:1.9; cf. trans. Foster, "Wang Chia's *Shih-I*," 386.
[2556] Campany, *Strange Writing*, 306.

The act of state building is implied in the above anecdote as a proto-bureaucracy is established by means of an esoteric ritual using jade tablets and the fictitious Sinking Elm Incense. Importantly, the Yellow Emperor was also credited with the invention of many aspects of civilized life, including daily-use items such as the carriage, boat, cooking pot, and bronze mirror.[2557] By placing incense into the hands of the Yellow Emperor, Wang Jia, the compiler of the *Uncollected Records*, was also aligning the burning of aromatics with many of the other civilizing forces the famed emperor was credited with initiating.

In addition, this anecdote also references a pair of competing ritual practices that establish a series of hierarchies. The granting of jade tablets to rulers as emblems of their virtue is an ancient Chinese practice.[2558] This ritual is subsequently followed by a new rite, where fragrant resin pellets are mixed with crushed jewels and then used to delineate ritually ordered space.[2559] In this case, the use of fragrant and precious powders not only distinguishes rank based on seniority, but also identifies the presence of non-Chinese foreigners (*rong* 戎) who are separated from Chinese members of the court. Encoded in the sweet fragrance of aromatics, we find ritual, political, and moral order.

The name "sinking elm," similar to Sinking Light Incense [HC#54], would have brough to mind the prized real-world Sinking in Water Aromatic, or aloeswood, which by the third century was already being imported from countries along the Indochinese Peninsula and

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[2557] Chang, *Art, Myth, and* Ritua, 42.

[2558] For a convenient, though dated, summary of jade as symbols of sovereignty and virtue, see Berthold Laufer, *Jade: A Study in Chinese Archaeology and Religion* (Chicago: Field Museum of Natural History, 1912): 80–103. For the continued importance of symbols of imperial investiture into the medieval period, especially in early Daoist sacraments, see Seidel, "Imperial Treasures."

[2559] It is possible that semi-translucent air-hardened resins, in addition to their high cost, made foreign incense seem as if it were crushed jewels. Though uncommon, there are a handful of examples in Chinese Buddhist translations which describe the use of crushed jewels (*baoxie* 寶屑) mixed with incense in the preparation of *maṇḍalic* space, most notably in the work of Kumārajīva, see e.g. T1509.740b09. These would all likely postdate the *Uncollected Records*, however. It might also be possible to view the use of crushed jewels as analogous to the use of crushed jade, which we find in Chinese sources.

was being harvested in the tropical regions of southern China within a century or two after that period.[2560] Notably, Wang Jia resided in the cosmopolitan center of Luoyang and was known to move within Buddhist circles, reputedly striking a friendship with the influential scholar monk Dao'an 道安 (312–385) who spent the end of his life at Chang'an.[2561] Socializing within these environments, it is almost certain Wang Jia was intimately familiar with a luxury commodity such as aloeswood, a product often noted in Buddhist scriptures. Elsewhere in the *Uncollected Records*, Wang Jia shares a story about a tree named Perpetual Spring (*hengchun* 恆春), with leaves like lotus flowers and the scent of cassia, that was also known by the alternative name Sinking Life (*chansheng* 沉生). Wang Jia then interjects, noting that it is "like the aloeswood of today."[2562]

Because the above episode of the Yellow Emperor describes Sinking Light as a type of oleogum or oleoresin, it appears Wang Jia may have also been familiar with other imported aromatics, such as frankincense, or perhaps even gum guggul, an oleogum resin that was closely connected to Dao'an's teacher, Fotudeng, in the medieval Chinese imagination. Moreover, the fact that Sinking Elm was made into a fragrant paste and smeared on the ground also attests to Wang Jia's knowledge of Indian Buddhist offering practices. Lastly, as we have seen in the episode about Expelling Coldness Aromatic [HC#46], the fact that Sinking Elm was mixed with gems seem to point to the perceived value of rare aromatics, a perception that was driven by scarcity and market prices as much as it was driven by stories of their miraculous attributes.

[2560] For more on the history of aloeswood in China see HC#3 and HC#42.
[2561] Wang Jia is noted in the medieval biography of Dao'an, see Arthur E. Link, "Biography of Shih Tao-An," *T'oung Pao*, Second Series, 46, no. 1/2 (1958): 37–39.
[2562] 如今之沉香也。SYJ:10.225.

56) Clouding the Imperial Palace Aromatic 茵墀香[2563]

The *Uncollected Records* [states], "In the third year of *chuping* (191[2564]), Emperor Ling [of the Han](r. 168–189) received a tribute from the Western Regions that was boiled into a decoction to dispel an epidemic. The palace servants used it to wash their heads."

拾遺記：靈帝初平三年，西域獻，煮湯辟癘，宮人以沐頭。[2565]

[COMMENTS] In contrast to the passage preserved here, the received *Uncollected Records* offers a different glimpse into the contexts in which this strange aromatic was used. In this version we are told that Emperor Ling had constructed the Roaming Nude Villa (*luoyou guan* 裸遊館) in the Western Garden. This is a location he enjoyed visiting in the height of summer where "palace servants between the ages of twenty-seven and thirty-six would all put on cosmetics, take off their outer garments, and wear only underwear; some would bathe nude communally." We are further told there was "a tribute from the Western Regions [called] Clouding the Imperial Palace Aromatic that was boiled into a decoction. After the palace servants had bathed in it, the excess liquid was put into a stream and thus was called the Flowing Fragrance Stream."[2566]

[2563] My reading of this name is speculative. *Yin* 茵 (or 鞇) more commonly refers to woven grass padding used as a seating mat, but the term was also used in the medieval period to identify two different plants, a type of *Artemisia* and a type of highly poisonous *Skimmia*; see Hua, Buell, and Unschuld, *Dictionary of the Ben Cao Gang Mu*, 434 (#1378 and #1393). Perhaps due to the interwoven nature of the mat, *yin* is also glossed as *yin* 氤 and *yinyun* 氤氳 in Chinese dictionaries, terms which refer to the dense cover of smoke, fog, or mist. It is from this sematic vantage point that I understand the name of this entry. *Chi* 墀 refers to the palace of the emperor, see my comments to Clutched Aromatic at HC#88.

[2564] The *chuping* era falls under the subsequent reign of Emperor Xian 獻 (r. 189–220), not Emperor Ling. *Chuping* might be a mistake for *xiping* 熹平 (172–178) or *zhongping* 中平 (184–189), thus placing this reputed event in the third reign year equivalent to 174 or 186.

[2565] Cf. SYJ:6.144–145.

[2566] 宮人年二七已上，三六以下，皆靚妝，解其上衣，惟著內服，或共裸浴。西域所獻茵墀香，煮以為湯，宮人以之浴浣畢，使以餘汁入渠，名曰流香渠。SYJ:6.145.

Unlike the version of this story presented in the *Materia Aromatica* where the aromatic tribute was prepared as a balneotherapeutic wash to end an epidemic, the received version presents the aromatic as substance to clean and perfume the women of the imperial palace.[2567] According to imperial historical documents, such as the *Book of Later Han*, the Western Garden pleasure grounds existed since at least the 120s. Moreover, Emperor Ling, a figure admonished by later imperial historians for his decadence, was known to have conducted activities there that quickly became notorious throughout the capital of Luoyang.[2568] The Roaming Nude Villa, however, is never mentioned in the *Book of Later Han* and the *Uncollected Records* anecdote is perhaps part of later elaborations on the debauchery of the emperor who is often seen as a principal reason for the fall of the once glorious Han dynasty.

Despite the historical uncertainty of Emperor Ling's activities, the story describes an olfactory practice well-attested in ancient and medieval sources and is worth briefly discussing. The boiling of scented plants to infuse essential oils into water was a common method to prepare a bath, but could also be used as to create a balneotherapeutic wash or employed for ritual lustrations. As noted by Edward Schafer, "the bathing medium *par excellence*" was *tang* 湯, "hot water," a term that could also refer to a medicinal potion or a natural hot spring.[2569]

[2567] I believe the addition of *piyi* 辟癘, "to dispel an epidemic," is a copyist error of the homeoteleuton type. The same pair of characters appear in the following entry, also cited from the *Uncollected Records*, as the fifteenth and sixteenth graphs in the passage. This error is also found in the uncorrected Huacheng edition of the *Baichuan*, see p. 1816.

[2568] Rafe de Crespigny, *Fire over Luoyang: A History of the Later Han Dynasty 23-220 AD* (Leiden: Brill, 2017), 45.

[2569] Schafer, "Bathing Customs," 58. Schafer's work remains a useful overview of bathing culture in ancient and medieval China. For discussion on the springtime Lustration Festival, see Bodde, *Festivals*, 273–288.

The typical scented bath was classically known as a Thoroughwort Decoction (*lantang*), a term which has its origins in the "Lord of the Clouds" (*Yunzhong jun* 雲中君) of the *Songs of Chu* anthology.[2570] In this poem, a thoroughwort bath is used as part of a ritual cleansing procedure for a shaman (*ling* 靈) who wishes to commune with a spirit named Lord of the Clouds. If the identification of classical *lan* as *Eupatorium fortunei*, a type of thoroughwort, is correct, this water would have been infused with the scent similar to lavender.

In the north, the *Rites of Zhou* also describes the importance of ritual lustration, assigning it to the duties of the female *wu*-shaman who perform them during seasonal rites asking for the removal of defilement and ill fortune.[2571] The *Record of Rites* also preserves a discourse by Confucius on the appropriate activities of the *ru*-scholar 儒, noting that one should "bath the body and wash one's virtue," thus illustrating the strong conceptual link between cleanliness of the body and the symbolic purity of one's moral conduct.[2572] During periods of mourning, the requirements for general cleanliness were lifted and seen as an appropriate expression of respect for a family member who died. But even in such cases, the requirements of ritual purity were not to be abrogated when a sacrifice was to be performed. Presented again as the carefully considered instruction of Confucius, a gentleman is informed that "lustration before sacrifice is for the sake of ritual purity, not [bodily] ornamentation."[2573]

[2570] CC:2.57, trans. Sukhu, *Songs of Chu*, 7.

[2571] ZLZS:26.1763, trans. Biot, *Le Tcheou-li*, Vol. 2, 104. The Han commentarial tradition specifies that lustration included the use of "fragrant and aromatic herbs and medicine" 香薰草藥, ZLZS:26.1763. Derk Bodde presumes this refers to thoroughwort and other scented plants, see Bodde, *Festivals*, 278. Elsewhere, Bodde notes that the *Book of Odes* connected the ritual act of purging ill-fortune with the collection of thoroughwort plants, making his presumption well-reasoned, see Bodde, 276. Other examples of bathing as ritual purification are noted in Schafer, "Bathing Customs," 56–60.

[2572] 澡身而浴德。LJZS:59.41.3626.

[2573] 祭之沐浴，為齊潔也，非為飾也。KZJY:10.43.306 (reading 齊 as 齋). For more on the close correlation between bodily hygiene and virtue, see my comments to Hong Chu's preface of the *Materia Aromatica*.

This underscores the belief that bathing was not only for the sake of hygiene or vanity, but was intimately tied to moral order.

The connection between bodily hygiene and physical health was also widely accepted as accurate medical knowledge in antiquity. Another reason to break the protocols that asked mourners to go unbathed was the appearance of ulcers and sores on the body and head. This medical pragmatism also extended to breaking one's abstention from alcohol and meat when ill during periods of mourning.[2574] The *Guideway through Mountains and Seas* recommends bathing in a decoction of *huangguan* 黃雚, an unknown plant said to resemble the temperate ailanthus, for resolving scabies, while the medical manuscripts from Mawangdui list a recipe for infusing hot water with peach leaves to relieve long-lasting itches.[2575]

The archaeological record has also revealed other important clues as to which botanical materials may have been used as medicine and to scent the body. For example, lacquered toiletry cases (*lian* 奩[2576]) have been recovered from many Warring States and Han-era tombs, some containing fragrant plant materials that may have been used to infuse such waters. The Chu necropolis at Baoshan 包山 revealed a tomb sealed in 316 BCE that contained one such early toiletry case. When excavated, along with bronze mirrors, bone hairpins, and a powder puff, the box was filled with Sichuan peppercorns. Tomb 1 at Mawangdui was also found to contain a five-piece toiletry case set with one of the smaller nested containers holding Sichuan peppercorns and another holding an assortment of scented

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[2574] KZJY:10.43.306.
[2575] SHJ:2.4697 and Harper, *Early*, 97 and 298, respectively.
[2576] *Lian* is typically used in modern archaeological reports to denote round cases or boxes, some of which due to their contents can be identified as toiletry or cosmetics cases. Smaller containers nested inside toiletry cases are often identified in these reports as *he* 盒. *Lian* has also been used to identify openwork tapered cylinders that may be early types of incense burners, see passing comments in Rawson, "Chu Influences," 93 and Rawson, "Boshan lu," 75. For an overview of toiletry cases and their contents, see Sun, *Handai wuzhi wenhua*, 299–303; for a discussion on various types of crates, boxes, and containers, see Sun, 395–98.

herbs (*xiangcao* 香草) which were not identified in the archaeological report. Lastly, another Chu tomb in Shizishan 獅子山 saw the discovery of a lacquered bamboo box containing hand towels and unidentified plant material. More importantly, the box was found in the vicinity of a large silver basin, suggesting the herbs were intended to be used to infuse bathing water.[2577]

Turning back to the anecdote of Emperor Ling, we find the foreign tribute item, Clouding the Imperial Palace Aromatic, being boiled to create an herbal bath, not too dissimilar from the well-known Thoroughwort Decoction of the *Songs of Chu*. The anomaly of the event that caused it to be recorded in the *Uncollected Records* was the fact that the scent of the excess bathing water was powerful enough to scent an adjacent stream. Special fragrant bathing waters are also found elsewhere in the *Uncollected Records*. In a tale related to Shi Hu, the ruler of the northern Later Zhao dynasty, when the water was drained from the imperial harem's Pure Amusement Bathing House (*qingxi yushi* 清嬉浴室), it formed a rivulet outside the palace that became known as the Warm Scented Stream (*wenxiang qu* 溫香渠). These scented waters were so coveted by people outside the palace precincts that fights ensued, but those who retrieved even a small amount were met with great satisfaction by their family members.[2578]

There are several aromatics listed in Hong Chu's *Materia Aromatica* that are used in hot water decoctions to extract their scented essential oils, including sweet basil [HC#20], sweetgrass [HC#21], thoroughwort [HC#34], lemongrass [HC#36], and *dūrvā* [HC#76]. In

[2577] As discussed in Milburn, "Aromas," 445. Yang Zhishui has identified some of the implements used in ritual lustration, chiefly comprising a pitcher filled with scented water and a companion broad-mouthed wash basin. This is exemplified by a recovered Chu-style bowl inscribed *yufou* 浴缶, "wash basin," see Yang, *Xiang shi*, 92.
[2578] SYJ:9.217.

addition to these, medieval Daoists would prepare a decoction of costus root [HC#16] and wild angelica root [HC#30] for dispelling the Three Corpses, as recorded in the *Scripture of the Forty-Four Methods on Yellow Silk*.[2579] Medieval Buddhist scripture attest to a more complex recipe of aromatics as preserved in the *Sutra of Golden Light*. As described by Catherine Ludvik, the balneotherapeutic recipe revealed by the goddess Sarasvatī could be used to counteract numerous real-world difficulties, including epidemics, diseases, quarrels, bad dreams, and curses, among many other obstacles.[2580] The extant Sanskrit version of this text contains thirty ingredients, while the late sixth century Chinese translation by Jñānagupta has twenty-five and the eighth century translation by Yijing has thirty-two.[2581] Of the ingredients listed in Yijing's translation, fifteen also appear as headwords (or have the same or similar underlying botanical referents) in the *Materia Aromatica*. This includes musk [HC#2], aloeswood [HC#3], sandalwood [HC#4], gum guggul [HC#6], saffron/turmeric [HC#7], frankincense [HC#9], camphor oil [HC#12], costus root [HC#16], Indian dill/tree moss [HC#18], Himalayan cedar/spikenard [HC#19], valerian root?/sweet basil [HC#20], nutsedge [HC#27], sal dammar/liquidambar [HC#33], Indian bay leaf/Malayan patchouli [HC#38], and cinnamon/cassia [HC#52] (listing the Indian referent first followed by the Chinese botanical analogue).[2582]

57) Stone Leaf Aromatic 石葉香

The *Uncollected Records* [states], "This aromatic [is made] of overlapping layers and it

[2579] DZ1380:18b. I translate the relevant passage in my comments to wild angelica at HC#30.
[2580] Ludvik, *Sarasvatī*, 162–64.
[2581] Ludvik, 164. A comparison of these ingredient lists can be found in Ludvik, 309–15.
[2582] The Indian and Chinese referents are discussed in my comments to the respective entries. My identifications are sometimes different from those in Ludvik, 309–15.

appearance is like mica. Its smell dispels epidemics. During the time of Emperor Wen of Wei, it was presented as tribute by the country of Futi[2583].

拾遺記曰：此香疊疊[2584]，狀如雲母，其氣辟癘。魏文帝時題腹[2585]國獻。[2586]

[COMMENTS] This is one of many miraculous drugs noted in medieval tales of the strange literature with the capacity to end wide-spread illness. Nothing more is known about this aromatic's reputed country of origin and despite the connection to the historical Emperor Wen of the Cao-Wei, it is certainly fictional.[2587]

Nevertheless, the description of the mysterious aromatic drug as having the appearance of mica is precisely that of the description of camphor given by the pilgrim monk Xuanzang in the mid-seventh century [HC#80], more than two hundred years after the compilation of the *Uncollected Records* by Wang Jia. Curiously, as we know through the early fourth century *Sogdian Ancient Letters*, camphor was one of the products sold in the emporiums of the Tarim Basin [HC#1], hinting that white crystalline camphor flakes may have been known to Wang Jia, a figure with possible connections to Buddhists who lived in cosmopolitan centers at the end of the fourth century.[2588] Consequently, we might speculate that this anecdote regarding Stone Leaf Aromatic was motivated by the movement of Southeast Asian camphor through China, but stronger evidence to this point eludes us.

[2583] I have been unable to identify this country.
[2584] Read 疊疊 as 重疊, following SYJ:7.159.
[2585] Read 題腹 as 腹題, following SYJ:7.159.
[2586] Cf. SYJ:7.159.
[2587] Emperor Wen is also closely associated with the unidentified Midie Aromatic, see HC#43b.
[2588] See Link, "Shih Tao-An," 37–39 and my comments to Sinking Elm Incense at HC#55.

58) Phoenix Brain Incense 鳳腦香

The [*Miscellaneous*] *Compilation from Duyang* [states]: [Emperor] Muzong [of the Tang](r. 820–824) tested it in front of [a wooden sculpture called] Concealing the True Isles in order to worship and venerate [the immortal Yiqu Xuanjie].

杜陽編：穆宗嘗于藏真島前焚之，以崇禮敬。[2589]

[COMMENTS] This entry contains an extremely condensed version of a story preserved in the received *Miscellaneous Compilation from Duyang*. This particular tale of the strange can be summarized as follows: A Daoist master named Yiqi Xuanjie 伊祁玄解, who had flowing black hair, a youthful appearance, and pleasant smelling breath, was held by Emperor Muzong against his will. The Daoist adept was versed in the esoteric arts of longevity and wished to return the Eastern Sea, a mythic abode of the immortals. We are told that one of the emperor's palaces housed an intricately carved miniature wooden model of the three Isles of the Immortals, decorated with paint, pearls, and pieces of jade. On the Lunar New Year, while gazing upon the ornate miniature landscape, the emperor laments his inability to travel to such a paradise. Upon hearing this statement, Yiqi Xuanjie suddenly leaps into the air, shrinks himself in size, and glides through one of the gatehouses in the model, not to be seen again. Because of this miraculous act, the emperor called the carving of the three mountains "Concealing the True Islands," and venerated the Daoist master by burning Phoenix Brain Incense every morning at dawn. The emperor later heard a report that Yiqi Xuanjie was spotted riding a yellow mare across the sea.[2590]

[2589] Cf. DYZB:2.13–14.
[2590] A translation of the longer story can be found in Stein, *World in Miniature*, 52–53.

Rolf Stein discussed this tale in his wide-ranging historical analysis of miniaturized container gardens in East Asia, remarking that a lack of size was not also the absence of majesty in miniaturized world, since "smalless gives greater value to the object."[2591] Chinese smell culture plays only a small role in this story, but it is worth noting that sweet fragrances frame this medieval tale of the strange. Yiqi Xuanjie is described as youthful with lush dark hair, two standard tropes revealing the person's status as an immortal, but also as having "breath that is fragrant and clean."[2592] Far from being an inconsequential attribute, this additional olfactory sign bolstered an understanding of the adept's vitality (halitosis is often taken as a sign of the sick, ugly, or old) as well as his purity and inner virtue. After Yiqi Xuanjie renders himself small as a means of escape, the emperor decides to regularly make offerings of incense right in front of the miniature landscape, treating it both as the site of a miraculous occurrence and as a shrine suitable for worship. One might also imagine the curling whisps of smoke wrapping around the mountains like incense burned within the famed imperial *Boshan* censers [HC#100]. Of course, the emperor's incense has a special name, Phoenix Brain Incense, which would have linked it in the minds of medieval audiences to Dragon Brain Aromatic, the traditional name for camphor [HC#1].

An abbreviated retelling of this story, absent Phoenix Brain Incense, can be found in the *Comprehensive Mirror of True Immortals Who Embodied the Way through the Ages* (*Lishi zhenxian tidao tongjian* 歷世眞仙體道通鑑; DZ296).[2593]

[2591] Stein, 52.
[2592] 氣息香潔。DYZB:2.13。
[2593] DZ296:337b–8b. For more on this text, see Schipper and Verellen, *The Taoist Canon*, 887–92.

59) Purple Shu Aromatic (cassia?) 紫述香

The *Records Narrating the Strange* states, "Another name is safflower, or Gold Du Aromatic, or Musk Herb Aromatic. It is exported from the two commanderies of Cangwu[2594] and Guilin[2595]."

述異記：一名紅藍香，又名金[2596]香，又名麝香草香，出蒼梧，桂林二郡界。[2597]

[COMMENTS] In the sixteenth century *Systematic Materia Medica*, Purple Shu Aromatic is listed among the synonyms for Yu Gold Aromatic, which during the medieval period typically identified as saffron [HC#7].[2598] Curiously, in spite of the fact that Purple Shu Aromatic was known since the fifth century through the *Records Narrating the Strange*, this was the first time the botanical substance was incorporated into Chinese materia medica literature. Tellingly, the *Systematic Materia Medica* also lists safflower (*honglan hua* 紅藍花) and Herbal Musk Aromatic (*caoshe xiang* 草麝香; transposing part of the nomenclature above) as additional synonyms for Yu Gold Aromatic, proving this passage from the *Records Narrating the Strange* was the principal source for establishing these identifications.

The reason for including these three alternative names under the entry for Yu Gold Aromatic is not straightforward. On one hand, perhaps the final alternative name, Gold Du Aromatic, (*jindu xiang* 金杜香) was viewed as a close of Yu Gold Aromatic.[2599] On the other

[2594] A county in present-day Guangxi, see Hua, Buell, and Unschuld, *Dictionary of the Ben Cao Gang Mu*, 69.
[2595] A commandery that comprised regions of present-day Guangxi, see . Hua, Buell, and Unschuld, *Dictionary of the Ben Cao Gang Mu*, 120.
[2596] Read 金 as 金杜, following TPYL:8.983.875.
[2597] Cf. TPYL:8.983.875.
[2598] BCGM:1.895 [鬱金香/釋名] .
[2599] Equally, if Yu Gold Aromatic was read as wild turmeric, a connection to *du* 杜 could be established though its use in nomenclature related to both wild ginger and galangal, all fragrant rhizomes, see my comments to wild ginger at HC#31.

hand, perhaps the longstanding conflation between safflower and saffron, one of the many botanical analogues provided for Yu Gold Aromatic [HC#7b], motivated the connection.[2600] In any regard, this identification appears to contradict the full citation of the *Records Narrating the Strange* which linked all of these botanical names, with some slight variations, to Tortoiseshell Aromatic [HC#52], the reputed name for a superior kind of cassia. The resolution of these issues will have to await further research.

60) Wei Aromatic 威香[2601]

Mr. Sun's[2602] *Charts of Auspicious Correspondences* states, "This is an auspicious herb. It is stated that another name is Solomon's Seal[2603]. When the king performs the rites in splendor, then it grows in front of the halls. It is also stated that when the king cherishes the lives of other people, it then grows."

孫氏瑞應圖曰：瑞草，曰：一名威狉[2604]，王者禮備，則生於殿前。又云：王者愛人命，則生。[2605]

[COMMENTS] This anomalous aromatic is one among a class of mythic plants that grew in response to the virtuous conduct of the emperor. Similar to the appearance of special *fauna*, such as the phoenix or single-horned *qilin* 麒麟, special *flora* functioned as an augury of

[2600] On the Chinese confusion between safflower and saffron, see Laufer, *Sino-Iranica*, 310–11, 324–28. Berthold Laufer also speaks to the mistaken connection between the so-called musk root, *Ferula moschata* (syn. *Ferula sumbul*), and saffron, see Laufer, 315n.1.
[2601] Read 威 as 葳, following T2122:573a18–19.
[2602] Referring to Sun Rouzhi of the Jin; his *Charts of Auspicious Correspondences* is also cited for the entry to the Incense from Yuezhi [HC#47].
[2603] *Polygonatum odoratum*, see Hua, Buell, and Unschuld, *Dictionary of the Ben Cao Gang Mu*, 429 (#1217).
[2604] Read 威狉 as 葳蕤, following T2122:573a18–19.
[2605] Cf. T2122:573a18–19; cf. TPYL:8.981.857.

auspiciousness and the favor of Heaven. According to surviving passages from the *Charts of Auspicious Correspondences*, *weirui* 威蕤 (or 威緌, 葳蕤), here above cited as Wei Aromatic (*weixiang* 葳香), was one of several kinds of plants that grew or appeared in direct response to favorable socio-political conditions.[2606] For example, according to this text, when a ruler exhibits virtue, the plant *fubing* 福并 grows, when he practices benevolence and righteousness, *zida* 紫達 will always be seen, and when there is peace for a generation, *quyi* 屈軼 will appear in the front courtyard of the palace.[2607]

Among the more common plants of this sort to be cited in Chinese sources is *mingjia* 蓂莢, or "lucky pods." The *Charts of Auspicious Correspondences* describes the plant as such:

> As for the *mingjia*, it leaves are round and pentachromatic. Another name is the Calendar Pod. It has fifteen leaves. Each day it grows a single leaf from the first day of the lunar month until the full moon. On the sixteenth day and afterwards is loses a single leaf [each day] until the last day of the lunar month. When the moon is a mere sliver, the sole leaf curls and falls off. It is [a sign] of the auspicious of the sage. When the virtue of men and lords match that of Heaven and Earth then [*mingjia*] grows.[2608]
> 蓂莢者，葉圓而五色，一名歷莢。十五葉，日生一葉，從朔至望畢；從十六日毀一葉，至晦而盡。月小則一葉卷而不落。聖明之瑞也，人君德合乾坤則生。

According to lore, the leaves (or elsewhere, pods) of the plants would grow in accordance with the waxing and waning of the moon. The *Traditions of Heavenly Aromatics* [HC#119] claims that the Yellow Emperor used Sinking Elm [HC#55] and *mingjia* as incense, but this latter view is not substantiated in other surviving Chinese document of which I am aware.

[2606] *Weirui*, a rhyming binome, also carries a meaning of "lush and luxuriant," see Knechtges, Wen Xuan, Vol. 2, 20n.30.
[2607] TPYL:7.873. Another example is *pinglu* 平露, see relevant footnote at Golden Spice at HC#107.
[2608] TPYL:7.873.

Notably, the appearance of Wei Aromatic is cited as one of the auspicious omens appearing during the Liu Song Dynasty in the *Book of Song*.[2609] Importantly, this text defines Wei Aromatic just as the *Charts of Auspicious Correspondences* defines *weirui*, affirmatively linking the two names. This has the effect of suggesting an olfactory dimension to *weirui* that was not originally intended. The similarly named *weirui* 萎蕤, now often identified as Solomon's Seal (*Polygonatum odoratum*), appears in the collected annotations to the *Classic of Materia Medica of the Divine Husbandman* and is now treated as a synonym of the otherwise mythic Wei Aromatic.[2610]

61) Hundred Rinse Perfume 百濯香

The *Uncollected Records* [states], "The four favorite concubines of Sun Liang [of the Wu](r. 252–258) combined their four scents. Each perfume was a special recipe and the tribute of a strange country. Whoever was to walk through [the concubines'] rooms of repose and rest would find the perfume clung to his garment for a full year without end. Therefore, this perfume was named Hundred Rinse. Afterwards their quarters were called the Chambers for Cherishing Perfume.

拾遺記：孫亮寵姬四人，合四氣，香皆殊方，異國所獻。凡經踐躡，安[2611]息之處。香氣在[2612]衣，彌年不歇，因香名百濯。復目其室曰思香媚寢。[2613]

[2609] SShu:28.18.822. As indicated in the text, the date on which this occurred had been lost.
[2610] XXBC:6.152–153. According to Tao Hongjing's annotations, the original materia medica text had *niüwei* 女萎 which was then emended to *weirui*.
[2611] Read 安 as 宴, following SYJ:8.190.
[2612] Read 在 as 沾, following SYJ:8.190.
[2613] SYJ:8.190–191.

[COMMENTS] The longer account of this story in the *Uncollected Records* provides further details about this special perfume. The four concubines of the child emperor Sun Liang 孫亮, named as Chao Shu 朝姝, Li Ju 麗居, Liu Zhen 洛珍, and Jie Hua 潔華, were able to gaze at the moon through a specially designed window fashioned for their private quarters. While the thin transparent glass made it seem as if there was nothing between them and the external world, it caused their individual perfumes, each of which was an exotic export from a strange country, to combine into a rare fragrance that would not wash off garments even after rinsing them one hundred times. This peculiar quality gave rise to the name of their combined scent as the Hundred Rinse Perfume.[2614]

This anecdote plays with a few recurring themes in tales of the strange literature regarding aromatics, including foreign origins, supermundane scenting strength, and an explicit association with femininity (and by extension, health and fertility). This story in the *Uncollected Records* is also one of the few that refers explicitly to blending (*he* 合) scents, although in this case the final combination appears to be the unintended effect of having the four women in close proximity to one another within a confined space. Nevertheless, each individual perfume appears to be comprised of a "special recipe" (*shufang* 殊方), revealing the Hundred Rinse Perfume to be a complex mixture of more than just four individual ingredients. Wang Jia's fourth century association of perfume blending with the southern coastal state of Eastern Wu may reflect contemporary historical considerations given the earliest textual evidence we have for blending arts comes in the mid-to-late third century *Treatise on Strange Things of the Southern Regions* by Wan Zhen, a regional governor for

[2614] SYJ:8.190–191. The received *Uncollected Records* notes the aromatics as exports, not tributes.

the state of Eastern Wu.[2615] Even if Wang Jia's anecdote is not historically accurate, as we know nothing else of these four concubines outside of his text, it reveals an early medieval belief in the connection between the southern coastal state and the practice of blending perfumes and incense.

62) Dragon Pattern Aromatic 龍文香

The [*Miscellaneous*] *Compilation from Duyang* [states]: "A tribute from the time of Emperor Wu [of the Han], but the country's name has been forgotten."

杜陽編：武帝時所獻，忘其國名。

[COMMENTS] This passage has not been preserved in the received version of the *Miscellaneous Compilation from Duyang* which opens with the reign of Emperor Daizong (r. 762–779) of the Tang. This episode represents yet another tale associated with the great Emperor Wu and his vast collection of foreign tribute aromatics, symbolizing his extensive imperial power over vast territorial domains.

63) Thousand Pace Aromatic 千步香

[63a] The *Records Narrating the Strange* [states], "The Southern Seas export Thousand Pace Aromatic. When worn [on the belt-sash], its fragrance is smelled for one thousand paces. It is

[2615] For more on the early arts of perfumery in China, see my comments to onycha at HC#35 and the discussion in Chapter 5, Section 7.

an herb. Nowadays, the coastal areas have Thousand Pace Herb. It is the [same] type. The leaves resemble galangal[2616] [leaves] and have red and blue markings."

[63b] The *Records of Tribute*[2617] states, "Rinan commandery presented Thousand Pace Aromatic as tribute."

[63a] 述異記: 南海出千步香，佩之香聞於千步。草也。今海隅有千步草，是其種也。葉似杜若，而紅碧相雜。[2618]

[63b] 貢籍曰：南[2619]郡貢千步香。[2620]

[COMMENTS] The name of this unknown aromatic plant is meant to highlight the pungency of its fragrance which can be smelled for over a thousand paces. It is reported as being worn inside a scenting sachet [HC#97] and thus seems to have been envisioned as a bodily perfume or perhaps as an apotropaic charm.[2621]

64) Perfuming the Flesh Incense 薰肌香

The *Records of Cavern Darkness* [states], "It is used to perfume people's flesh and bones. Up to old age they will not fall ill."

洞冥記: 用薰人肌骨，至老不病。[2622]

[2616] Galangal (*Alpinia officinarum*) was principally used for its aromatic rhizome. For more on the identification of *duruo* 杜若 as galangal, see Pan, *Chuci*, 76–77; Harper, *Early*, 363n.2.
[2617] I have been unable to identify this source. It appears to have been originally cited by the *Records Narrating the Strange*, see TPYL:8.981.855–856.
[2618] Cf. TPYL:8.981.855–856.
[2619] Read 南 as 日南, following TPYL:8.981.856.
[2620] Cf. TPYL:8.981.856.
[2621] For another plant so-named for its perceived ability to project its scent, see Ten *Li* Aromatic [HC#50], also cited by the *Records Narrating the Strange*.
[2622] Cf. trans. Smith, "Ritual," 610. According to Smith, this passage from the *Records of Cavern Darkness* is solely preserved in the *Materia Aromatica*, see Smith, "Ritual," 610n.26.

[COMMENTS] This anomalous aromatic has a profound impact on a person by both perfuming the core of their body and preventing the onset of illness. We find a similar cosmetic application in a story where a woman of the imperial court chewed aromatics, resulting in a deep-body perfuming of her flesh [HC#93]. Miraculous qualities such as these create an association between a fragrant bodily scent, youthfulness, and health. Such ideas were partly fostered through medieval formularies such as the *Emergency Prescriptions to Keep up your Sleeve*, a work edited up through the twelfth century. This work preserves several recipes for perfuming the body, but which require scented pills to be taken orally over the span of several days, causing the body to become more and more fragrant.[2623]

According to the full account found the *Records of Cavern Darkness,* this aromatic was one among the collection of Emperor Wu of the Han. This item is listed together with Sinking Light Incense [HC#54], Spirits and Demons Incense [HC#71], Jin Midi Incense [HC#73], and Bright Court Incense.

65) Hengwu Aromatic 蘅蕪香

The *Uncollected Records* [states], "Emperor Wu of the Han dreamed that Lady Li (d. ca. 100 BCE) gave him *Hengwu* Aromatic. The emperor was startled from his dream and awoke, but his clothing and pillows were as if touched by the fragrant smell which lingered for months without end."

拾遺記: 漢武帝夢李夫人授蘅蕪之香，帝夢中驚起。香氣猶著衣枕，歷月不歇。[2624]

[2623] See e.g. DZ1306:6.30a–b.
[2624] Cf. TPYL:2.176.673, cf. trans. Smith, "Ritual," 672, cf. trans Milburn, "Aromas," 462.

66) Nine Blend Incense 九和香

The *Pearl Satchel of the Three Caverns*[2625] states, "Heavenly Men and Jade Maidens crush and sift heavenly incense. Raising jade censers, they burn Nine Blend Incense."

三洞珠囊曰：天人玉女擣羅天香，按擎玉爐燒九和之香。[2626]

[COMMENTS] A recipe for Nine Blend Incense is preserved in the Ming Daoist canon. It is found in the *Protocols for the Section of Ritual Registers of the Zhengyi Canon* (*Zhengyi fawen falu buyi* 正一法文法籙部儀; DZ1242) from the early Tang.[2627] The recipe and directions are as follows:

> "Recipe for Nine Blend Incense": When burned, this incense will be smelled for nine *li* and stimulate the spirits.
> 九和香法。燒之香聞九里，感徹神明。
>
> [Ingredients]: Aloeswood (one *jin*), costus (three *jin*), onycha (three *jin*), frankincense (one *jin*), elemi (three *jin*), Xie Aromatic[2628] (one *jin*), Dark Jian Aromatic[2629] (one *jin*), nutsedge (one *jin*), and large dried jujubes (twelve).
> 沈木香一斤，青木香三兩，甲香三兩，薰陸香一斤，詹唐香三兩，熒香一斤，青漸香一斤，雀頭香一斤，大乾棗二十枚。
>
> [Directions]: Take each of the nine ingredients and crush them separately. Pass them through a sieve and mix with pale honey until evenly dispersed. Stash this inside a vessel and seal the opening. After three nights and three days the incense is complete and it will be smelled for nine *li*. This method is secret and should not be rashly transmitted. When one desires to contact the spirits, combine all of the pellets and burn them. Separate [the pellets] slightly so they do not touch inside the vessel [i.e. censer]. This will allow the scent to not disperse. This is the ancient Nine Blend.[2630]
> 凡九種各，異擣下篩，以白蜜和令相著。窻器中，封其口，三宿三日，香成聞九里。其法祕不妄傳。欲致神明，合諸丹者燒之，稍稍分著別器中，令炁不泄。此古九和也。

[2625] The *Pearl Satchel of the Three Caverns* (*Sandong zhunang* 三洞珠囊; DZ1139) is a thirty *juan* anthology of Daoist passages compiled by Wang Xuanhe 王懸河 (d.u) and completed around 680, see Schipper and Verellen, *The Taoist Canon*, 440–41. Only ten *juan* survive of the original thirty *juan* work.
[2626] Cf. DZ1139.4.11a.
[2627] For more on this scripture, see Schipper and Verellen, *The Taoist Canon*, 471–72.
[2628] I am unable to identify this substance; it might refer to a blended (*xie*) incense recipe.
[2629] I am unable to identify this substance.
[2630] DZ1242.24a–b. The final sentence and the measurements for each of the ingredients were added by Lord Immortal Ge (*Ge xiangong* 葛仙公), a name associated with Ge Xuan 葛玄 (164–244), but this identification seems unlikely in this case.

This "Recipe for Nine Blend Incense" is found at the very end of the *Protocols for the Section of Ritual Registers of the Zhengyi Canon*, specifically in an appended section related to the rules and protocols regarding the secret transmission of Daoist scriptures. The injunction against rashly transmitting the instructions for making the Nine Blend Incense would be directly related to the secrecy surrounding these transmission rites.[2631]

67) Musk from Jiuzhen 九真雄麝香

The *Miscellaneous Records of the Western Capital*[2632] [states], "When Brilliant Companion Zhao gifted her elder sister [Zhao] Feiyan (d. 1 BCE) thirty-five items, including costus, aloeswood, and Musk from Jiuzhen."

西京雜記：趙昭儀上姊飛燕三十五物，有青水[2633]香，沈水香，九真雄麝香。[2634]

[COMMENTS] Brilliant Companion Zhao refers to Zhao Hede 趙合德 (d. ca. 7 CE), one of the favored consorts of Emperor Cheng 成 of the Han (r. 51–17 BCE). Her older sister, Zhao

[2631] Immediately preceding our recipe we find a brief register of adepts who received a transmission of an accessory rite, thus the Nine Blend Incense may be directly related to this protocol, see brief comments on this point in Schipper and Verellen, *The Taoist Canon*, 472.

[2632] The *Miscellaneous Records of the Western Capital* (*Xijing zaji* 西京雜記) is a collection of anecdotes about the Western Han capital of Chang'an. If the postface attributed to Ge Hong is to be trusted, these stories were gleaned from the unused portions of Ban Gu's *Book of Han*, which were originally based on the unpublished chronical of Liu Xin 劉歆 (ca. 50 BCE–23 CE). Believing this string of attributions to be implausible, some scholars attribute this text to Ge Hong himself, while others claim it as the work of later compilers. It seems most reasonable to assume this text is a mid-to-late Six Dynasties work with a *terminus ante quem* of the mid-sixth century when it is first cited by other works. For a summary of these debates on dating, see Knechtges and Chang, *Reference Guide*, Vol. 1, 1648–55.

[2633] Read 水 as 木, following TPYL:8:981.857.

[2634] Cf. TPYL:8:981.857.

Feiyan 趙飛燕 (d. 1 BCE), highly regarded as a court dancer and musician, quickly gained favor to become empress. The goods listed above were among thirty-five items reportedly gifted to Zhao Feiyan by her sister as a kind of bridal trousseau.[2635] Both sisters wielded great power in the imperial household and undoubtedly had access to some of the most rare and valuable exotica of their time. As we know from Han imperial histories, luxury items imported from afar would have included pearls and kingfisher feathers from the south and woolen textiles from the west. Rare aromatics, on the other hand, were not yet recorded as imports or items of foreign tribute during the lifetimes of Zhao Feiyan and Zhao Hede. Consequently, the reputed gifts of aloeswood [HC#3] and costus [HC#16] should be should be carefully scrutinized.[2636]

Notably, the register of gifts is first recorded in the *Miscellaneous Records of the Western Capital*, a work that is most likely a product of the Six Dynasties, thus postdating the reputed event by several centuries. There is a possibility Indian costus root was imported through Yunnan during the Han, potentially making it one of the earliest supra-regional aromatics imported into China, but the terminology in the registry above weakens the speculation that costus was in the possession of Zhao Hede. The medieval Chinese nomenclature for costus was Dark Wood Aromatic, as we see here, but this terminology only first appears in the late third century.[2637] There are similar linguistic anachronisms with the reference to aloeswood. In spite of the fact that aloeswood-producing *Aquilaria* trees were

[2635] For a discussion of Zho Feiyan's life in the context of the *Miscellaneous Records of the Western Capital*, see Olivia Milburn, *The Empress in the Pepper Chamber: Zhao Feiyan in History and Fiction* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2021), 64–73. A discussion of the gifted items can also be found in Anthony J. Barbieri-Low, *Artisans in Early Imperial China* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2007), 181–182.
[2636] The circulation of supra-regional aromatics during the Han is discussed in Chapter 2, Section 4.
[2637] The identification of this plant as *Aristolochia debilis* is not authentic to the early medieval period, see Barbieri-Low, 182 and my comments to Wood Aromatic at HC#16.

native to the Chinese tropical south, the resin-saturated aromatic is first noted in Chinese sources through the translation of Buddhist scriptures in the late second century where it was called Honey Aromatic. Sinking in Water Aromatic, the nomenclature used for aloeswood in the gift registry, does not appear in Chinese sources until the late third century.

The final scented material listed in Hong Chu's entry, Musk from Jiuzhen (*jiuzhen xiongshe xiang* 九真雄麝香), it not without its own problems. The name remains a *hapax legomenon* and is difficult to interpret. There are aspects in favor of treating the gift as appropriate to the time. For example, musk is recorded in the *Classic of Materia Medica of the Divine Husbandman* and thus likely would have been known to Zhao Hede and Zhao Feiyan (although the nomenclature *xiongshe* 雄麝, "buck musk deer," is unexpected). Additionally, Jiuzhen, a commandery in present-day northern Vietnam, was established during the Western Han, thus it is a period-appropriate place name. The main issue stems from the fact that the musk deer was not strongly associated with the far south during the Han and according to the best information we have at our disposal, in the early sixth century the highest quality musk came from the northwest, around present-day Gansu, and only an inferior quality came from the south.[2638] Consequently, musk pods from Jiuzhen would not warrant special mention in a list of gifts meant to extol their scarcity and value.

A variant reading, perhaps even an attempt at correcting the terminology, is provided in the *Imperial Readings of the Taiping Era*. The editors have separated this item into two substances, "Realgar from Jiuzhen" (*Jiuzhen xionghuang* 九真雄黃) and musk (*shexiang* 麝香).[2639] The mineral realgar, known in Chinese as "male yellow" (*xionghuang* 雄黃) for its

[2638] XXBC:15.364, trans. King, *Garden of Paradise*, 87–88.
[2639] TPYL:8:981.857.

pairing with "female yellow" (*cihuang* 雌黃), or orpiment, was known as a product of western China throughout the medieval period or, at times, as an import from Rome.[2640] Thus, the alternate reading "Realgar from Jiuzhen" does not necessarily resolve the issue.

In sum, there is no sound reason to treat this register of gifts as authentic to the Han. Due to the particular nomenclature of aromatics, it would appear to date no earlier than the late third century, putting it in line with when the *Miscellaneous Records of the Western Capital* is believed to have been compiled.[2641]

68) Kaśmīri Incense 罽賓國香

The *Miscellaneous Accounts of Master Lu*[2642] [states], "Yang Mei once summoned Cui Anshi (d. 760) to eat and placed a single censer in front of the plate. Smoke ascended in the shape of a tower. Cui distinguished the smell of a single fragrance, but it was not the smoke from the censer, so Cui was puzzled. Yang glanced towards his attendants who then brought a white angular dish that held a lone ball of lacquer and presented it to Cui. He said 'This is Kaśmīri Incense[2643] and this is the fragrance you smell.'"

[2640] For more on Chinese realgar, see Edward H. Schafer, "Orpiment and Realgar in Chinese Technology and Tradition," *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 75, no. 2 (1955): 73–89; Schafer, *Golden Peaches*, 219–20; see also XXBC:4.107–109.

[2641] While Anthony Barbieri-Low considers the list genuine to the Western Han, Olivia Milburn claims there is "nothing here to contradict a date in the late Han to early Jin dynasty," see Barbieri-Low, "Artisans," 181 and Milburn, *Zhao Feiyan*, 68, respectively. My dating of this lists is not based on when costus and aloeswood were first imported into China, something Milburn describes as "highly controversial," but upon the distinctive Chinese terminology that came to refer to them. A further indication of anachronism in the full list of items is also found in the use of the term *boshan* censer (noted in the above works), which only dates to the Jin, see Kirkova, "Sacred Mountains," 56–57.

[2642] The *Miscellaneous Accounts of Master Lu* (*Lu shi zashuo* 盧氏雜說) is a lost work attributed to Lu Yan 盧言 (ca. 9th cent.).

[2643] The identification of Jibin 罽賓, which I render as here as Kaśmīra, but elsewhere as Greater Kaśmīra, has been the focus of a considerable amount of scholarship over the past century. The Chinese toponym Jibin referred to different places at different times, but has generally indicated locations south of the Hindu Kush. Since the first century BCE, Jibin was used as a transcription for Kaśmīra, but around the fourth century it sometimes pointed to a greater geographical region that also included Gandhāra further west. In the seventh

盧氏雜說：楊枚嘗召崔安石食，盤前置香一爐，煙出如樓臺之狀。崔別聞一香，非似爐煙，崔思之。楊顧左右，取白角碟子，盛一漆毬子呈崔。曰：此罽賓國香，所聞即此香也。

69) Kumuda Flower Aromatic (water lily) 拘物頭花香

The *Veritable Record of Taizong of Tang*[2644] states, "Kaśmīra presented Kumuda Flower Aromatic. Its fragrance could be smelled for several *li*."

唐太宗實錄曰：罽賓國進拘物頭花香，香聞數里。

[COMMENTARY]: The Sanskrit *kumuda* is understood as a type of white night-blooming water lily (*Nymphaea* spp.), but is often mistranslated as a lotus (*Nelumbo* spp.). Despite its

century, Jibin was more regularly associated with Kapiśā, west of Gandhāra in present-day eastern Afghanistan. This westward shift of Jibin and its meaning for Buddhists in the region is discussed in Shoshin Kuwayama, "Pilgrimage Route Changes and the Decline of Gandhāra," in *Gandhāran Buddhism: Archaeology, Art, Texts*, ed. Pia Brancaccio and Kurt Behrendt (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 2006), 107–34 and Giovanni Verardi, "Buddhism in North-Western India and Eastern Afghanistan, Sixth to Ninth Century AD," *Zibun* 43 (2012): 147–83. Modern Indologists have tended to discuss a cultural and religious influence of "greater Gandhāra" radiating outward from Gandhāra proper in the Peshāwar basin that was sustained through burgeoning monastic networks and continuous intraregional contact along well-established trade routes, see Jason Emmanuel Neelis, *Early Buddhist Transmission and Trade Networks: Mobility and Exchange within and beyond the Northwestern Borderlands of South Asia* (Leiden: Brill, 2011), 231–39 and sources cited therein. For early medieval Chinese Buddhists, the sense of Jibin, and not necessarily its precise political and geographic referents, appears to have held similar implications as a diffusive region of great religious influence that functioned as an important pilgrimage location, an influential site of monastic learning, and thriving epicenter of new Buddhist scholarship (especially for the Sarvāstivādins). While a medieval Chinese Buddhist "greater Jibin" does not necessarily coincide with the modern scholarly understanding of "Greater Gandhāra," specifically since the latter does extend as far eastward as Kaśmīra, both are predicated on porous cultural boundaries conditioned by an intraregional ease of movement for people and objects along established trade routes. It is with this sense that I sometimes translate Jibin as Greater Kaśmīra, inclusive of the modern connotations of "Gandhāran Buddhism" that spilled beyond the borders of Gandhāra proper. Moreover, because so many Buddhist monks went to Jibin on pilgrimage and to study with Indian Buddhist teachers from the eastern side of Pamirs, places like Kashgar, Khotan, and Kucha could be considered as part of the extreme orbit of influence of "Greater Kaśmīra" that was, again, maintained by heavily traversed trade routes running in both directions.

[2644] The *Veritable Record of Taizong of Tang* (*Tang Taizong shilu* 唐太宗實錄) is lost chronical covering the rule of Emperor Taizong (r. 626–649) of Tang.

use as political tribute in the entry above, flowers formed an important category of Buddhist offering and the Chinese transcription, *juwutou* 拘物頭, Late Han Chinese **ko-mut-do*, originates in Chinese Buddhist translations.

70) Spirit Ascending to Heaven Incense 昇霄靈香

The [*Miscellaneous*] *Compilation from Duyang* [states]: "When Princess Tong Chang (849–870) passed away and the lords grieved in pain, they constantly had purple-robed *bhikṣuṇī* and Daoist priestesses burn Spirit Ascending to Heaven Incense and strike the purple and gold chimes for returning to heaven. This was in order to guide the spirit in its ascent."
杜陽編：同昌公主薨，主哀痛，常令賜紫尼及女道冠焚昇霄靈之香，擊歸天紫金之磬，以導靈昇。[2645]

[COMMENTARY]: The received *Miscellaneous Compilation from Duyang* records the name of this incense as Ascending to Heaven and Drawing Down the Spirits Incense (*shengxiao jiangling zhi xiang* 昇霄降靈之香). In either rendering, the literal reading of the name provides the necessary insight into its use during the mortuary rites of Princess Tong Chang, a favored daughter of Emperor Yizong (r. 859–873). Although the name of the princess was omitted from Hong Chu's entry on Expelling Coldness Aromatic [HC#46], the *Miscellaneous Compilation from Duyang* draws a recurring association between Tong Chang and perfumed air, both in life and in death. While the previous tale involving scenting sachets symbolized royalty, femininity, and beauty, the use of incense here is emblematic of its

[2645] Cf. DYZB:3.27.

perceived ties to religious ritual, both Buddhist and Daoist, and the movement of the deceased spirit upward into the heavens, just as the smoke rises into the sky.

71) Spirits and Demons Incense 祇精香

The *Records of Cavern Darkness* [states], "This is exported from the country of Tuhun. When this incense is burned, mountain and forest goblins, demons, and spirits will all flee in fear."

洞冥記：出塗魂國，燒此香魑魅精祇皆畏避。[2646]

[COMMENTARY]: The use of this anomalous aromatic forms a complimentary pair with the normative ritual function of medieval incense: instead of drawing divine beings close, this drives away malignant demons. This idea develops from much older uses of noxious plants to drive away pests and unwanted vermin. Among the earliest clear examples of such a practice can be found in the *Rites of Zhou* where a special officiant is in charge of pest extermination through burning *mangcao* 莽草, a plant identified by Joseph Needham and others as a species of *Illicium*, or star anise.[2647] These practices dovetailed into early Chinese medical theories that viewed human illness and disease as the result of attacking parasites or demonic bugs. Donald Harper has highlighted the close relationship between early theories regarding bug-related disease etiology and fumigation techniques, noting the use of smoke is

[2646] Cf. trans. Smith, "Ritual," 610. According to Smith, this passage from the *Records of Cavern Darkness* is solely preserved in the *Materia Aromatica*, see Smith, 610n.25.
[2647] The identity of this plant and other pesticides in the *Rites of Zhou* are discussed in Needham, Lu, and Huang, *Science and Civilisation,* Vol. 6, Part 1, 472–78. See also the discussion of fumigation in Chapter 3, Section 4.

among “the most potent demonifuges.”[2648] The medieval practice of apotropaic fumigation is thus exemplified by Hong Chu’s entry for Spirits and Demons Incense above.

As reported in the *Records of Cavern Darkness,* this aromatic was a foreign import from the fictive country of Tuhun, the same source for Sinking Light Incense [HC#54], both of which were reputedly in possession of Emperor Wu of the Han.

72) Flying Scent Incense 飛氣香

The *Secret Instructions of the Pearl Satchel of the Three Caverns*[2649] states, “Sandalwood Incense, Night Spring Mysterious Resin, Vermilion Tomb Flying Incense, and Reverting Life Incense are all kinds of incense that are burned by the Perfected.”

三洞珠囊隱訣云：真檀之香，夜泉玄脂朱陵飛之香，返生之香，皆真人所燒之香也。

73) Jin Midi Incense 金磾香[2650]

The *Records of Cavern Darkness* [states], “When Jin Midi (d. 86 BCE) became an attendant [in the imperial court], he desired his garments be perfumed and clean so he made a dense cloud from a perfume he blended himself. The emperor soon took a liking to him. Seeing that Midi had perfumed himself, the women of the palace each used it to enhance their charms.”

洞冥記：金日磾既入侍，欲衣服香潔，得氤氳之氣，自合此香，帝果悅之。日磾嘗以自薰，宮人以見者，每增其媚。[2651]

[2648] Harper, *Early*, 96.
[2649] I have been unable to identify this text.
[2650] Read 金磾 as 金曰磾.
[2651] Cf. trans. Smith, “Ritual,” 610. According to Smith, this passage from the *Records of Cavern Darkness* is solely preserved in the *Materia Aromatica*, see Smith, “Ritual,” 610n.27.

[COMMENTS] Jin Midi 金日磾 (d. 86 BCE) was the son of the slain ruler of the Xiutu 休屠 (vassals of the Xiongnu) whose mysterious golden man statue (*jinren* 金人) was confiscated by the Western Han general Huo Qubing 霍去病 (140–117 BCE) in 121 BCE. Soon thereafter, Jin Midi was taken captive and forced to work in the Han stables, but quickly rose through the ranks to become one of Emperor Wu's most trusted courtiers. His surname, Jin, was bestowed in honor of his father's golden statue.[2652] Imperial histories make no mention of Jin Midi's prowess with blending aromatics as is suggested by the anecdote above. The story of Jin Midi Incense preserved in the sixth century *Records of Cavern Darkness* is better understood as reflecting the interests of early medieval authors who reconceived Emperor Wu and his contemporaries as surrounded by wondrous smells and fantastic foreign aromatics.

Several other men in the medieval imagination were reputed for their personal perfuming habits, including the Han official Yong Zhongzi [HC#85], the Eastern Han political and military advisor Xun Yu [HC#94], and the Western Jin official Han Shou [HC#98].

74) Fivefold Aromatic 五香

The *Pearl Satchel of the Three Caverns* states, "As for the Fivefold Aromatic, a single tree trunk has five roots, a single branch has five stems, a single stem has five leaves, and the span of [each] leaf has five segments. The five-fives are mutually matched, therefore

[2652] Jin Midi's biography from the *Book of Han* is translated in Burton Watson, *Courtier and Commoner in Ancient China: Selections from the History of the Former Han* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1974), 151–57.

previous worthies named it the tree of the Fivefold Aromatic. If you burn it for ten days it penetrates the Heaven of the Nine Sovereigns. This is Dark Wood Aromatic[2653]."

三洞珠囊曰：五香，一株五根，一莖五枝，一枝五葉，一葉間五節，五五相對，故先賢名之五香之木；燒之十曰，上徹九星之天，即青木香也。[2654]

[COMMENTS] Not to be confused with the five ingredient incense blend, nor the five ingredient ritual wash, the Fivefold Aromatic (*wuxiang* 五香) was presented as singular aromatic plant with a recursive pentadic anatomy.[2655] This plant, however, was not simply viewed as a fictive substance, but was connected to Dark Wood Aromatic, a term that otherwise indicated costus root in medieval medical literature and further supported by the sixth century Daoist pharmacologist Tao Hongjing [HC#16].

75) Thousand Blend Incense 千和香

The *Pearl Satchel of the Three Caverns* states, "Sun the Perfected on Mt. Emei burned Thousand Blend Incense."

三洞珠囊：峨嵋山孫真人然千和之香。[2656]

[COMMETS] Sun the Perfected was the Daoist moniker for the famed medieval physician Sun Simiao 孫思邈 (581–682), known for his compilation of the *Essential Priceless*

[2653] For more on this plant, see my comments to Wood Aromatic at HC#16.
[2654] This passage is not found in the received Ming edition of the *Pearl Satchel of the Three Caverns*.
[2655] For further discussion on early Grand Purity incense and lustration blends, see Chapter 5, Section 7 and Chapter 5, Section 8.
[2656] This passage is not found in the received Ming edition of the *Pearl Satchel of the Three Caverns*.

Prescriptions for All Urgent Ills. Sun Simiao was posthumously associated with Mount Emei and was considered among its pantheon of Daoist immortals.[2657] I have been unable to locate this passage in the received version of the *Pearl Satchel of the Three Caverns*. Nevertheless, the Thousand Blend Incense has an older history than its inclusion in this Daoist compendia and appears, for example, in the *Array of the Five Talisman Numinous Treasures of the Most High* which was compiled during the Eastern Jin.[2658]

The relevant part of this text relates the quest of the Yellow Emperor in the mythic past who travels to Mount Emei in search of the Celestial Perfected August Person (*Tianzhen huangren* 天真皇人) to inquire about the Way of Triple Unity (*sanyi zhi dao* 三一之道). The Celestial Perfected August Person is described as possessing anomalous characteristics, all which are signal his numinous character. For example, he is claimed to be nine *chi* in height and covered in long black hair. Furthermore, he lives under a cliff on the north side of Mount Emei, in a dwelling where the rooms are made of green jade, the beds are made of gold, and the curtains are made of woven flowers.[2659]

Significantly for our concerns, Celestial Perfected August Person is also described as burning Thousand Blend Incense, a name which connotes an inconceivably complex mixture of aromatics. It also points to the lavish luxuries enjoyed by the mythic figure on his mountaintop abode. Medieval incense blends very rarely included over a dozen ingredients, thus a recipe requiring a thousand ingredients would have played to the Chinese imagination about the highly sophisticated arts of perfumery and the close relation to the esoteric arts of

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[2657] James M. Hargett, *Stairway to Heaven: A Journey to the Summit of Mount Emei* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2006), 75–76.
[2658] For more one this seminal Daoist work, see Schipper and Verellen, *The Taoist Canon*, 232–33; Raz, *Emergence of Daoism*, 16, 148–65, and the numerous citations therein.
[2659] DZ388:3.18a.

compounding elixirs. Furthermore, such a recipe would signal privileged access to a wide assortment of raw materials and their high commercial value.

Not surprisingly, in the early medieval period, we find posthumous stories about Liu An 劉安 (179–122 BCE), the prince of Huainan, and Emperor Wu of the Han burning a Hundred Blend Incense (*baihe xiang* 百和香), an equally astounding recipe in terms of ingredients, in preparation for receiving divine figures.[2660] The connotations of luxury, olfactory complexity, and spiritual communion likely bolstered the use of Hundred Blend Incense a trope for medieval poets [HC#125a, HC#125h]. While there are no surviving medieval recipes for Thousand Blend Incense, we do find a recipe for a Hundred Blend Incense – albeit with only twenty ingredients – recorded in Sun Simiao's *Essential Priceless Prescriptions for All Urgent Ills*.[2661]

76) Turuṣka (storax / frankincense? / *dūrvā*) 兜樓婆香

The *Śūraṃgama Sutra*[2662] states, "Separately place a single small censer in front of the *maṇḍala* and using a decoction of this aromatic [i.e. *turuṣka*] take the fragrant liquid and bathe the charcoals, thus causing them to burn ferociously."

楞嚴經：壇前別安一小爐，以此香煎，取香水沐浴其炭，然令猛熾。[2663]

[2660] Smith, "Ritual," 463, 482.
[2661] For the Hundred Blend Incense recipe, see the *Essential Priceless Prescriptions for All Urgent Ills*, DZ1163:17.13a–b. For a Tang poem discussing Hundred Blend Incense, see Schafer, *Golden Peaches*, 159; Bedini, *Trail of Time*, 29.
[2662] The *Śūraṃgama Sutra* (*Lengyan jing* 楞嚴經 or *Shoulengyan jing* 首楞嚴經; T945) is a Buddhist scripture purportedly translated by the Indian monk *Pramiti (Pancimidi 般剌蜜帝) in 705. Modern scholarship considers this to be an indigenous Chinese works dating from the early eighth century, see James A. Benn, "Another Look at the Pseudo-Śūraṃgama Sūtra," *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 68, no. 1 (2008): 57–89.
[2663] Cf. T945:133b20–21.

[COMMENTS] The curious aromatic under consideration above, identified in Chinese as *douloupo* 兜樓婆, Middle Chinese **təu-ləu-bwâ*, has a *locus classicus* in Kumārajīva's early fifth century translation of the *Lotus Sutra*.[2664] *Douloupo*, now often read as a corruption of the orthographically similar *doulousuo* 兜樓娑, Middle Chinese **təu-ləu-sâ*, is most frequently treated as a transcription for an underlying Sanskrit *turuṣka*.[2665] While classical Indian *turuṣka* has never been definitively identified, it is most commonly understood as frankincense resin.[2666]

Notably, however, frankincense is also commonly identified in classical Indic works as *kundurūka* (or *kunduru*) and the relationship between *turuṣka* and *kundurūka* has not yet been fully established. It may be the case that *turuṣka* and *kundurūka* were synonyms. Yet, for example, in the *Great Compendium* (*Bṛhatsaṃhitā*) of Varāhamihira, a mid-sixth century encyclopedic treatise containing a chapter on perfuming recipes, *turuṣka* and *kundurūka* are treated as separate ingredients, suggesting they were not coterminous synonyms in the medieval period.[2667] Nevertheless, it is difficult to know where to set the distinctions between them.

Medieval Indian perfumers may have identified *turuṣka* as a different quality or grade of frankincense, perhaps one that derived from a "foreign" *Boswellia* frankincense species.[2668] This suggestion is based on the fact that the principal meaning of *turuṣka*, as noted in the Monier-Williams Sanskrit-English Dictionary, is "Turkestan" or something that

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[2664] T262.53b06.
[2665] Karashima, *Glossary of Kumārajīva's Translation*, 67–68.
[2666] This is often based on the authority of the Monier Monier-Williams (1819–1899) Sanskrit dictionary which identifies *turuṣka* as olibanum, see Monier-Williams, *A Sanskrit English Dictionary*, 451.
[2667] McHugh, *Sandalwood and Carrion*, 110 (see Table 5.1 "Diagram of the Grid Perfumes").
[2668] It is known, for example, that the Romans differentiated between three different grades of frankincense, among which regional origin may have played a role in distinguishing between them, Groom, "The Frankincense Region," 86.

comes from Turkestan, such as "a Turk," or "a Turkish prince."[2669] Consequently, the term *turuṣka* has a strong ethnic (and more broadly "foreign") connotation and would have brought to mind the foreign controlled regions to the northwest of India, typically north of the Hindu Kush. The *B. serrata*, a species that produces "Indian" frankincense, occurs in the Punjāb region and the surrounding areas.[2670] Thus, its resinous exudate may have been distinguished between a locally Indian sourced variety, traded under the name of *kundurūka*, and one that came from foreign "Turkic" lands, traded as *turuṣka*, even though it was extracted from the same species of tree.[2671]

Importantly, *turuṣka* was also used more generally to refer to foreign people, similar to *mleccha*, the "barbaric Other."[2672] Consequently, there is sometimes also a conflation between the "Turkic" Turuṣka and the previous foreigners who inhabited the northwest, the Ionian Greeks, known in Indic sources as the Yavana. In medieval literature the latter term also came to be used in a generic sense like *mleccha*.[2673] Consequently, it is possible the trans-Asian Greco-Roman trade in "Biblical" frankincense, that is, frankincense sourced from different *Boswellia* species in eastern Africa and the Arabian Peninsula, may have come to be known as *turuṣka*, the "barbarian resin," in India. This remains speculation, however,

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[2669] Monier-Williams, *A Sanskrit English Dictionary*, 451. James McHugh also highlights the foreign nature of *turuṣka*, see McHugh, *Sandalwood and Carrion*, 173 ("Turk frankincense"), 179 ("Turk-resin"), 237 ("turkey-gum"), see also McHugh, "Disputed Civets," 253.

[2670] In addition to Indian-sourced frankincense which comes from *B. serrata*, there is also "Biblical" frankincense which came from different *Boswellia* species in eastern Africa and the Arabian Peninsula.

[2671] It should be underscored that claiming this resin derived from the "same species" is a contemporary framing. Until recently, *B. thurifera* was considered distinct from *B. serrata*, as can be attested in numerous entries to the Monier-Williams Sanskrit-English Dictionary of 1899. It is therefore entirely possible that specimens of the "same species" were seen as two very distinct kinds of plant in the medieval period, just as was believed a century ago.

[2672] Brajadulal Chattopadhyaya, *Representing the Other? Sanskrit Sources and the Muslims: Eighth to Fourteenth Century* (New Delhi: Manohar, 1998), 30.

[2673] Himanshu P. Ray, "The Yavana Presence in Ancient India," *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient* 31, no. 3 (1988): 312.

and while *turuṣka* may have come to designate frankincense (the Africa and the Arabian variety makes more sense), I believe there is evidence to show that it also referred to a different scented resin altogether.[2674]

But first, what is the evidence that Kumārajīva's *douloupo* was indeed transcribing an underlying *turuṣka*? It is generally believed this Sanskrit term originated as an ethnonym for a Central Asian nomadic people who are otherwise not attested in Indic sources until the first Türkic khaganate was founded in present-day Mongolia in the mid-sixth century. The people known as the Türks quickly expanded westwards to the Caspian Sea and are first seen in Sanskrit sources as the Turuṣka in the first half of the seventh century.[2675] Consequently, reading Kumārajīva's early fifth century *douloupo* as transcribing *turuṣka* appears anachronistic since it predates the Turkic westward expansion by more than a century. This is also spite of the fact that Hendrik Kern and Bunyiu Nanjio's Sanskrit edition of the *Lotus Sutra* contains the term *turuṣka* (alongside, it should be noted, *kundurūka*) – a point we will return to below.[2676]

Later medieval Chinese Buddhists were also confused by Kumārajīva's terminology. Jizang's early seventh century commentary to the *Lotus Sutra* cites what appears to be an oral tradition stemming back to Kumārajīva, explaining that *douloubo* 兜樓波 (note the slightly different orthography) was "exported from the country of dragons and spirits and

[2674] As we see in the *Amarakośa* lexicography, both *turuṣka* and *yāvana* ("of Yavana") come to refer to types of incense resin, along with *piṇḍaka* (myrrh?), and *sihla* [→*silha*](frankincense?), see Klaus Karttunen, *Yonas and Yavanas in Indian Literature* (Helsinki: Finnish Oriental Society, 2015), 48.
[2675] Pushpa Prasad, "The 'Turuska' or Turks in Late Ancient Indian Documents," *Proceedings of the Indian History Congress* 55 (1994): 171–72; Chattopadhyaya, *Representing the Other*," 39–43. As noted by Pushpa Prasad, the Turuṣka are treated in Puranic histories as succeeding the Yavana.
[2676] Kern and Nanjio, *Saddharmapuṇḍarīka*, 407 (lines 1–2).

because it was not native [to China], the term was not translated."[2677] Aside from the unspecified "country of dragons and spirits," this comment offers little insight as to *douloubo*'s identity. Moreover, since most of the aromatics cited in the *Lotus Sutra* were never native to China (except, notably, for aloeswood; HC#3), this explanation only begs further scrutiny. If anything, Jizang's comment underscores just how little was known about the term *douloubo* when he was composing his commentarial treatise.

Within the next century there appears to have been two different solutions to the *douloupo* puzzle. On one hand, in his commentary to Yijing's early eighth century translation of the *Sutra of Golden Light*, Huizhao 慧沼 (650–714) claims that Mao Root Aromatic (*maogen xiang* 茅根香) had a resemblance to our unknown *douloupo* 兜婁婆.[2678] Numerous iterations of *mao* in plant names have left precise identification difficult at times, but if Yijing and Huizhao were familiar with contemporary Chinese materia medica literature, Mao Root (*maogen* 茅根), albeit without the suffix "aromatic," was identified as a type of grass that grew across the greater region of the ancient state of Chu, present-day Hubei, Hunan, and elsewhere, and is now identified as *Imperata cylindrica*, or cogongrass.[2679] Taken together, the commentaries of Jizang and Huizhao appear to be the sources for Fayun's mid-

[2677] 出龍神國，此土所無，故不翻也。T1721.620b22–23. It is worth underscoring that Kumārajīva and Jizang, as well as Huizhao and Kuiji below, all write *duoluopo* with slightly different graphs.
[2678] 茅根香者，似兜婁婆香。T1788.302b26–27. The *locus classicus* for Huizhao's particular transcription of *douloupo* is the late fifth century *Consecration Sutra*, see T1331:523c05. It is found in a cluster of aromatics pulled from Kumārajīva's *Lotus Sutra* and thus probably was intended to refer to Kumārajīva's *douloupo*. As we will see, however, Kumārajīva's *douloupo* and Huizhao's *douloupo* likely referred to different substances.
[2679] XXBC:8.223; see also my comments to lemongrass at HC#36. Yijing identifies Mao Root Aromatic as *washiluo* 嗢尸羅, or *uṣīra*, in his translation of the *Sutra of Golden Light*, see T665:435a06; see also Ludvik, *Sarasvatī*, 314. *Uṣīra* is often recognized as *Chrysopogon* zizanioides, commonly known as vetiver, a grass native to northern India famed for its intensely scented roots from which an essential oil can be extracted. For more on the use of and perception of vetiver as an inexpensive herbal aromatic in India, see McHugh, *Sandalwood and Carrion*, 166, 239–40, 261n.12. It is worth noting that while cogongrass was an important ritual instrument in ancient China with a well-developed rhizome, it is unscented. Perhaps this is why Yijing appended the word "aromatic" at the end, to signal its use in Indian perfumery. In any regard, both vetiver and cogongrass have long leaf blades and robust root systems.

twelfth century Buddhist dictionary entry for *duoluopo*, which states that this aromatic was "exported from the country of ghosts and spirits, and because it was not from this region it was not translated." Fayun further adds, "It is sometimes translated as a fragrant grass, the old translation was White Mao Aromatic."[2680] Ignoring the change to a "country of ghosts and spirits" (from "dragons and spirits"), by claiming the old translation of *douloupo* was White Mao Aromatic (*baimao xiang* 白茅香, HC#36) and not Mao Root Aromatic, Fayun, perhaps inadvertently, switches the botanical analogy of a grass native to Hunan and Hubei to a grass that only occurs in the tropical Chinese south, something I tentatively identify as a type of lemongrass (*Cymbopogon* spp.).[2681] In either regard, it appears one emerging medieval Chinese understanding of *douloupo* identified it as a kind of lofty grass, not a type of oleoresin.

It was the definition of Fayun that led Berthold Laufer to speculate that *douloupo* transcribed *dūrvā* and thus referred to Indian *dūrvā* grass (*Cynodon dactylon*, syn. *Panicum Dactylon*, sometimes also called Brahma grass).[2682] Notably, Hong Chu's citation above from the *Śūraṃgama Sutra* appears to support this speculation about *douloupo*. The text describes a process were *douloupo* was decocted in boiling water, suggesting it referred to a fibrous plant matter containing volatile oils that could be extracted and infused into a liquid. It would be unnecessary to place an oleoresin through a decoction and reduction process. Importantly,

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[2680] 出鬼神國。此方無故不翻。或翻香草。舊云白茅香。T2131:1104c03–04. Later, Huizhao glosses *woshiluo* (*uṣīra*), the transcription offered by Yijing for his translation of Mao Root Aromatic, as Mao Aromatic Root (*maoxiang gen* 茅香根), see T2131:1104c18. This would technically be the rhizomatic root of sweetgrass [HC#21].

[2681] In defense of Fayun's claim, White Mao Aromatic was said to resemble Mao Root, see my comments to lemongrass at HC#36.

[2682] Laufer, "Malabathron," 22n.1; Laufer, *Sino-Iranica*, 457n.9. Laufer also identifies *tupo* 突婆 as a transcription for *dūrvā*, which is identified in medieval Buddhist works as Mao Aromatic (*maoxiang* 茅香), see T2131:1104c17; see also T901:826b28. For more on the varieties of Indic grasses, including *dūrvā*, see Mahdihassan, "Vedic Grasses," 286–91.

however, because the *Śūraṃgama Sutra* is now identified as an indigenous Chinese composition, possibly dating from the early eighth century, this description should merely confirm the emerging understanding of the term *duoluopo* as a grass *in China*, and not taken as an independent witness of how this aromatic was processed in India.

A different solution to the identity of *douloupo* was suggested by Kuiji in the seventh century. In his commentary to the *Yogācārabhūmi-śāstra*, Kuiji notes the aromatic substance transcribed as *sudulujia* 窣堵魯迦 (or *shuaidulujia* 率堵魯迦) by Xuanzang had been in past translations rendered as *douloupo* 斗樓婆, Middle Chinese **təu-ləu-bwâ*.[2683] This leads us to another impasse, however, since this now begs the question of which Indic term *sudulujia* was transcribing in the seventh century. In the context of the original *Yogācārabhūmi-śāstra* passage, this aromatic is listed among three others: aloeswood, camphor, and musk. As a group they are described as the four great aromatics (*sida xiang* 四大香), suggesting all of them were well-known perfume blending ingredients and also readily accessible in northwest India, the location where the *Yogācārabhūmi-śāstra* was compiled.[2684] In 1919, Laufer suggested that *sudulujia* represented some linguistic form of storax [HC#5], offering forms of the Greek *sturax* as well as Syriac *sṭurkā* and *esṭurkā* as potential candidates. The immediate problem with these suggestions is that there is no easily identifiable Sanskrit equivalent to these terms. Nevertheless, Laufer suggests the unattested **sturuka*.[2685]

[2683] T1829:23c07; also see T2128:625c02..

[2684] T1579:293b01–02. The passage describes various Indic osmological classifications, listing iterations from the single generic odor (*gandha*), which according to Buddhist thought was the proper sensory object of the nose, to a list of ten different individual scents. The list of four great fragrances represents an osmological system based on specific ostensive referents. Aloeswood, camphor, and musk were all major commodities traded along northern Indian trade routes.

[2685] Laufer, *Sino-Iranica*, 457. Laufer stated that he did "not believe that this name [i.e., *sudulujia*] is connected with turuṣka," Laufer, *Sino-Iranica*, 457n.8. Laufer's comment was in response to Pelliot's earlier belief that *sudulujia* transcribed turuṣka, see Pelliot, "Chau Ju-kua," 479. Many of the words for storax listed in the

This uncertainty over the identity of *sudulujia* is more easily solved today by consulting with the modern Sanskrit edition of the *Yogācārabhūmi-śāstra* published in 1957. The *Manobhūmi* division of text contains the relevant section on the "four great fragrances" (*catvāro mahā-gandhā*), listing them as aloeswood (*agaru*), camphor (*karpūra*), musk (*kastūrikā*) – and *turuṣka*.[2686] There is no immediately apparent reason as to why Xuanzang opted to transcribe *turuṣka*, assuming this was term found in his version of the *Yogācārabhūmi-śāstra*, as *sudulujia* considering the underlying term has no initial *s-*. Perhaps Xuanzang's edition had something closer to **sturuka* (storax) which in time was "corrected" to *turuṣka*.[2687] In any regard, we can confirm Kuiji's *douloupo* rendered *turuṣka*, not *dūrvā*.

This leaves us with the question regarding the identity of *turuṣka*, namely, is it frankincense? An oleoresin like frankincense makes sense in the context of aloeswood, camphor, and musk, all extremely potent and valuable aromatic materials traded in India. Medieval Chinese sources point us in another direction, however. The *Dhāraṇī Collection Sutra*, translated by the Indian monk Atikūṭa in 654, introduces the new transcription *dulusejia* 都嚧瑟迦, Middle Chinese **tuo-luo-ʂjɛt-ka*, with the added comment that the phonetic sounds of the final two graphs should be combined.[2688] *Dulusejia* is certainly rendering *turuṣka* here. Furthermore, Atikūṭa provides us with two more crucial pieces of information. First, he appends the word oil (*you* 油) to his transcription, clarifying for us that

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Monier-Williams Sanskrit-English Dictionary are oriented around the terms śaila and śaileya, and thus are not likely related to *sudulujia*, see Monier-Williams, *A Sanskrit English Dictionary*, 1089–90.

[2686] Vidhushekhara Bhattacharya, *The Yogācārabhūmi Ācārya Asañga: The Sanskrit Text Compared with the Version* (Calcutta: University of Calcutta, 1957), 67 (line 2).

[2687] Another potential explanation is that according to the rules of *sandhi*, an *s* sound is produced when a final *visarga* meets with a consonant initial *t-*, thus yielding a "*-sturuṣka*." One would assume, however, that Xuanzang was well aware of these rules and would not have mistaken the *s-* as the initial constituent of *turuṣka*.

[2688] T901:839a26.

turuṣka is not a type of grass (*dūrvā*), nor a hardened frankincense resin. Most importantly, Atikūṭa also provides a translation, in the language of the Tang, as *suhe xiang* 酥合香, or what has been identified as storax by most modern scholars. This is perhaps the best evidence that medieval storax was traded as a liquid (or oil) and thus points us to the viscid resin of the *Liquidambar orientalis* native to the Anatolian Peninsula. As we have explored earlier, this identification is bolstered by the contemporary commercial trade of *L. orientalis* resin by Byzantine Greeks.[2689] Notably, the transcription *dulusejia* (in the variant form *dulusejian* 都嚕瑟劍) also appears in the *Sutra of Wondrous Attainments*, translated by the Indian monk Śubhakarasiṃha (637–735) in 726, with a clarifying note that the term was translated as *suhe xiang* 蘇合香, the more common Chinese orthography for storax.[2690]

The question now emerges as to whether we have firm footing to connect Kumārajīva's *douloupo* with *turuṣka* – and ultimately to storax (*suhe xiang*) – a relationship that was never proposed by medieval Chinese Buddhist exegetes and translators. I believe the evidence suggests we can. First of all, the *douloupo* of Kumārajīva was never widely adopted by other translators, in spite of the fact that it appeared in the extraordinarily popular *Lotus Sutra*. One among the handful of exceptions is the *Śūraṃgama Sutra*, see in the entry above, which is now considered a native Chinese composition.[2691] Consequently, it appears *douloupo* was never viewed as an appropriate transcription, an issue scholars still address

[2689] For more on the identify of *suhe xiang* as storax, and more specifically as the resin of the *L. orientalis*, not the *Styrax officinalis*, see my comments to storax at HC#5.
[2690] T893:609b11; see also 640a26, 669c19–20. Other similar transcriptions of *turuṣka* in the Chinese Buddhist canon include *duolusejian* 咄嚕瑟劍 (T1225:141b06; T1227:152a27: T2131:1104c07), *duokou*[→*lu*]*sejian* 咄口[→嚕]瑟劍 (T946:173a24), and *dulusejia* 覩魯瑟迦 (T889:544c19). It should be underscored again that *tulu* 杜嚕 is not a truncation for one of these transcriptions of *turuṣka*, but an error for *juntulu* 君杜嚕, or *kunduru*, see relevant footnote to the headword for frankincense at HC#9.
[2691] Another early eighth century example can be found in T1092.367a14.

today by emending it to *doulousuo* as noted earlier. Medieval Chinese translators apparently devised new transcription methods for *turuṣka* or simply chose to translate it, thus never establishing *douloupo* as a part of the medieval translation repertoire. Again, even Jizang's commentary to the *Lotus Sutra* appears mystified by *douloupo*.

Secondly, what confidence do we have that Kumārajīva's *douloupo* was not a transcription of an underlying *dūrvā*, as suggested by Laufer? On one hand, *turuṣka* is found in an extant Sanskrit edition of the *Lotus Sutra* (bracketing for now the question of anachronism). Moreover, this interpretation is supported by Kuiji and verified through the Sanskrit edition of the *Yogācārabhūmi-śāstra*. Yet, Laufer's suggestion is still pertinent to this issue more broadly. Yixing's early eighth century commentary to the *Scripture on the Manifest Buddhahood of the Great Vairocana and his Spiritual Transformations and Empowerments* (*Da Piluzhena chengfo shenbian jiachi jing* 大毘盧遮那成佛神變加持經; T848), which were aided by the lectures of Śubhakarasiṃha, cites a *dulupo* grass (*dulupo cao* 妬路婆草) – similar phonetically to *douloupo* – which not only approximates *dūrvā*, but also clearly distinguishes the plant as a type of grass.[2692]

Based on the above evidence, we can confirm that Huizhao's commentary to the *Sutra of Golden Light* was attempting to draw a parallel between *dūrvā* and cogongrass, not *turuṣka* and cogongrass, even though the specific Chinese transcription he cites is quite similar (but not exact) to the one used by Kumārajīva and Jizang. This gets further muddled

[2692] T1796.658b19–20. Yixing, or possibly the Indian monk Śubhakarasiṃha who lead the translation team, notes this plant is similar to the alfalfa plant (*muxu* 苜蓿; *Medicago sativa*) of the Western Regions, see Kotyk, "Ānxī-Xiāng," 524. This is an unexpected botanical analogue, as the leguminous flowering alfalfa is nothing like the grasses in the *Poaceae* family. Regardless, we can be fairly confident this was not in reference to "*turuṣka* grass" since, as we have seen above, Śubhakarasiṃha transcribed *turuṣka* as *dulusejia* and translated it as storax (*suhe xiang*). Even if Laufer's suggestion of *dūrvā* proves inaccurate, we can be sure *dulupo*, Middle Chinese **tuo-luo-bwâ*, referred to a type of grass (*cao*) or small herbaceous plant and was independent of *turuṣka*.

by Fayun's twelfth century dictionary, which employs the transcription of *turuṣka* by Kumārajīva and Jizang as the entry headword, but ultimately defines it with Huizhao's analogue to a fragrant Chinese grass, which was itself viewed by Huizhao as a rough botanical equivalent to *dūrvā*.

Consequently, we can now draw a faint line distinguishing between the received transcriptions of *dūrvā* and *turuṣka* in the medieval period. While I believe all such Chinese transcriptions were confused in the copying of our received texts (the conflation of *suo* 娑 with *po* 婆 underscores this point), if I was to suggest a "proper" transcription for the various terms as they stand today, they would appear as thus: Huizhao's *douloupo* 兜婁婆 is *dūrvā*; Yixing's *dulupo* 妬路婆 is *dūrvā*; Kuiji's *douloupo* 斗樓婆 (= *doulousuo*) is *turuṣka*; Jizang's *douloubo* 兜樓波 (= *doulousuo*) is *turuṣka*; and Kumārajīva's *douloupo* 兜樓婆 (= *doulousuo*) is *turuṣka*. Because the *Śūraṃgama Sutra* specifically cites Kumarajiva's *douloupo*, I render it as *turuṣka* as the headword for Hong Chu's entry, in spite of the fact it appears to describe *dūrvā* grass (as discussed above).[2693]

Lastly, we can find further insight by examining the comparable passages in the *Lotus Sutra* as translated by Kumārajīva and Dharmarakṣa, the latter who completed his work in the late third century. There is a list of six aromatics which run as thus in the relevant portion of Kumārajīva's work: sandalwood, frankincense, *turuṣka*, *spṛkkā* [?], aloeswood, and Gum Aromatic (gum guggul [?]).[2694] Dharmarakṣa renders the list of six as such: frankincense, storax (*suhe xiang*), Flower Aromatic [?], sandalwood, aloeswood, and Dark Wood Honey

[2693] It is worth noting an additional similar transcription, *tuoluosuo* 陀羅娑, Middle Chinese **dâ-lâ-sâ*, which was curiously used for camphor, see T893:609b12–13.
[2694] 栴檀。薰陸。兜樓婆。畢力迦。沈水。膠香。T262:53b06–07.

Aromatic [?].[2695] Due to the different terminology employed, these two lists of aromatics might appear considerably different, but if we take sandalwood from the fourth position in Dharmarakṣa's list and place it in the first position, we more easily see a potential correspondence between the two:

	Kumārajīva's Translation	**Dharmarakṣa's Translation**
1.	sandalwood 栴檀	sandalwood 栴檀
2.	frankincense 薰陸	frankincense 薰陸
3.	*turuṣka* 兜樓婆	storax (*suhe xiang* 蘇合香)
4.	*spṛkkā* 畢力迦[2696]	Flower Aromatic 華香[2697]
5.	aloeswood 沈水	aloeswood 木樒

[2695] 薰陸香。蘇合香。華香。栴檀香。木樒香。青木樒香。T263:120a15–16.

[2696] Kumārajīva's *bilijia* 畢力迦 is considered a transcription of *pṛkkā*, which is treated as a truncated *spṛkkā* (*sailibijia* 塞畢力迦), see Karashima, *Glossary of Kumārajīva's Translation*, 19. *[S]pṛkkā* is often identified as fenugreek (*Trigonella balansae*, syn. *T. corniculata*), a plant native to the Punjāb and Kaśmīra regions, see Laufer, *Sino-Iranica*, 446–47; cf. McHugh, *Sandalwood and Carrion*, 110, 268n.27 (expressing doubt of this identification). Jizang claims that this substance, along with *turuṣka*, was not native to China and thus not translated, but adds that some have translated it as *cuchi* 犲池 (?), see T1721.620b22–23; cf. T2189:169a05 (which cites the translation as *chu* 觸, S. *sparśa*). Yijing's translation of the *Sutra of Golden Light* notes that alfalfa (*muxu*) is rendered as *sailibijia*, see T665:435a01. Alfalfa was introduced into China through seeds that were brough back by Han envoys from the Ferghana Valley in the second century BCE. The plant was noted as being cultivated successfully in the palace courtyards, see Hulsewé, *China in Central Asia*, 135–36. Fenugreek, on the other hand, is not listed in Chinese materia medica until the eleventh century, where it was cited as being cultivated in southern China, see Laufer, *Sino-Iranica*, 446. Both alfalfa and fenugreek are in the legume family with trifoliate leaves, and thus it is possible Yijing was using alfalfa, a foreign plant well known to the Chinese, as a loose botanical analogue to foreign fenugreek, which was possibly unknown in the eighth century. *Spṛkkā* was known in a mid-sixth century Indian perfuming manual as an aromatic ingredient, thus an identification as fenugreek, which produces both very fragrant seeds and leaves, is preferable over alfalfa; see citation of *spṛkkā* in McHugh, *Sandalwood and Carrion*, 110. Dharmarakṣa appears to have rendered *spṛkkā* generically as Flower Aromatic (see below), which might account why *bilijia* is unexpectedly glossed as cloves (i.e. dried flower buds) in a twelfth century Buddhist dictionary, see T2131:1104c06. The apparent connection between flowers and fenugreek is not clear and several possibilities emerge: 1) Dharmarakṣa did not have *[s]pṛkkā* in his text and thus Flower Aromatic rendered a different term, 2) Kumārajīva's [*sai*]*bilijia* was not meant to transcribe an underlying *[s]pṛkkā* or 3) *[s]pṛkkā* did not refer to fenugreek. One very speculative solution is that Kumārajīva's [*sai*]*bilijia* rendered *śephālikā*, Indian night-flowering jasmine (*Nyctanthes arbor-tristis*), thus accounting for Dharmarakṣa's translation as Flower Aromatic.

[2697] See relevant footnote to *spṛkkā* above.

	Kumārajīva's Translation	Dharmarakṣa's Translation
6.	Gum Aromatic 膠香[2698]	Dark Wood Honey Aromatic 青木樒 [2699]

In this ordering, *turuṣka* is equivalent to storax, an identity clearly confirmed in Atikūṭa's *Dhāraṇī Collection Sutra* of the mid-seventh century and by Śubhakarasiṃha's *Sutra of Wondrous Attainments* in the eighth century.

The acceptance of Kumārajīva's *douloupo* as a rendering of *turuṣka* thus leaves us with the question of potential anachronism, especially if we presume *turuṣka* was also found in Dharmarakṣa's *Lotus Sutra* of the late third century (and translated as *suhe xiang*). Both of these works predate the founding of the Türkic khaganate in the mid-sixth century, the presumed origin for the Sanskrit term *turuṣka*. This may not be the case, however. While the dating of Sanskrit texts can be challenging, the *Great Compendium* of Varāhamihira is regularly dated to the Gupta Period (320–647) and most typically to the middle of the sixth century. The appearance of *turuṣka* in this work presumably predates the otherwise earliest attested use of Turuṣka as an ethnonym in early seventh century.

At this time I can only speculate a possible resolution. It might be the case that Buddhist scriptures like the *Lotus Sutra* (translated into Chinese at the end of the third century) contained a different term, perhaps similar to Laufer's proposed **sturuka*, or perhaps a Prakrit form without the initial *-s*, and were "corrected" to *turuṣka* at some late

[2698] I believe there is evidence to treat Gum Aromatic as gum guggul, partly based on a roughly contemporaneous use of the former term to explicitly render the latter substance by the Indian translator Guṇavarman, see my comments to gum guggul at HC#6. Moreover, the Sanskrit Edition of the *Lotus Sutra* by Hendrik Kern and Bunyiu Nanjio contains the term *kuduruka-rasa*, which Kern treats as a single substance in his translation: "resin of Boswellia Thurifera" (i.e., frankincense resin), see Kern and Nanjio, *Saddharmapuṇḍarīka*, 470 (lines 1–2) and Hendrik Kern, *Lotus of The True Law*, 378, respectively. As another possible explanation, one might read *rasa*, "resin," separately as an abbreviated from of *gandharasa*, which referred to the gum of the *Commiphora*, such as myrrh or possibly gum guggul. A different interpretation may treat Gum Aromatic as a truncation for White Gum Aromatic, or sal dammar from the *śāla* tree, see my comments to White Gum Aromatic at HC#33. In such a case, *rasa* would refer to *sarjarasa*.
[2699] See relevant footnote to Gum Aromatic above.

time because of a perceived phonetic similarity.[2700] The original motivation behind such a word would likely be from Greek (*sturax*) or, depending on timeframe, perhaps even the Latin *styrax* or *storax* (or *storaca* or *storace*).[2701] Critically, according to the first century *Periplus Maris Erythraei*, a handbook for Greco-Roman merchants, storax (*sturax*) was being shipped into Indian ports and, as we have seen elsewhere, was available to the Chinese in the Tarim basin at the end of the first century (reported as *suhe xiang*). We should expect storax to have circulated in India at this time. It might have even been under the name *turuṣka* (if we assumed the citation in the *Great Compendium* to be authentic to the sixth century, i.e. previous to Türkic expansion) or, as suggested above, a term emended to *turuṣka*, the "barbarian resin," once the Türks arrived in the northwest. Presumably, because of the conflation with the Yavana and foreign peoples more generally, the precise referent may have been confused with another major foreign import, frankincense. Consequently, when the *Great Compendium* lists both *turuṣka* and *kundurūka*, it might not have referred to foreign frankincense and (Indian) frankincense, but storax and frankincense, two fully different resins.[2702]

Both the origin and early identity of *turuṣka* remain uncertain, but evidence in translated medieval Chinese Buddhist scriptures strongly suggest one of its early referents was viscid Mediterranean storax. As to when or in which contexts *turuṣka* indicated

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[2700] In his brief analysis of this issue in 1912, Paul Pelliot speculated the initial *s-* sound was lacking in early Chinese transcriptions due to an older Prakrit form, see Pelliot, "Chau Ju-kua," 479.
[2701] The masculine and feminine forms of Latin storax are discussed in Nicolson and Steyskal, "Styrax Linnaeus," 583.
[2702] There seems to have been a close relationship historically between storax and frankincense. For example, Herodotus (484–424 BCE) speaks of *styrax* (storax) being burned at the base of frankincense trees to drive away winged serpents who protected them, see Nicolson and Steyskal, "Styrax Linnaeus," 582–83. In addition, according to Monier-Williams, one accepted Sanskrit term for storax was *yavanadeśaja*, "produced in the country of Yavana," suggesting its identity as frankincense was also flexible, see Monier-Williams, *A Sanskrit English Dictionary*, 848 and Chattopadhyaya, *Representing the Other*, 30, 40.

frankincense will require an analysis of Sanskrit sources. Until such work is undertaken, for the time being, in passages where we encounter both *turuṣka* and *kundurūka*, such as in the *Lotus Sutra*, the former should likely be taken to denote storax and the latter frankincense, as seems to have been understood by many in medieval China.

77) Tagara (valerian root?) 多伽羅香

釋氏會要曰：多伽羅香，此云根香。多摩羅跋香，此云藿香。旃檀，釋云與樂，即白檀也，能治熱病。赤檀能治風腫。[2703]

The *Collected Essentials of Buddhists*[2704] states, "*Tagara* is called Root Aromatic. *Tamālapattra*[2705] is called Indian bay leaf [HC#38]. Sandalwood [HC#4] is explained as Providing Joy because white sandalwood is able to treat heat illness and red sandalwood is able to treat wind-swelling."

[COMMENTS] *Tagara* is sometimes identified as an Indian species of *Valeriana*, a rhizomatic plant valued for its strongly scented rootstalk. As noted by James McHugh, *tagara* was among the more prominent Indic aromatics that appear in texts before the common era, but a definitive identification of this plant remains elusive.[2706] In the case of the passage above, *tagara* was identified as among a class of aromatics that derived from the roots of plants, hence its alternative name as "Root Aromatic." It seems a small contingent of

[2703] Cf. T2128:412c14 and 434c15. The *locus classicus* of this passage is Huilin's *Pronunciation and Meaning of the Complete Canon*.
[2704] The *Collected Essentials of Buddhists was* a forty *juan* text attributed to the Song dynasty monk Renzan 仁贊 who resided in Daci Temple 大慈寺 in Chengdu.
[2705] Literally, "*tamāla* leaf," but also sometimes referred to simply as "leaf" (*pattra*), this refers to the fragrant Indian bay leaf (*Cinnamomum tamala*), see my comments at HC#38; see also McHugh, *Sandalwood and Carrion*, 110, 268n.21.
[2706] McHugh, *Sandalwood and Carrion*, 73–75.

Chinese Buddhist translators also considered Wood Aromatic (*mu xiang*), more often identified as costus root in non-Buddhist Chinese texts, to be a suitable translation of *tagara* [HC#16]. For reasons that remain unclear, *tagara* was also sometimes translated as the Aromatic from Lingling (or simply, *lingling*), a native Chinese plant that likely referred to sweet basil [HC#20].

The definitions presented here for *tagara*, *tamālapattra*, and sandalwood were all originally copied from the ninth century Buddhist dictionary of Huilin, called the *Pronunciation and Meaning of the Complete Canon* (*Yiqiejing yinyi* 一切經音義).[2707] Huilin clarifies the powerful therapeutic property of sandalwood by noting both white and red sandalwood are medicines for removing illness from the body and settling it, thus giving us sandalwood's alternative name as Providing Joy.[2708]

78) Great Elephant Treasure Incense 大象藏香

The *Collected Essentials of Buddhists* states, "It is created when *nāgas* fight. If one burns a single pellet it will generate a great radiant light and wisps of clouds will form above smelling like sweet dew. For seven days and nights a sweet rain will fall."
釋氏會要曰："因龍鬪而生，若燒其一丸，興大光明，細雲覆上。味如甘露，七晝夜降其甘雨。[2709]

[COMMENTS] The *Avataṃsaka Sutra*, the *locus classicus* of the above passage, further describes the benefits of burning Great Elephant Treasure Incense. It explains that any

[2707] T2128:412c14 and 434c15.
[2708] T2128:434c15.
[2709] Cf. T278:713a17-18, cf. T279:361a13–14, cf. T2122:571a07–14.

sentient being who smells its fragrance will be joyous for seven days and nights and repel all illnesses and feelings of anger or fear. In the context of the above passage, *nāgas* – rendered into Chinese as dragons (*long* 龍) – referred to elephants, and in particular to Indian scent-elephants (*gandhahastin*). According to James McHugh, scent-elephants were thought to have the capacity to excite, frighten, or calm other elephants due to their powerful odor.[2710] Such ideas were based on the seasonal and hormonal changes of bull elephants who were in musth, a condition of rut that increases their sexual arousal and aggressive dominance behaviors. An elephant in musth often secretes a semi-fluid substance, called temporin, from the temporal glands on the sides of his head. It appears this substance was envisioned by the Buddhist authors of the *Avataṃsaka Sutra* as a powerfully fragrant and miraculous aromatic that could be burned as a special kind of incense.

79) Ox-Head Sandalwood 牛頭旃檀香

The *Avataṃsaka Sutra* states, "It comes from Mount Ligou. If smeared on the body, fire will not be able to burn it."

華嚴經云：從離垢出[2711]，若以塗身，火不能燒。[2712]

[COMMENTS] *Gośīrṣa*, "ox-head," was considered a particularly fine type of sandalwood retrieved from the mythical Mount Ox-Head, although this passage claims it is found on Mount Ligou (*Ligou shan* 離垢山), or "Mount Free-from-Defilement." In India, ox-head

[2710] McHugh, *Sandalwood and Carrion*, 82.
[2711] Read 出 as 山, following T278:713b06
[2712] Cf. T278:713b06–07, cf. T279:361a20–22, cf. T2122:571a14–15.

sandalwood was an expensive luxury item with cooling medicinal properties ideal for treating fevers.[2713] This association with coolness likely motivated the belief as noted in the entry above that it could protect a person from fire if they were to cover themselves with ox-head sandalwood paste.

80) Karpūra (camphor) 羯布羅香

The *Records of the Western Regions*[2714] states, "The tree [is similar] to the trunk of the pine, yet with different leaves. Its flowers and fruits can also be distinguished. When first collected, it is moist and one does not yet find the aromatic substance. After the wood is dried and split along the grain, there is an aromatic substance inside with the appearance of mica and the color of icy snow. This is also [called] Dragon Brain Aromatic [HC#1]."[2715]
西域記云：其樹松身異葉，花果亦別。初採既濕，尚未有香。木乾之後，循理而折之，其中有香。木乾之後[2716]，色如冰雪。亦龍腦香。

[COMMENTS] *Karpūra*, the earliest attested Sanskrit name for camphor [HC#1], was highly valued in India for its strong fragrance, pure white color, and cooling effects.[2717] These visual and tactile qualities are handily encapsulated by the comparison above to both mica and icy

[2713] McHugh, *Sandalwood and Carrion*, 208–09.
[2714] The *Great Tang Records of the Western Region* (*Da Tang xiyou ji* 大唐西域記; T2087) was composed by the eminent Buddhist monk Xuanzang 玄奘 (602–664) following his seventeen-year long pilgrimage to India between 626 and 645. It was written in 646 upon the request of the emperor and includes extensive information on the geography, customs, and lore of the countries he travelled through. A full translation of the text can be found in Li, *Tang Dynasty Record*.
[2715] Cf. T2087:932a10–13; cf. trans. Li, *Tang Dynasty Record*, 284.
[2716] Replace 木乾之後 with 状若雲母, following T2087:932a12.
[2717] For a survey on the history of camphor in Indian religions, see McHugh, "Camphor," 30–53; for more on the various Indic names for camphor, see Sternbach, "Camphor in India," 425–67. In the passage above Xuanzang transcribes *karpūra* as *jiepoluo* 羯布羅, Middle Chinese **kjät-puo-lâ*.

snow. The Buddhist pilgrim monk Xuanzang, the compiler of the *Records of the Western Regions*, also summarily describes the harvesting of camphor crystals hidden inside the *Dryobalanops aromatica* tree. First, camphor collectors would cut down the tree, sometimes releasing a gush of liquid camphor oil known to medieval Chinese as the Aromatic from Barus [HC#12], from cavities inside the trunk. This might be why Xuanzang describes the wood as initially moist or wet. To gather the more prized camphor crystals, the logs would be spilt along the grain to reveal fissures filled with the glistening white aromatic.

Edward Schafer interprets Xuanzang's comments as indicating the *D. aromatica* was successfully introduced and cultivated on the Malabar coast by the early seventh century.[2718] This seems highly unlikely. It has alternatively been suggested Xuangzang had seen ngai camphor [HC#18] from the Indian *Blumea balsamifera*.[2719] This too is unlikely since Xuanzang's description of a tree similar to the pine does not match that of the small, shrub-like *Blumea*, nor does he describe the distillation necessary to extract ngai camphor. Yamada Kentarō has instead suggested that Xuanzang encountered an indigenous Indian product extracted from the roots of the South Asian cinnamon tree, *Cinnamomum verum* (syn. *C. zeylanicum*), that has a similar olfactory profile to camphor.[2720] This product is sometimes called Malabar camphor.

While the proposal of Yamada has merit, it is not without uncertainty (see below), and another explanation is also plausible. Xuanzang introduces camphor by way of his

[2718] Schafer, *Golden Peaches*, 166–67.
[2719] Gerini, *Researches on Ptolemy's Geography*, 435, 437–40, esp. 439n.1; see rejection of this claim in Pelliot, *Marco Polo*, Vol. 2, 666.
[2720] Yamada, *Tōzai kōyaku shi*, 97–98; *Tōa kōryō shi kenkyū*, 43. Yamada notes that an oil can be extracted from the roots, but is unsure if crystalline granules could have also been found. For discussion of the South Asian cinnamon tree producing "Malabar camphor," see Yamada, *Tōa kōryō shi kenkyū*, 41, 426; and especially Donkin, *Dragon's Brain*, 89–93.

discussion of Mount Malaya, a mythical mountain located along the southwestern coast of the Indian subcontinent which was famed for its sandalwood trees guarded by snakes.[2721] Thus, the Buddhist pilgrim does not explicitly connect his discussion of camphor to a particular region through which he travelled, but presents it as an additional element of lore surrounding famous aromatic trees. We know this because Xuanzang's biography does not claim that he travelled to the far south, but explicitly states that he only heard stories about the region.[2722] It is likely Xuanzang encountered snow-like camphor, an item that would have entered through southern Indian ports, and recorded it in his travelogue with another aromatic tree closely associated with the south. Similar lore regarding southern perfumes came to be preserved in the *Rāmāyaṇa* epic, as a later recension of the text hints at the presence of camphor in the Indian south, while the poet Rājaśekhara (ca. 10th cent.) places camphor trees, along with several other supra-regional aromatics, on Mount Malaya.[2723]

Regardless of the origin of Xuanzang's account, other medieval sources report a close relationship between the Indian subcontinent and the maritime supply chain of camphor. For example, Chinese records report a tribute of camphor arriving in the mid-seventh century from the kingdom of Udyāna, located in the Swat River valley, only a few decades after the first recorded tribute of camphor crystals arrived in China from the Malay Peninsula, the latter being one of the few places where *D. aromatica* occurs in the wild.[2724] Furthermore, the

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[2721] McHugh, *Sandalwood and Carrion*, 171–73. According to Xuanzang, the mountain is located just south of the ancient kingdom of Malakūṭa, thus pointing us to the Western Ghats, see T2087:931c23, 932a05.
[2722] T2053:242a07, trans. Li, *Biography*, 116.
[2723] Sternbach provides evidence for the interpolation in the *Rāmāyaṇa*, noting that "fine white lotus" (*kahlārasukha*) was replaced by "camphor fragments" (*karpūradala*), see Sternbach, "Camphor in India," 432n.23; cf. Donkin, *Dragon's Brain*, 92n.30 (who incorrectly cites the translation as "boughs of camphor trees"). This emendation was likely due to the fact that the white lotus was identified as giving off a "cooling" scent. For reference to the work of Rājaśekhara, see Zumbroich, "From Mouth Fresheners to Erotic Perfumes," 81.
[2724] Chavannes, *Documents sur les Tou-kiue*, 126; Schafer, *Golden Peaches*, 167. For the early importation of camphor into China see my comments to camphor at HC#1.

ninth century Arab physician Ibn Māsawayh claims all types of camphor "are brought from the land of Sofāla," an Indian port city on the western coast.[2725] In the twelfth century, another Chinese report claims that the Coḷā kingdom, in control of present-day Coromandel Coast on the Bay of Bengal, exported camphor, along with finger rings, elephant tusks, and cotton.[2726] Lastly, the early thirteenth century *Treatise on the Barbarians* mentions both the importation and exportation of camphor from the ports of Sri Lanka.[2727]

The regular citation of camphor as an Indian export has led some scholars to speculate the native production of camphor or a camphor-like product, such as ngai camphor distilled from the *B. balsamifera* or Malabar camphor oil drawn from the roots of the *C. verum*.[2728] Such hypotheses are difficult to assess. While both suggestions are, in theory, plausible, the proposition of a native Indian "camphor" in the early medieval period comes to us without clear or direct evidence. For example, the use of Malabar camphor finds support thorough seventeenth century European accounts, but I am unaware of reports from an earlier period.[2729] Evidence for the manufacturing of nagi camphor comes even later in the nineteenth century and, moreover, was described only as the product of Hainan in southern China.[2730] It seems just as reasonable to read the claims of Ibn Māsawayh, the *Treatise on the Barbarians*, and so forth as describing the redistribution of imported camphor.[2731]

[2725] Levey, "Ibn Māsawaih," 402. Here, Sofāla should be understood as the port of Supāra (Sopārā), see Pelliot, *Marco Polo*, Vol. 2, 668.
[2726] As reported in the *Notes from Beyond the Southern Mountains* (*Lingwai daida* 嶺外代答), see Hirth and Rockhill, *Chau Ju-Kua*, 100n.8; Wheatley, "Geographical Notes," 101; Pelliot, *Marco Polo*, Vol. 2, 666; Ptak, "Camphor," 149.
[2727] Hirth and Rockhill, *Chau Ju-Kua*, 73.
[2728] Other theories have also been floated, including the use of a type of Indian patchouli, see Wheatley, "Geographical Notes," 101.
[2729] Donkin, *Dragon's Brain*, 90–91.
[2730] See my comment to ngai camphor at HC#18.
[2731] Ultimately, Pelliot believed that "some camphor" was produced in southern India, but does not speculate on its source, see Pelliot, *Marco Polo*, Vol. 2, 665.

The claims of a native India camphor are sometimes connected to the murky etymology of the term *karpūra*. An older view supported by Yamada, now mostly in the minority, sees *karpūra* as deriving from an older (unspecified) Dravidian word that is best exemplified through southern Indian languages, such as the Tamil word for *C. verum*, *kārppu* and *karau*. For Yamada, such terms originally referred to the root of the *C. verum* and the camphor-like substance it produces.[2732] It is more common to treat the Sanskrit *karpūra* as a back-formation of the Prakrit *kappūra*, itself originally a loan-word for the Malay term for camphor, *kāpur*, "chalk, lime."[2733] Ludvik Sternbach traces the earliest citation of *karpūra* in Sanskrit sources to the *Great Compendium* of Varāhamihira in the mid-sixth century where it is cited as an ingredient for a scented mouthwash.[2734] As we discussed earlier in the *Materia Aromatica*, the *Sogdian Ancient Letters*, dated to the early part of the fourth century, refer to *kprwh* in the fragments of Letter VI and thus reveal an earlier relationship between *karpūra* / *kappūra* / *kāpur*.[2735] Given the relatively late appearance of *karpūra* in Indic sources (presuming Sterhback is correct in his analysis of Sanskrit sources), it is likely the term was adopted following the start of camphor trade across the Bay of Bengal by Malay and South Indian sailors.

[2732] Yamada, *Tōzai kōyaku shi*, 96. For further support of such a view, see Hoogervorst, "Southeast Asia in the Ancient Indian Ocean World," 187n.157.

[2733] See discussion of these matters in Mahdi, "Some Austronesian Maverick Protoforms," 191; Hoogervorst, "Southeast Asia in the Ancient Indian Ocean World," 185–188; Sternbach notes *karpūra* "is of Austro-Asian origin," Sternbach, "Camphor in India," 427. Pelliot sees evidence for the Prakrit form *kappūra* in the Chiense transcription *jiebuluo* 劫布羅, see Pelliot, *Marco Polo*, Vol. 2, 665 (see T2059:103c20).

[2734] Sternbach, "Camphor in India," 438; see discussion of relevant passage in McHugh, *Sandalwood and Carrion*, 108–11. As Sternbach notes, *karpūra* also appears in the *Suśruta Saṃhitā* and *Caraka Saṃhitā*, but he views camphor as a later addition to the texts, see Sternbach, 437. Furthermore, Sternbach treats the references to camphor in the *Mahābhārata* as later additions, noting they appear "only in the southern recension," Sternbach, 433n.23. For further discussion of early references to camphor in Indic sources, see Wolters, *Indonesian Commerce*, 68, 282n.29, 282n.30.

[2735] Skjærvø, "Sogdian Notes," 113–14.

81) Campaka Flower Fragrance 薝蔔花香

The *Lotus Sutra* states, "*Sumanā* flower fragrance, *jatī* flower fragrance, *mallikā* flower fragrance, *pāṭala* flower fragrance, green, red, and white lotus flower fragrance, blossoming tree fragrance, fruit-bearing tree fragrance, sandalwood [HC#4], aloeswood [HC#3], *tamālapattra* fragrance, *tagara* fragrance [HC#77], elephant scent, horse scent, man scent, woman scent, *kovidāra* tree fragrance, *mandāra* flower fragrance, *mañjūṣaka* flower fragrance…"

法華經云：須曼那華香，闍提華香，末利花香，羅羅華香，青赤白蓮華香，華樹香，果樹香，旃檀香，沈水香，多摩羅跋香，多伽羅香，象香，馬香，男香，女香，拘鞞陀羅樹香，曼陁羅花香，殊沙華香。[2736]

[COMMENTS] The list of floral (and other miscellaneous) odors in this entry is taken from a section of the *Lotus Sutra* which explains the benefits to the bodily senses should one recite and copy the scripture, a standard Mahāyāna Buddhist devotional practice. Specifically, these odors are cited as examples of what one could unmistakably identify with a purified nose achieved through such practices. Thus, the divine power achieved is the power of superb olfactory discrimination, which one might equate to a veritable olfactory omniscience – the ability to know all smells.

The ancient *campaka*, the flower chosen by Hong Chu as the headword for this entry, is generally identified as the *Magnolia champaca* (syn. *Michelia champaca*), a tree native to large regional swaths of South Asia and Southeast Asia, with vibrantly colored cream,

[2736] Cf. T262:48b16–49b14, trans. Kern, *Lotus of The True Law*, 341–42.

yellow, or yellow-golden flowers that have an exceptionally strong scent.[2737] It is precisely because of these scented flowers that some late medieval Buddhists may have identified *campaka* as Yu Gold Aromatic, nomenclature typically reserved for saffron [HC#7].

[2737] By the thirteenth century, the *Treatise on the Barbarians* has equated Buddhist *campaka* with gardenia flowers, see Hirth and Rockhill, *Chau Ju-Kua*, 202–03.

[III] Affairs of Aromatics 香之事

[Section Three: Forty-Four Entries[2738]]

82) Discussion on *Xiang* 述香

[82a] *Explaining Graphs* [*and Analyzing Characters*] states, "[*Xiang* is a kind of] 'fragrance' [[that is pleasant smelling]]. The [small] seal script has 'millet' and 'sweetness' [as semantic constituents]."[2739]

[82b] When modified into clerical script it is written as *xiang*.[2740]

[82c] The *Commentary on the Spring and Autumn Annals*[2741] states, "glutinous millet and panicled millet are aromatic and fragrant."

[82a] 說文曰：芳也。篆，從黍從甘。[2742]

[82b] 隸省作香。

[82c] 春秋傳曰：黍稷馨香。[2743]

[2738] Individual entries are distinguished according to the table of contents of the Huacheng xylographic edition of the *Baichuan* held by Harvard University. This inadvertently causes some confusion for entries HC#82 and HC#83 as both require apparent subdivision.

[2739] *Explaining Graphs and Analyzing Characters* was principally interested in the structure of Chinese graphs, not their meaning(s) in context, thus each gloss for a head graph functions as more of a potential analogue (X *vis-à-vis* Y) than as a synonym or strict definition. The [[double brackets]] represent an explanatory phrase meant to provisionally add further context to the gloss, following the practice of Bottéro and Harbsmeier, "Shuowen Jiezi," 262–63. The head graph that was analyzed for each entry was written in small seal script (*xiaozhuanzhu* 小篆書), a relatively non-standard orthography for Chinese graphs. For more on the formulaic composition of entries in the *Explaining Graphs and Analyzing Characters*, see Bottéro and Harbsmeier, "Shuowen Jiezi."

[2740] Hong Chu's comment regards the construction of *xiang* in standard clerical script (*lishu* 隸書). In this case, the bottom component was written as *yue* 曰 instead of *gan* 甘 ("sweetness") as seen in seal script.

[2741] This quotation does not appear in any of the three surviving commentaries to the *Spring and Autumn Annals*, i..e. the *Zuo Commentary*, the *Gongyan Commentary* (*Gongyang zhuan* 公羊傳), and the *Guliang Commentary* (*Guliang zhuan* 穀梁傳). For more on these works and other lost commentaries on the *Spring and Autumn Annals*, see Loewe, *Early Chinese Texts*, 67–76.

[2742] Cf. SWJZ:7.180.

[2743] Cf. SWJZ:7.180.

[82d] In general, [graphs] related to ‘fragrant’ are all have *xiang* [as a semantic constituent].

[82d.1] A far-distant smelling fragrance is called *xin*.

[82d.2] A beautiful fragrance is called *shi*. (pronounced *shi*)

[82d.3] The scent of a fragrance is called *xian*. (analyzed as *x-ian*)

[82d] 凡香之屬皆從香。

[82d.1] 香之遠聞曰馨。

[82d.2] 香之美者曰鵹 (音使) 。

[82d.3] 香之氣曰馦 (火兼反) 。

82d.4	*an*/*yan* 馣 (音淹)	82d.5	*yun* 馧 (於雲反)	82d.6	*fu* 馥 (扶福反)
82d.7	*ai* 馤 (音愛)	82d.8	**bie* 馫 (方滅反)[2744]	82d.9	*pin*/*bin* 馪 (音繽)
82d.10	*jian* 馦 (音牋)	82d.11	*bo* 馞 (步末反)	82d.12	*bie*/*pie* 馝 (匹結反)
82d.13	*bi*/*mie* 馡 (滿結反)	82d.14	*bo*/*bei* 馞 (音悖)	82d.15	*han* 馠 (火含反)
82d.16	*fen* 馩 (音焚)	82d.17	*fen* 馚 (上同)[2745]	82d.18	*nun* 麝 (奴昆反)
82d.19	*peng* 韸(音彭韸韸大香)[2746]	82d.20	*tu* 馟 (他胡反)	82d.21	*yi* 騎 (音倚)
82d.22	*ni* 馜 (音你)	82d.23	*bo*/*po* 馞 (普沒反)	82d.24	*bie*/*mie* 馝 (滿結反)
82d.25	*pie* 馝 (普滅反)	82d.26	*weng* 馡 (烏孔反)	82d.27	*piao* [香+橈] (音瓢)[2747]

[2744] The analysis of the onset “*fang*” 方 and the final “*mie*” 滅 runs afoul of permissible phonotactics. This error is present in the Huacheng xylographic edition of the *Baichuan*, see BCXH:1819b8. Moreover, there is no modern Chinese pronunciation for the graph “馫,” although we should expect *man* based on the phonetic element *man* 萬. This is not without its own problems, however, since this graph is used to transcribe the first syllable of the Persian term *bīrzai*, see my comments to Bīrzai Aromatic at HC#51. The graph 馫 is found both in the *Baichuan* and *Siku quanshu* editions of the *Materia Aromatica* for that entry, see BCXH:1815a8 and SKQS:844.225a2. The modern print edition of the *Miscellaneous Morsels from Youyang* uses *bie* 馝 to transcribe *bīrzai*, see YYZZ:18.1349. As noted by Laufer, the *Systematic Materia Medica* also uses *bie*, where the pronunciation is explained by *bie* 別, see Laufer, *Sino-Iranica*, 363n.2. It seems *bie* 別 may have been mistaken for *fang* 方 in the copying of the *Materia Aromatica*. This means the graph under consideration, and against expectation, should be pronounced *bie*, not *man*.

[2745] Hong Chu notes the pronunciation is the same as the previous graph.

[2746] Following the pronunciation, Hong Chu notes that “*peng peng* is a great smell.”

[2747] I follow the pronunciation of this graph given by Hong Chu.

[COMMENTS] This portion of the *Materia Aromatica* is concerned with the analysis of the graph for fragrance (*xiang*) and other graphs that contain *xiang* as a component. In the table above I provide the generally accepted modern pronunciation of the graph followed, when necessary, by the pronunciation offered by Hong Chu if it is not in general agreement. Outside of *jian* [82d.10], which refers to a type of aloeswood [HC#23], and the three words Hong Chu explicitly defines [82d.1–3], the remaining list of terms are all typically treated as simple synonyms for "fragrant." Overall, the terms are rarely encountered in early and medieval sources.

83A) Fragrance of the Land 國香[2748]

Zuo Commentary [states]: "Thoroughwort is the fragrance of the land."[2749]

左傳：蘭有國香。

[COMMENTS] This entry refers to a story concerning the reign of Duke Wen 文 (r. 672–628 BCE) of Zheng, an ancient state comprising present-day western Henan. In the original passage from the *Zuo Commentary* we are told a young concubine, known as Yan Ji 燕姞, has a prophetic dream where a heavenly messenger (*tianshi* 天使) delivers to her some thoroughwort. According to the tale preserved in the *Zuo Commentary*, the messenger relays the following information:

[2748] The table of contents of the Huacheng xylographic edition lists Fragrance of the Land after skipping several similar style passages, both before and for a single passage following. For consistency in following the table of contents, I have decided to treat this entry and the next as an individual unit.
[2749] CQZZ:21.4057, trans. Durrant, Li, and Schaberg, *Zuo Tradition*, 605; see also Sterckx, *Food, Sacrifice, Sagehood*, 172n.18; Milburn, "Aromas," 458. In all of these scholarly discussions, however, the plant is anachronistically rendered as an orchid, see my comments to thoroughwort at HC#29.

> I am Bo Chou. I am your ancestor. Take this as your son, for it is thoroughwort, the fragrance of the land. The people will admire and cherish him just as they do this [thoroughwort].[2750]
> 余為伯儵，余而祖也。以是為而子，以蘭有國香，人服媚之如是。

Soon after this dream, Duke Wen has sexual intercourse with Yan Ji and gives thoroughwort to her as a gift. Unsure if others will believe the lord chose a woman of such low position, Yan Ji asks to use the thoroughwort as proof of their union, to which Duke Wen agrees. Yan Ji gives birth to a son and names him Lan (Thoroughwort), known to later history as Duke Mu (r. 628–606 BCE) of Zheng. As a parallel to the legendary beginning of the boy's life, when Duke Mu finally falls terminally ill the *Zuo Commentary* notes that pieces of thoroughwort were cut, thus ending his life.[2751]

Gopal Sukhu underscores the careful wording of the heavenly messenger to Yan Ji, specifically in the use of the word *fu* 服 which carries a dual meaning. On one hand, it means "to serve, respect, admire," and on another hand, it also means "to wear, adorn." Consequently, the passage refers both to the act of adorning the body with thoroughwort, just as we see described in the ancient *Songs of Chu* anthology as a symbol of virtue and divinity, as well as admiration for the future lord who is aptly named Thoroughwort.[2752] Ultimately, this story plays upon the idea found in many early and medieval sources that a person who is "perfumed," both in a literal sense and as "saturated" with virtue, should consequently be admired and cherished.

There is another layer of meaning to thoroughwort in this story related to eroticism, fertility, and progeny. In the *Book of Odes* anthology there is a poem entitled the "Zhen and

[2750] CQZZ:21.4057; cf. trans. Durrant, Li, and Schaberg, *Zuo Tradition*, 605.
[2751] CQZZ:21.4057; trans Durrant, Li, and Schaberg, *Zuo Tradition*, 607. An abbreviated version of this story is also preserved in SJ:43.1756.
[2752] See discussion in Sukhu, *Shaman*, 104–05.

Wei Rivers" (*Zhenwei* 溱洧) which, according to later commentaries, describes a springtime courtship festival in the same state of Zheng. The poem opens with a man and woman going out into the fields to gather thoroughwort (*xian*), an act read as indicative of their desired union.[2753] The erotic connotations of this scented plant find further support elsewhere, as thoroughwort (*xian*) is also cited as an aphrodisiac in the second century BCE medical manuscripts of Mawangdui.[2754] The fact that Yan Ji was gifted thoroughwort twice, first by the heavenly messenger and then by Duke Wen, might indicate an older tradition where her son was initially the product of a divine courtship.[2755] We know through the *Songs of Chu* that thoroughwort infused baths, known as thoroughwort decoctions (*lantang*), were used by female shamans in preparation for the descent of spirits, possibly in the act of spirit possession and erotic union.[2756]

Consequently, it is possible to read the gift of thoroughwort to Yan Ji in the *Zuo Commentary* not only as a means to prophesize her son's virtue and devoted following, but also as a means to enhance sexual desire and signal successful courtship (both divine and human) as was popularly understood among the people of Zheng.

[2753] MSZY:4.732 (Mao #95), cf. trans. Waley, *Book of Songs*, 76 (translating thoroughwort as "scented herbs").
[2754] Specifically, thoroughwort is used as part of a drug therapy to augment the size of an erection, see Harper, *Early*, 330.
[2755] See discussion and several citations to similar accounts in Smith, "Ritual," 76n.82.
[2756] For further comments scented plants and ancient mediumship, see Chapter 2, Section 2.The erotic significance of thoroughwort is also briefly discussed in Bodde, *Festivals*, 273–75; Hawkes, *Songs of the South*, 97; Stein, *World in Miniature*, 303n.86.

83B) In Time, One [No Longer] Smells the Fragrance 久而聞其香[2757]

Discourses of the States[2758] states, "When one enters a room of thoroughwort root, in time, one [no longer] smells the fragrance."

國語: 入芝蘭之室，久而聞[2759]其香。

[COMMENTS] In contrast to Hong Chu's citation, this passage was based primarily on the *School Sayings of Confucius* (*Kongzi jiayu* 孔子家語), a work edited in the third century by Wang Su 王肅 (195–256), but much of which is based on older materials.[2760] The full passage reads as follows:

> Being accompanied by a wholesome person is like entering a room of thoroughwort root; in time, although one cannot smell its fragrance, one will be transformed by it. Being accompanied by an unwholesome person is like entering a market of abalone fish; in time, although one cannot smell its stench, one will also be transformed by it.[2761]
> 與善人居，如入芝蘭之室，久而不聞其香，即與之化矣。與不善人居，如入鮑魚之肆，久而不聞其臭，亦與之化矣。

This expresses the sentiment that the nearly imperceptible influence of another person's moral virtue will have an effect on one's own behavior and character, just as certain environmental odors will cling to one's garments and cause them to smell in a similar manner even though one has become inured to their scent.

[2757] Read 聞 as 不聞.

[2758] *Discourses of the States* (*Guoyu* 國語) is a collection of stories and sayings of rulers and other prominent people during the Spring and Autumn period (771–476 BC). Some view the *Discourses of the States* as an informal commentary on the *Spring and Autumn Annals*, thus complimenting the more widely acclaimed *Zuo Commentary*, see Loewe, *Early Chinese Texts*, 265.

[2759] Read 聞 as 不聞.

[2760] Loewe, *Early Chinese Texts*, 258–62.

[2761] KZJY:4.15.115.

84) Preface on Aromatics 香序

Fan Ye (398–446)[2762] of the [Liu] Song, courtesy name Weizong, compiled the *Formulary of Blended Aromatics*. The preface said: "A lot of musk should be avoided, an excessive amount is harmful. Aloeswood is mild and calming, thus [even] in excess of a *jin* it is harmless. Sweet basil and patchouli are dry and fragile, while elemi is sticky and moist. Things such as spikenard, storax, gum guggul, and saffron are repeatedly crushed, blended, and sifted.[2763] These are also the valuables of foreign countries, but cannot be found in China.[2764] Furthermore, jujube paste is dim and dull, while onycha reduction is insipid and vulgar, thus not only do they not assist in the intensity of smell, they surely and entirely enhance the severity of sickness."

[2762] Biography at SShu:69.1819–1833.

[2763] Liu Jingmin reads this sentence as listing *naduo* 捺多 (also *naduo* 榛多) and *heluo* 和羅 as unidentified aromatics, see Liu, *Songdai Xiangpu*, 259; see also Lin Ying, "Ruler of the Treasure Country : The Image of the Roman Empire in Chinese Society from the First to the Fourth Century AD," *Latomus* 63, no. 2 (2004): 333. O.W. Wolters treats *naduoheluo* as a single unidentified aromatic, see Wolters, *Indonesian Commerce*, 115. All four graphs are attested as Chinese Buddhist transcriptions for Indic phonetic components, making such claims plausible. Ultimately, however, I find this reading unconvincing. First, in the subsequent passage, neither *naduo* nor *heluo* are cited as representing government officials, suggesting that Shen Yue did not read the two terms in question as aromatics. It should be noted, however, that Shen Yue did not cite gum guggul (*anxi*) nor saffron (*yujin*) in his analogy either. Secondly, if taken as individual aromatics, both the terms *naduo* and *heluo* stand as *hapax legomena* in surviving medieval works. Neither term appears in medieval Buddhist lexicographical resources as a name for fragrant materials nor are used in Buddhist commentarial glosses. Ultimately, I believe the text to be corrupt and prefer to read the passage verbally as describing processing techniques for blending perfumes. *He* 和, "to blend," and *luo* 羅, "to sift," are commonly seen in late medieval blending instructions, while *na* 捺, "to press down," might refer to kneading and making pellets, or might otherwise be a copyist error for *dao* 擣, "to crush." Yamada Kentarō does not address this issue, but neither does he discuss *naduo-heluo* among the other individual aromatics that he highlights in this passage. This suggests he did not read them as individual materials, see Yamada, *Tōzai kōyaku shi*, 29. The National Palace Museum also notes a total of nine aromatics when discussing this passage, excluding *naduo-heluo*, see Guoli gugong bowuyuan, *Xiangju tulu*, 17.

[2764] It is difficult to understand the general import of this sentence. Is Fan Ye describing the scarcity of these aromatics in China or their rejection by Chinese perfumers? Lin Ying translates this sentence as saying the perfumes are "cherished in the foreign land but do no good in China," Ying, "Treasure Country," 333. Wolters translates it as saying that the aromatics are "all valued in foreign countries but do not count for much in China," Wolters, *Indonesian Commerce*, 115. Kong renders it as saying that as for these foreign substances, "although they are cherished in foreign countries, no one believed them to be beneficial to the Central Land," Kong, *Fu Poetry Along the Silk Roads*, 35. Yamada glosses the sentence as saying that spikenard, storax, gum guggul, and saffron are only used in moderation, see Yamada, *Tōzai kōyaku shi*, 29. It may simply be the case that the scarcity of these items led to their infrequent use in blending recipes.

[Commentary of Shen Yue:] In accordance with the preface, all [these descriptions] are representative of court officials. “A lot of musk should be avoided” represents Yu Bingzhi (388–450)[2765]; “Sweet basil and patchouli are fragile and dry” represents He Shangzhi (382–460)[2766]; “elemi is sticky and moist” represents Shen Yanzhi (397–449)[2767]; “jujube paste is faint and muddled” represents Yang Xuanbao (370–463)[2768]; “onycha reduction is insipid and vulgar” represents Xu Zhanzhi (410–453)[2769]; “spikenard and storax” represents Huilin (early 5th cent.)[2770], a person of the Way; and “aloeswood is mild and calming” represents himself [i.e. Fan Ye].”[2771]

宋范煜[2772]，字蔚宗，撰和香方，其序云：麝本多忌，過分必害；沈實易和，盈斤無傷。零藿慘[2773]虐[2774]，詹糖粘[2775]濕。甘松，蘇合，安息，鬱金，捺多和羅之屬，並被[2776]於外國，無取於中土。又棗膏昏懞[2777]，甲煎[2778]淺俗，非惟無助於馨烈，乃當彌增于尤疾也。此序所言，悉以比類朝士：麝本多忌比庾憬[2779]之，[零藿虛燥比何尚之， 詹

[2765] Biography at SShu:53.1516–1522.
[2766] Biography at SShu:66.1732–1741.
[2767] Biography at SShu:63.1684–1690.
[2768] Biography at SShu:54.1534–1542.
[2769] Biography at SShu:71.1843–1848.
[2770] Biography at SShu:97.2388.
[2771] Cf. SShu:69.1829; cf. SKQS:844.335b16–336a7; cf. TPYL:8.981.853.
[2772] Read 煜 as 曄, following uncorrected Huacheng edition, p. 1820.
[2773] Read 慘 as 燥, following SShu:69.1829.
[2774] Read 虐 as 虛, following SShu:69.1829.
[2775] Read 粘 as 黏, following SShu:69.1829.
[2776] Read 被 as 被珍, following SShu:69.1829.
[2777] Read 懞 as 鈍, following SShu:69.1829.
[2778] Read 煎 as 煎, following SShu:69.1829.
[2779] Read 憬 as 炳, following SShu:69.1829.

唐黏濕比沈演之[2780]]，棗膏昏懞[2781]比羊玄保，甲醆[2782]淺俗比徐湛之，甘松蘇合比惠休[2783]道人，沈實易和蓋[2784]，自比也。

[COMMENTS] Fan Ye's single *juan Formulary of Blended Aromatics* (*Hexiang fang* 和香方) is no longer extant. The "Bibliographic Treatise" (*jingji zhi* 經籍志) compiled for the *Book of Sui* (*Sui shu* 隋書) in the seventh century already lists Fan Ye's manual, under the variant title, *Formulary of Superior Aromatics* (*shangxiang fang* 上香方), as lost.[2785] In spite of this, the preface was copied into the Fan Ye's *vita* found in the *Book of the Song* (*Song shu* 宋書), completed at the end of the fifth century.[2786] It remains unknown when Fan Ye compiled his manual, but it is likely after his political career came to an end in 433 when he was demoted to serve an administrative post in Pengcheng, present-day Xucheng in Jiangsu, a period in which he focused on writing and ultimately compiling the *Book of Later Han*. He was executed in 446.[2787]

Due to the loss of the other fifth century perfuming formularies and blending manuals, Fan Ye's preface, however brief, provides us with important information regarding the state of Chinese perfumery during the early medieval period. First, we are given insight into which aromatic exotica were presumably well-known and which ones were more difficult to obtain. We learn, for example, that Fan Ye's aromatic ingredients were sourced

[2780] Following SShu:69.1829.
[2781] Read 懞 as 鈍, following SShu:69.1829.
[2782] Read 醆 as 煎, following SShu:69.1829.
[2783] Read 惠休 as 慧琳, following SShu:1829. Huixiu 惠休 was also a name of a poet-monk from the fifth century and was a friend of Xu Zhanzhi, see SShu:71.1847.
[2784] Omit 蓋, following SShu:1829.
[2785] SuiS:34.1043.
[2786] SShu:69.1829.
[2787] For an overview of Fan Ye's life and career, see Knechtges and Chang, *Reference Guide*, Vol. 1, 218–22.

from the frontier borderlands of China, including Himalayan spikenard [HC#19], western Indian gum guggul [HC#6], and northern Indian saffron [HC#7], as well as Mediterranean storax [HC#5]. All four of these items are cited in the first century *Periplus Maris Erythraei*, a handbook of Greco-Roman trade, as being traded in the bustling ports of Barbarikon and Barygaza on the Arabian Sea, the former of which also exported Chinese silk to the West.[2788] Yet, according to Fan Ye, it appears these items were either difficult to obtain or were of little interest to perfumers in the mid-fifth century, noting they "cannot be found in China." Writing in the coastal south under the Liu Song, Fan Ye probably had limited access to goods coming through overland trade routes controlled by the Northern Wei, and thus these political and economic realities may account for such a statement. Less a century later, Tao Hongjing cites aloeswood, frankincense, cloves, patchouli, elemi, and liquidambar as the six most valued aromatics of contemporary perfumers, thus hinting at the continued limited access or interest in the above four raw materials for the perfuming arts in the south.[2789]

These four stand in contrast to the first five materials listed in Fan Ye's preface, musk [HC#2], aloeswood [HC#3], sweet basil [HC#20], patchouli [HC#38], and elemi [HC#10], which were certainly more widely available in Chinese markets. The musk deer lived in the mountains and forests across China and sweet basil was known to flourish in the subtropical region of Lingling in present-day southern Hunan. In addition, elemi was available in the tropical far south and the harvesting of native *Aquilaria* trees for aloeswood was likely just beginning in Guangdong when Fan Ye compiled his manual. Lastly, patchouli was native to the Malay Peninsula, but was cultivated regionally in central Vietnam, or possibly even

[2788] See Casson, *Periplus*, 22, 26n.29, 67, 75, 81, 152–53, 163–64, 185, 193–94, 222, 292–93.
[2789] XXBC:12.313. This should only be read as reflecting the interest in general perfuming arts, as the demand for foreign aromatics among other social groups, such as Buddhist monastics or Daoists, may have been different.

closer to the Chinese southern border, during the fifth century. Turning again to Tao Hongjing, we find three of these five materials, aloeswood, elemi, and patchouli, were favored by Chinese perfumers in the earl sixth century.

Lastly, Fan Ye's surviving preface also sheds light on early blending principles, such as the minimal use of all-too-potent musk, or the free and copious use of aloeswood.[2790] These relative proportions of musk and aloeswood are still exemplified in the recipes preserved at the end of Hong Chu's catalogue. Additionally, jujube paste and onycha [HC#35] are treated are dull or malodorous, reflecting their general use as additives and agglutinants. Moreover, if my reading is correct, Fan Ye talks about crushing and sifting raw materials as part of the compounding process, refining techniques that remain central to perfuming arts through the Song and are seen in Hong Chu's blending recipes.

Notably, the chief redactor of the *Book of Song*, Shen Yue 沈約 (441–513), who oversaw the compilation of Fan Ye's biography, reads the individual aromatics as allusions to other members of the Liu Song court.[2791]

85) Commandant Fragrance 香尉

The *Records Narrating the Strange* [states], "Yong Zhongzi of the Han collected the fragrant

[2790] Fan Ye uses odd nomenclature for this pair of materials, which may have prompted Shen Yue to read the preface allegorically. For aloeswood, Fan Ye writes *shenshi* 沈實, a term which also carries the meaning of "deep loyalty." Given that Fan Ye was charged with plotting to usurp the throne, for which he was ultimately executed, the fact that Shen Yue connects Fan Ye to aloeswood might reveal a real political message hidden within the preface.

[2791] See preceding footnote; in addition, these figures are addressed in relation to Fan Ye's catalogue in Liu, *Songdai Xiangpu*, 258–62.

goods of the Southern Seas. He paid respect to Commandant[2792] Fu Yang and at that time people called him Commandant Fragrance."

述異記: 漢雍仲子進南海香物，拜涪陽尉，人[2793]謂之香尉。[2794]

[COMMENTS] I have been unable to uncover any further information concerning Yong Zhongzi 雍仲子 or Fu Yang 涪陽. According to this anecdote, Yong Zhongzi appears to have been captivated by the fragrant plants, resins, and gums from Southeast Asia, causing him to amass a collection of these valued commodities. At some unspecified time, Yong Zhongzi had an encounter of some consequence with Fu Yang. In my reading of this terse passage, it appears that Yong Zhongzi presented a gift to Fu Yang, presumably in deference to a man of superior rank, which included rare aromatics. As a result, people started to jokingly refer to Yong Zhongzi as Commandant Fragrance.

It should be noted that several other men in the medieval imagination were reputed for their personal perfuming habits, including the Western Han official Jin Midi [HC#73], the Eastern Han political and military advisor Xun Yu [HC#94], and the Western Jin official Han Shou [HC#98].

86) Fragrance Markets 香市

The *Records Narrating the Strange* states, "Rinan [commandery] has fragrance markets; the locations where merchants trade in all kinds of aromatics."

[2792] A common military title that does not often suggest active field command, see Hucker, *Dictionary of Official Titles*, 564 (#7657).
[2793] Read 人 as 時人, following TPYL:8.981.856.
[2794] Cf. TPYL:8.981.856.

述異記曰：南方[2795]有香市，乃商人交易諸香處。[2796]

[COMMENTS] Located on the central Vietnamese coast, the old Han commandery of Rinan was positioned optimally for trade in aromatics. Not only was prized aloeswood produced in regional forests of *Aquilaria* trees, known as the forests of a Thousand Mu Aromatic [HC#49] in the *Materia Aromatica*, but already by the Han, Rinan was a critical entrepôt for merchant ships plying the trade routes between China and Southeast Asia.[2797]

We unfortunately have no other direct information about the Rinan's perfume markets. The brief entry above is found only in the *Records Narrating the Strange*, a text dating to around the end of the fifth century. Yet we do have clues providing additional context for early medieval aloeswood trade in this region, arguably the most lucrative and important export of Rinan.

One important source in this regard is the *Records of Linyi* (*Linyi ji* 林邑記), a work of unknown authorship that possibly dates no later than the end of the fifth century.[2798] This gazetteer describes the people living in the regions south of Zhiwu 朱吾, a trading port in

[2795] Read 南方 ("southern regions") as 日南 ("Rinan"), following TPYL:8.981.856. I believe this is a preferable reading because the compilers of the *Imperial Readings of the Taiping Era* grouped many of the passages from the *Records Narrating the Strange* that discuss Rinan together; cf. Laufer, "Malabathron," 29n.1 (who reads the passage as a description of Southeast Asia per the reading in the *Materia Aromatica*). Hong Chu's citation to the "southern regions" was copied into into Chen Jing's *Newly Compiled Materia Aromatica*, SKQS:844.322b04–05.

[2796] Cf. TPYL:8.981.856.

[2797] By the end of the Han, the ports of Jiaozhi became the main center of Chinese trade with the Southern Seas, see Wang, "Nanhai Trade," 21, 29; Schottenhammer, "Maritime Power," 446.

[2798] This work has been attributed to the Western Han master of esoterica Dongfang Shuo, but this is patently untenable, see Li, *Fourth Century Flora*, 117–18; Ma, "Nan-Fang Ts'ao-Mu Chuang," 241–43; Zheng et al., *Dictionary of the Ben Cao Gang Mu*, 287. The polity of Linyi is first cited in Chinese historical materials in the 220s–230s, thus establishing a *terminus post quem* for this work, see Vickery, *Champa Revisited*, 11, 16–17. Moreover, the *Records of Linyi* is first cited in Li Daoyuan 酈道元 (d. 527) *Annotations to the Guideway through Rivers* (*Shuijing zhu* 水經注), giving a *terminus ante quem*. The work has been treated as being compiled no later than the end of the fifth century, see Needham, Lu, and Huang, *Science and Civilisation,* Vol. 6, Part 1, 445.

northern Rinan near present-day Đồng Hới, as "collecting aromatics for a living and trading them with people at markets."[2799] Since this passage is describing a local pursuit, we can presume the principal aromatic sold at perfume markets was locally harvested aloeswood from the *Aquilaria crassna*. This tree is found throughout the mountains of central Vietnam and surrounding regions. The *Records of Linyi* further describes the local inhabitants as the "wild people of the Wenlang who live without shelters by using trees as resting spots and who eat raw meat."[2800] Even though this passage offers stock descriptions of a "savage" people, native ethnic groups of the Vietnamese Central Highlands were possibly among the first to acquire knowledge of how aloeswood was produced in *Aquilaria* trees and develop specific strategies regarding its removal. For example, the *Book of Liang* reports that local peoples (*turen* 土人) of Linyi "chop and cut apart [the aloeswood tree] and after storing it for many years [the wood] decays and rots," and then concludes saying, "only the [fragrant] gnarled heartwood segments remain."[2801] These descriptions correspond to Wan Zhen's mid-to-late third century report in the *Treatise on Strange Things of the Southern Regions* as well as Zhu Fazhen's late fifth century *Commentary on Climbing Mt. Luofu*.[2802] Both works attest to an early aloeswood industry in Rinan.

We may speculate that local forest-dwelling tribes first discovered scented aloeswood chunks among fallen and decaying *Aquilaria* trees scattered throughout regional forests. At some point, and certainly by the late third century, local tribes realized they could hasten the

[2799] 彩香為業，與人交市。TPYL:8.981.854. This point is reiterated in the *Annotations to the Guideway through Rivers*, see Yamada, *Tōa kōryō shi kenkyū*, 192.
[2800] 文郎野人，居無室宅，依樹止宿，食生肉。TPYL:8.981.854.
[2801] 土人斫斷之，積以歲年，朽爛而心節獨在。LS:54.48.784; also see TPYL:8.982.864. This passage is discussed in Yamada, *Tōa kōryō shi kenkyū*, 185
[2802] T2122:573c24–29 (passage discussed in comments to Wood Honey Aromatic at HC#42) and TPYL:8.982.865 (discussed in comments to aloeswood at HC#3), respectively.

process by cutting apart *Aquilaria* trees and leaving the pieces of wood to rot, thus revealing the dark aloeswood hidden inside. It remains open to debate if the peoples of the Central Highlands independently discovered these methods for procuring aloeswood or if they learned the techniques from elsewhere, such as northeastern India which has an even older recorded tradition of aloeswood production.[2803] In either regard, aloeswood continued to not only be integral to trade, but also to later Vietnamese folklore, including the story of the goddess of storms and floods, Thiên Y Ana (C. Tian yi ana 天依阿那). According to Rolf Stein, her myth "is nothing more than the story of a piece of [aloeswood.]"[2804] Indeed, up through the nineteenth century Cham "forest men" were integral to the collection of *gahalo*, or aloeswood.[2805]

Thus, according to the documentation available to us, it appears aloeswood was harvested at least by the end of the third century by native ethnic groups around the Central Highlands who then traded their goods at urban markets, such as the Fragrance Markets noted in the *Records Narrating the Strange*. In addition, the movement of goods into China also seems to have mirrored the movement of knowledge about the production and harvesting of aloeswood. For example, by the fifth century, local Chinese living in present-day Guangdong are reported as using the same strategies of aloeswood harvesting as those in Rinan and Linyi.[2806]

[2803] See my comments to aloeswood at HC#3.
[2804] Stein, *Miniature Gardens*, 85.
[2805] Schafer, *Golden Peaches*, 164.
[2806] See my comments to aloeswood at HC#3.

87) Sweet Basil Censer 薰爐[2807]

Ying Shao's (ca. 144–ca. 204) *Observances for Han Officials*[2808] states, "When the Secretarial Court Gentlemen[2809] enter the Pavilion [of the Imperial Secretariat[2810]] where they are assigned, they are provided two female attendants[2811] who are all chosen for being exemplary and upright. This is an assignment to follow the official. The female attendants grasp incense burners and burn sweet basil, following the officials who enter into the Pavilion [of the Imperial Secretariat] to provide protection for their clothing."

應劭漢官儀曰：尚書郎入直臺中，給女侍史二人，皆選端正，指使從直。女侍史執香爐，燒薰以從入臺中給使護衣。[2812]

[COMMENTS] The Court Gentlemen of the Imperial Secretariat were in charge of drafting the most important imperial documents, including edicts and decrees. Consequently, men of this position were among the most influential figures at the court and often had direct access to the emperor. According to Ying Shao and other court officials of the Han, assignment to

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[2807] Given that the context of this passage specifically highlights the burning of sweet basil (*xun*), I have elected to translate Hong Chu's headword, *xunlu* 薰爐, as "sweet basil censer," instead of the more common "diffusion brazier" or "perfuming censer."

[2808] Ying Shao 應劭 (ca. 144–ca. 204) was a prolific scholar who served in high-ranking posts through the end of the Eastern Han. When the much of the imperial archive was destroyed and the Han capital was moved to Xu 許 at the end of the second century, Ying Shao compiled the procedures and protocols of the imperial court into a work he entitled the *Precedents for the Rituals and Observances of Han Officials* (*Han guan liyi gushi* 漢官禮儀故事), which was then condensed into the *Observances of Han Officials* (*Han guan yi* 漢官儀), see Knechtges and Chang, *Reference Guide*, Vol. 1, 1933–40, esp. 1935.

[2809] These are members of the court retinue who were assigned specialized duties within the Imperial Secretariat, see Hucker, *Dictionary of Official Titles*, 411–12 (#5047).

[2810] The agency which oversaw the preparation of formal drafts for all imperial edicts and decrees, essentially becoming the administrative core of imperial governance by the late Han. *Tai* 臺 could be used to denote several different agencies, but here it refers to the Imperial Secretariat (*shangshu tai* 尚書臺), see Hucker, *Dictionary of Official Titles*, 412 (#5057), 475–76 (#6135); also see 411–12 (#5042). For more on the role of the Imperial Secretariat in Han governance, see Hans Bielenstein, *The Bureaucracy of Han Times* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980), 48–49, 56–57.

[2811] Hucker, *Dictionary of Official Titles*, 357–58 (#4347), Bielenstein, *Bureaucracy*, 57.

[2812] Cf. TPYL:2.215.86; cf. HGLZ:143. See similar passages in HGLZ:33, 64, and 206.

this administrative post meant that the official would be gifted new silk fabrics and given access to the best food, drinks, and delicacies. This position was also assigned two escorts for travel as well as two female attendants who burned *xun*, sweet basil [HC#20], to fumigate and perfume the officials' garments when seeking audience with the emperor.[2813] In addition to diffusion cages, as a matter of practicality, these attendants may have used long-handled portable censers (*xinglu* 行爐) to assist them in their duties.[2814] Such specialized roles attest to the fact that garment fumigation was an integral part of Han olfactory culture when in close proximity to the Son of Heaven. To this we can also add the court practices of chewing cloves to freshen the breath [HC#95] and adorning oneself with thoroughwort and other bodily perfumes [HC#88].[2815]

The position and duties of the two female censer attendants were first noted in the Wei Hong's 衛宏 (fl. 1st cent.) *Old Observances for Han Officials* (*Han guan jiuyi* 漢官舊儀), a work that was compiled in the first few decades on the common era and purportedly covered the court protocols of the Western Han.[2816] Unlike the use of cloves and thoroughwort, this document extends the use of sweet basil into the very early years of the Eastern Han, if not squarely into the Western Han. In addition to being included in the work of Ying Shao, a cited by Hong Chu above, the female censer attendants were also noted in

[2813] Both Hans Bielenstein and Charles Hucker treat the two escorts and female censer attendants as following the emperor as he entered into the Pavilion of the Imperial Secretariat, not the Secretarial Court Gentlemen, see Hucker, *Dictionary of Official Titles*, 357–58 (#4347) and Bielenstein, *Bureaucracy*, 57. Since these attending positions are discussed in the context of the emoluments of the Secretarial Court Gentlemen, this interpretation appears unlikely. Notably, Hong Chu understood the pair of female censer attendants as serving the Secretarial Court Gentlemen.
[2814] Zeng and Wang, "Handai de xunlu," 124–25.
[2815] For brief discussion of personal hygiene when visiting the emperor, see Lu and Lo, "Scent and Synaesthesia," 41.
[2816] HGLZ:33, 64. For a *vita* of Wei Hong's career, see de Crespigny, *Biographical Dictionary*, 852.

Cai Zhi's *Duties and Observances for Han Officials Selected for Use*, both works describing the court protocols of the Eastern Han.[2817]

It is important to underscore that these documents are the earliest surviving Chinese works which employ the term incense burner (*xianglu* 香爐). Additionally, these are among the earliest texts that unambiguously refer to burning plant materials as perfume, or in the *lingua franca* of medieval Chinese religion, burning incense (*shao xiang* 燒香).

There are four important points to raise in regard to these issues. First, these court protocols are some of the earliest textual sources which do not treat the term *xiang* as the aroma of state sacrifice, but as part of a broader category of perfuming directly associated with burning plants for their scent.

Second, these works are the beginning of a more general trend of replacing the older term diffusion brazier (*xun$_1$lu* 熏爐), which is attested in a handful of inscriptions from the Western Han.[2818] By exchanging the graph *xun$_1$* for the graph *xiang*, the pleasing olfactory aspect of burning fragrant plant materials is emphasized over the act of simple smoke diffusion.

Third, given that we can only speculate on the usage of ancient incense burners found in archaeological excavations, these court protocols are explicit in their function: they are used for perfuming and fumigating garments. We find further insight by turning to the *Supplementary Record by Famous Physicians*, a work from the early medieval period that thus represents pharmacological knowledge roughly contemporaneous with the compilation of the Han protocols. This text explains in plain language one of the potential uses for sweet

[2817] HGLZ:206.
[2818] See discussion in Chapter 3, Section 2.

basil, namely that it was effective in "driving away stench and malign *qi*."[2819] Malign *qi* was a general pathogenic agent that could harm the human body, thus its expulsion was considered necessary for health and general well-being.[2820] If we look closely at the language of the Han protocols, the two female censer attendants were specifically charged with "protecting the garments" (*huyi* 護衣) of the courtiers, meaning their duty many not have only been safeguarding against the stench of a foul body, but also against the potential of spreading disease.

Lastly, building on the previous point, the earliest textual elaboration on the use of incense burners in China does not portray them as part of state sanctioned sacrificial rites nor as a tool for esoteric arts in the search for immortality; incense burners are depicted as exoteric devices of a more-or-less domestic nature.

It is not clear what happened to these court protocols regarding sweet basil after the Han dynasty collapsed. The sumptuary ordinance issued by Cao Cao around 216 banning the burning of incense for reasons of personal vanity may have disrupted this practice, but it also appears the therapeutic and apotropaic use of sweet basil to prevent the spread of disease continued unabated.[2821] Whatever the case may have been, in the coming centuries the use of sweet basil appears to have fallen out of favor among the courtly elite who were increasingly exposed to foreign aromatics that were prized for their novelty and extraordinary pungency.

[2819] 去臭惡氣。XXBC:20.834.
[2820] Zhang and Unschuld, *Dictionary of the Ben Cao Gang Mu*, 142. Notably, according to Zhang Zhibin and Paul Unschuld, a secondary meaning of malign *qi* was bad odor.
[2821] See my comments to Golden Incense Burner at HC#99.

88) Clutched Aromatic 懷香

The *Duties of Han Officials*[2822] states, "Secretarial Court Gentlemen clutch aromatics and clasp thoroughwort as they hastily walk along the Cinnabar Landing."

漢官典職曰：尚書郎懷香握蘭，趨走丹墀。[2823]

[COMMENTS] As noted in the comments to the preceding entry, Secretarial Court Gentlemen were in charge of drafting imperial edicts and official decrees and thus often had direct access to the emperor. The Cinnabar Landing (*danchi* 丹墀), also sometimes called the Red Landing (*chichi* 赤墀), refers to the long platform covered in red paint at the top of the stairs leading to the emperor's palace. The architectural element was often used in literary contexts as a metonym for the imperial palace. This passage provides a glimpse into the lives of the Secretarial Court Gentlemen as they entered into the precincts of the imperial palace to deliver documents to the emperor. The actions of clutching, or "holding against one's breast" (*huai* 懷), and clasping (*wo* 握), were probably not done manually, but likely referred to holding aromatics in scenting sachets close to one's body, such as on a belt-sash, in order to ward off foul body odor and emit an agreeable fragrance [HC#97].

A slightly emended reading is found in Ying Shao's two *juan* edition of the *Observances for Han Officials* re-compiled by Sun Xingyan 孫星衍 (1753–1818). There we are told that officials clasped thoroughwort and suckled aromatics (*han xiang* 含香) instead

[2822] The full title of this work is the *Duties and Observances for Han Officials Selected for Use* (*Hanguan dianzhi yishi xuanyong* 漢官典職儀式選用). It was compiled by the Eastern Han court official Cai Zhi 蔡質 (fl. 178). For a *vita* of Cai Zhi's career, see de Crespigny, *Biographical Dictionary*, 32.
[2823] Cf. TPYL:8.981.854, cf. TPYL:8.983.870, cf. HGLZ:206. See similar passages in HGLZ:115 and 143.

of clenching them.[2824] This undoubtedly refers to the practice of chewing on cloves to freshen the breath [HC#95]. Regardless of the precise wording of this passage, when an official had audience with the emperor it was expected that he was cloaked in the sweet air of perfume to conduct formal business.

In addition to being considered a bold perfume, the ministerial use of thoroughwort was also highly symbolic. Based on the *Songs of Chu*, and the poem "Encountering Sorrow" in particular, the scent of thoroughwort was emblematic of the unwavering virtue of person who wore it as well as suggestive of being in the presence of the divine – a perfect emblem for the minister meeting with the Son of Heaven. This symbolic meaning of divine presence was further hypostatized through the *Classic of Materia Medica of the Divine Husbandman*, a work edited up through the Eastern Han and thus roughly contemporaneous with the Han protocols, which claimed that thoroughwort could be used to communicate with the spirits.[2825]

As with the use of sweet basil to perfume the robes of Secretarial Court Gentlemen, it is uncertain when the adornment of thoroughwort as a prerequisite to with the emperor ceased, but the practice appears to have not survived the collapse of the Han empire. Furthermore, it is not clear if the sumptuary ordinance issued by Cao Cao around 216 banning the use of personal scenting devices included the use of scenting sachets filled with thoroughwort. Regardless of the ban, the perceived value of thoroughwort in the imperial house would decrease in the coming centuries as foreign aromatics took center stage in the

[2824] HGLZ:143.
[2825] XXBC:7.188. This is attributed to Thoroughwort Herb, not Marsh Thoroughwort; for the difference between these two plants, see my comments to Thoroughwort Aromatic at HC#29.

lives of the elite.

89) Aromatics Guilds 香戶

The *Records Narrating the Strange* states, "Nanhai commandery[2826] has aromatics gathering guilds."

述異記曰：南海郡有採香戶。[2827]

[COMMENTS] It is difficult to evaluate this passage given there is no other reference to "aromatics guilds" in medieval records. If taken at face value, there appear to have been a professional class of aromatics gatherers, or perhaps local families associated with such a trade, in the far Chinese south around Nanhai commandery, part of present-day Guangdong.

Notably, not only do aloeswood-producing *Aquilaria sinensis* trees occur in the tropical south, but there are several fifth century reports claiming aloeswood was harvested in the region of Guangdong west of the Pearl River Delta.[2828] These reports are roughly contemporaneous with the compilation of the *Records Narrating the Strange*, thus it is possible these guilds focused on the collection of aloeswood, a valuable commodity that was highly prized by Chinese perfumers, such as we see in Fan Ye's preface to his blending manual [HC#84].

[2826] Established during the Qin, this commandery administered portions of present-day Guangdong, Zheng et al., *Dictionary of the Ben Cao Gang Mu*, 224–25.
[2827] Cf. TPYL:8.981.856.
[2828] See my comments to aloeswood at HC#3.

90) Aromatic Isle 香洲

The *Records Narrating the Strange* state, "There is an island within Zhuya commandery[2829] that exports all kinds of strange aromatics. Oftentimes, we do not know their names.

述異記曰：朱崖郡洲中，出諸異香，往往有不知名者。[2830]

[COMMENTS] The "Aromatic Isle" of old Zhuya commandery refers to what is now known as the island of Hainan off the southern coast of China.[2831] Despite the claims of mystery surrounding the aromatic goods found on the island in the above passage, Hainan was known in the later medieval period as a major producer of aloeswood, providing both the highest-grade Sinking Aromatic [HC#3] as well as lower grades of aloeswood, such as Jian Aromatic [HC#22].[2832]

Most notably, the *Treatise of the Supervisor of Guihai* by Fan Chengda, the *Notes from Beyond the Mountains* by Zhou Qufei, the *Treatise on the Barbarians* by Zhao Rukuo, all claim aloeswood from Hainan surpassed all foreign varieties in scent quality and reported that pieces as thin as paper would still sink in water.[2833] The *Treatise on the Barbarians* furthermore identifies several varieties of aloeswood that are uniquely associated with the

[2829] A short-lived administrative region comprising the present-day island of Hainan that was established and abolished under the Western Han, see Hua, Buell, and Unschuld, *Dictionary of the Ben Cao Gang Mu*, 383. For more on the intermittent military advancements into Hainan from the mainland, see Edward H. Schafer, *Shore of Pearls* (University of California Press, 1969), 5–25.
[2830] Cf. TPYL:8.981.856; cf. trans. Schafer, *Shore of Pearls*, 41.
[2831] Zhuya was written as both "Vermilion Cliffs" (*zhuya* 朱崖) and "Pearl Cliffs" (*zhuya* 珠崖), see Schafer, *Shore of Pearls*, 8–9.
[2832] Schafer, 42–43. By the Song, aloeswood was sometimes traded under the name Aromatic from [Zhu]ya (*ya xiang* 崖香), deriving from its local origins in Zhuya ("Vermilion Cliffs"), see Liu, "'Tianxiang zhuan," 110.
[2833] See passages in Yamada, *Tōa kōryō shi kenkyū*, 194–96; Hirth and Rockhill, *Chau Ju-Kua*, 185; see also Liu, "'Tianxiang zhuan," 110.

island: Aromatic of Penglai (*penglai xiang* 蓬萊香) and Pheasant-Spotted Aromatic (*zhuge ban xiang* 鷓鴣斑香).[2834]

The Hainanese trade in aloeswood was almost exclusively run by the native ethnic group known as the Li 黎, who lived in the foothills of the mountains where *Aquilaria sinensis* grows in abundance on sunny, lower altitude slopes. The tropical climate of Hainan produces a wide variety of scented *flora*, thus in addition to aloeswood, galangal root and elemi [HC#10] were also exported from Hainan.[2835] By the nineteenth century there was also an extensive distillation operation of nagi camphor on Hainan [HC#18]. If we can authentically date the above passage from the *Records Narrating the Strange* to the end of the fifth century, this passage is the earliest reference to aloeswood trade on Hainan.[2836]

The tropical island frequently encountered fearful typhoons and was generally considered inhospitable to most mainland Chinese during the medieval period. Accordingly, in the words of Edward Schafer, "through the ages Hainan has been regarded as the ultimate place of exile."[2837] Among the most famed political exiles was the scholar-official and poet Su Shi 蘇軾 (1037–1101), who arrived on Hainan in 1097 and soon started to document his life there.[2838] One aspect highlighted by Su Shi was how religious ritual motivated commerce in both directions on the island. The mainland Chinese of the late medieval period were enamored with Hainan aloeswood, and the Li sought to fill that demand in exchange for items of daily use, such as salt, grains, tools, and perhaps most importantly, oxen. Su Shi

[2834] Hirth and Rockhill, *Chau Ju-Kua*, 176–77.
[2835] Schafer, *Shore of Pearls*, 43–44; Hirth and Rockhill, *Chau Ju-Kua*, 176–77; for more the the activites of the Li on Hainan, see Yamada, *Tōa kōryō shi kenkyū*, 193–98.
[2836] Yamada is hesitant to accept such an early date, see Yamada, *Tōa kōryō shi kenkyū*, 216n.36.
[2837] Schafer, *Shore of Pearls*, 85.
[2838] This was a figure Hong Chu knew through his uncle Huang Tingjian, see Introduction to the translation.

reports on the widespread use of oxen in ritual slaughter to remedy sickness and notes the moral hypocrisy in which aloeswood was then burned at Buddhist altars on the mainland: "The Li people sacrifice all of the cattle they acquire to their ghosts – not one escapes. Then men from the Middle Kingdom use the aromatic that sinks in water as an offering to the Buddha, and to ignite for the high gods in hopes of good fortune. This is nothing but burning the flesh of oxen!"[2839] For Su Shi, the trade generated by the ritual use of burning aloeswood incense only supported the brutal killing of animals, highlighting what he viewed as an opposition between Buddhist worship and the Buddhist precepts.

A few decades before Su Shi's arrival, the scholar-official Ding Wei was exiled to Hainan for three years between 1022 and 1025. Already having written about tea production in Fujian, Ding Wei was perfectly suited to lending a critical eye on the production of local aloeswood. His essay, *Traditions of Heavenly Aromatics* [HC#119], was the first to offer a comprehensive analysis of aloeswood on Hainan, ultimately creating a system of evaluation he termed the Four Classes and Twelve Types.[2840]

91) Hall of Spreading Fragrance 披香殿

The *Names of the Han Palaces and Watchtowers*[2841] [states], "In Chang'an there is the Hall of Concordant Happiness and the Hall of Spreading Fragrance."

漢宮闕名。長安有合歡殿，披香殿。[2842]

[2839] As translated in Schafer, *Shore of Pearls*, 67.
[2840] A brief overview of his system can be found in my comments to Jian Aromatic at HC#22.
[2841] I have been unable to identify this text.
[2842] The *Names of the Han Palaces and Watchtowers* (*Han gongque ming* 漢宮闕名) is cited in the *Imperial Readings of the Taiping Era* under the division of palaces (*gong* 宮), but it does not list any halls, see TPYL:2.173.654–655. Under the division for halls (*dian* 殿), the *Imperial Readings of the Taiping Era* cites the *Names of the Han Palaces and Halls* (*Han gongdian ming* 漢宮殿名), but this does not include the Hall of Spreading Fragrance, see TPYL:2.175.667.

[COMMENTS] The pair of structures in this above entry represent two of the halls reportedly built on the rear precincts of the Weiyang Palace (*Weiyang gong* 未央宮) in the Western Han capital of Chang'an. These rear palaces (*hou gong* 後宮) were generally used as the women's residences. Constructed by decree of Emperor Wu of the Han and located in the southwest section of the city, Weiyang Palace covered more than two square kilometers.[2843]

The fourth century *Yellow Maps of the Three Capitals* lists a total of fourteen halls on this sprawling imperial compound. The first eight include the Hall of Bright Yang (*zhaoyang dian* 昭陽殿), Hall of Soaring (*feixiang dian* 飛翔殿), Hall of Completion (*zengcheng dian* 增成殿), the Hall of Concordant Happiness (*hehuan dian* 合歡殿), the Hall of Thoroughwort Forests (*lanlin dian* 蘭林殿), the Hall of Spreading Fragrance (*pixiang dian* 披香殿), the Hall of the Phoenix (*fenghuang dian* 鳳凰殿), and the Hall of the Mandarin Ducks (*yuanluan dian* 鴛鸞殿 or *yuanyang dian* 鴛鴦殿).[2844] These eight are also cited in Zhang Heng's 張衡 (78–139) "Rhapsody on the Western Metropolis" (*Xijing fu* 西京賦).[2845] The last six structures behind the Weiyang Palace include the Hall of Peaceful Dwelling (*anchu dian* 安處殿), the Hall of Everlasting Tranquility (*changning dian* 常寧殿), the Hall of Wild Angelica and Galangal (*zhiruo dian* 茝若殿), the Hall of Sichuan Pepper Breeze (*jiaofeng dian* 椒風殿), the Hall of Surpassing (*fayue dian* 發越殿), and the Hall of Sweet Basil

[2843] de Crespigny, *Biographical Dictionary*, 43.
[2844] SFHT:3.194.
[2845] See the list translated in Knechtges, *Wen Xuan*, Vol. 1, 193.

(*huicao dian* 蕙草殿).[2846] Thirteen of these halls are mentioned in Ban Gu's "Two Capitals Rhapsody" (*Liangdu fu* 兩都賦), while the sole outlier, the Hall of the Phoenix, is named in his *Book of Han*, where it is claimed to have been constructed after a phoenix appeared in the imperial hunting park.[2847] In terms of the specific use of the Hall of Spreading Fragrance, the headword entry above, the "Rhapsody on Spring" (*Chunfu* 春賦) by sixth century poet Yu Xin 庾信 (513–581) cites it as the location were springtime garments were sewn.[2848]

It is notable that many of the palace hall names are associated with upward motion and scent, including the specific names of several aromatic plants significant to Western Han olfactory culture, such as sweet basil [HC#20], wild angelica, [HC#30] and thoroughwort [HC#29]. These names not only recall the numerous literary allusions to the virtuous conduct of a ruler who invisibly influences those around him, but in this particular context of rear palace structures, the association between fragrance and femininity, health, and fertility would also be evoked.

The naming of palace structures after fragrant substances also has a more clearly defined ritual purpose. One such building can be found in the "Songs for the Suburban Sacrifices" (*jiaosi ge* 郊祀歌), a collection of nineteen surviving hymns, all of which are untitled, that can be attributed to the Music Bureau (*yuefu* 樂府) formed under Emperor Wu.[2849] The fifteenth hymn describes the descent of spirits during a sacrificial banquet and the blessings they bring during the jovial event.[2850] It opens by describing the glistening

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[2846] SFHT:3.194.
[2847] HS:25.2.1252. The only other halls noted in the *Book of Han* include the Hall of Bright Yang and the Hall of Completion, see HS:97.2.3989, and HS:97.2.3985, respectively. For the halls listed in Ban Gu's rhapsody, see HHS:40.1.1341; also see Knechtges, *Wen Xuan*, Vol. 1, 123.
[2848] Knechtges and Chang, *Reference Guide*, Vol. 1, 2016–17.
[2849] Emperor Wu "recreated" a virtually new institution, see comments in Knechtges, "New Study," 310.
[2850] HS:22.1066.

blossoms of a numinous root (ling gen 靈根) right before the spirits appear, clearly drawing upon the association between fragrant rootstalks and the appearance of divine beings as seen in the *Song of Chu*. This association is more clearly established in the next set of verses where the spirits are described as flying around and spreading throughout (*ba* 拔) the Thoroughwort Hall (*lan tang* 蘭堂) before settling in around the altar (*tan* 壇). The aforementioned root was likely envisioned as thoroughwort root, an emblem of purity and virtue and ritual tool for inviting and appeasing the spirits. Naming the structure where the spirits descended Thoroughwort Hall would call upon all of these associations and signal the site of communion between humans and the divine. While the hymn does not make it clear how thoroughwort was used, contemporary cultural practice would dictate that thoroughwort was worn on the belt-sash or placed inside a scenting sachet tied to the body [HC#97]. There is no indication that it was burned and none of the nineteen surviving hymns discuss burning incense as part of sacrificial banqueting procedures.[2851] In the Tang it was reported that Thoroughwort Herb [HC#29] was planted around the pools of palace courtyards, a gardening trend that may stretch back to the Han due to its importance in such rituals around the capital.[2852]

The Thoroughwort Hall also appears in Zhang Heng's "Rhapsody on the Southern Capital" (*Nandu fu* 南都賦), a tribute to his birth city of Nanyang 南陽 in present-day Henan, and composed around the year 110.[2853] When the rhapsody turns to describing

[2851] As discussed in Chapter 2, Section 3.
[2852] As noted in XXBC:7.188. The Thoroughwort Hall should not be confused with the Thoroughwort Atheneum (*lan tai* 蘭臺), more often translated as the Orchid Pavilion. This was the name for the palace archive or library during the Han, see Hucker, *Dictionary of Official Titles*, 300 (#3560) and my comments at Yun Aromatic [HC#28].
[2853] This dating is noted at Knechtges, Wen Xuan, Vol. 1, 311. For a full translation of this poem, see Knechtges, 311–336.

seasonal sacrifices, it remarks: "they invite friends from afar and the fine guests are escorted in; bowing and yielding, they ascend the hall and feast in the Thoroughwort Hall."[2854] The poem continues to describe the convivial environment of drinking, dancing, and singing. As with the "Songs for the Suburban Sacrifices" describing the events around Chang'an, this structure in Nanyang is also associated with sacrificial banqueting, but the "Rhapsody on the Southern Capital" focuses more on the raucous activities of humans than the somber descent of the attending spirits.

While there is little evidence that the Thoroughwort Hall was more than a poetic trope used to evoke sacrificial banquets, an eaves tile bearing the name of the Hall of Spreading Fragrance has reportedly been recovered from archaeological excavations around present-day Xi'an.[2855] Thus, perhaps as the effect of building real structures bearing these names, the literary creation of scented buildings continued unabated into the medieval period. For example, the medieval *Esoteric Biography of Emperor Wu* claims the famed emperor was born in a palace hall that was renamed from Adorned Fragrance Pavilion (*chongfang ge* 崇芳閣) to Hall of Magnificent Thoroughwort (*yilan dian* 猗蘭殿).[2856] In both cases the name of the building would have implied the virtue of the newborn and the aspiration for divine favor at the hands of the spirits and of Heaven.

[2854] Knechtges, Wen Xuan, Vol. 1, 324n.157, 325 (changing "fragrant chamber" to "Thoroughwort Hall")
[2855] SFHT:3.194n.3.
[2856] Schipper, *L'Empereur Wou*, 65–66, Smith, "Ritual," 590.

92) Collecting Aromatics Footpath 採香徑

The *Treatise on Shao*[2857] [states], "King Helü of [the state of] Wu (514–496 BCE) constructed the Clacking Shoes Veranda and the Collecting Aromatics Footpath."

邵國志：吳王闔閭，起響屧廊，採香徑。[2858]

[COMMENTS] The *Records of the Land of Wu* (*Wudi ji* 吳地記) attributed to Dong Jian 董監 (d.u.), provides a slightly different perspective on this anecdote, focusing instead on a certain Mount Aromatics (*xiang shan* 香山): "The King of Wu dispatched his beauties to collect aromatics on the mountain. Because of this, [the mountain] took its name and there is also a Collecting Aromatics Footpath (*caixiang jing* 采香徑)."[2859] This story is certainly apocryphal since *xiang*, "aromatics," was not used to denote a second-order class of fragrant objects or plants in the pre-imperial period. Nevertheless, the cultivation and collection of fragrant plants is noted in several ancient sources. For example, this activity is attested during the Zhou in the vassal state of Zheng. In a poem entitled the "Zhen and Wei Rivers" from the *Book of Odes*, the courtship between a man and woman begins by them walking into the fields to gather thoroughwort (*xian*).[2860] The later commentarial tradition claims this was part of a broader social practice of courtship and marriage in the state of Zheng that regularly occurred during the spring.[2861]

[2857] I have been unable to identify this text.
[2858] Cf. TPYL:1.46.414.
[2859] 吳王遣美人采香於山，因以為名，故有采香徑。TPYL:1.46.414.
[2860] MSZY:4.732 (Mao #95), trans. Waley, *Book of Songs*, 76.
[2861] Waley, *Book of Songs*, 76; Liu, *Songdai Xiangpu*, 15. For further discussion of thoroughwort in this poem, see my comments to the Fragrance of the Land at HC#83A.

93) Chewed Aromatic 啗香

The [*Miscellaneous*] *Compilation from Duyang* [states]: "Zhao Juan (ca. 8th cent.), the mother of Yuan Zai's (713–777) favorite concubine, Xue Yaoying (ca. 8th cent.), had [her daughter] chew on aromatics from when she was young. Therefore, her skin and flesh were always perfumed."

杜陽編：元載寵姬薛瑤英母趙娟，幼以香啗英[2862]，故肌肉悉香。[2863]

[COMMENTS] In contrast to the Han court practice of suckling on cloves to keep the breath fresh [HC#95], this anecdote revolves around the belief of ingesting fragrant substances so they can perfume the body from the inside out. This belief underscores the close relationship between aromatics and drugs in the medieval olfactory imagination and is formed in part by the fact that both materials were made in the shape of small bean-sized pellets or pills. Consequently, the story of the beauty Xue Yaoying consuming aromatics/drugs may be seen as more of a medical therapy that cures the ills of bad body odor, a point that is also alluded to through the name of a different anomalous aromatic in Hong Chu's catalogue, Perfuming the Flesh Incense [HC#64]. This Tang-era story also touches on the late medieval themes of beauty, femininity, and fragrance as expressed in Expelling Coldness Aromatic [HC#46].

94) A Fondness for Incense 愛香

The *Records of Xiangyang*[2864] [states], "Liu Heji (236–306) had a fondness for incense. Even as he would go to the bathroom, he would place some atop an incense burner as he passed by

[2862] Read 英 as 之, following DYZB:1.6.
[2863] Cf. DYZB:1.6.
[2864] The *Records of Xiangyan* (*Xiang yang ji* 襄陽記) is a lost work of Guo Zhongchan 郭仲產 (ca. 5th cent.).

it. The Document Recorder[2865] Zhang Tan said, 'People [have claimed] the famed lord acts like a commoner. This is not false.' Heji said, 'When Lord Director[2866] Xun went to someone's home, wherever he sat would remain fragrant for three days. How [does he] compare to me [who loves incense less]?' Tan said, 'When an ugly woman imitates a beauty, people who see her will definitely run. Does the lord desire me to run away too?' Heji heartedly laughed."

襄陽記：劉季和[2867]性愛香，常如廁還，輒過香爐上。主簿張坦曰：人名公作俗人，不虛也。季和[2868]曰：荀令君至人家，坐席三日香。為我如何？坦曰：醜婦效顰，見者必走。公欲坦遁去邪？季和[2869]大笑。[2870]

[COMMENTS] The figure named in this humorous anecdote as Lord Director Xun, was Xun Yu 荀彧 (163–212), a highly respected and influential advisor to the warlord Cao Cao. Xun Yu was installed as the Director of the Imperial Secretariat for the puppet Han court when it was relocated to the city of Xu 許, in present-day central Henan, in 196.[2871] All that we know about Xun Yu's interest in incense and perfumes comes in the form of heresy as detailed in this anecdote from the fifth century. But at least from the perspective of Liu Hong 劉弘

[2865] One who is in charge of handling the flow of records in one of many of the imperial agencies, see Hucker, *Dictionary of Official Titles*, 182 (#1413).
[2866] Hucker notes that *lingjun* 令君 was an unofficial reference for a District Magistrate, Hucker, *Dictionary of Official Titles*, 314 (#3752). Given that Xun Yu was more famously known as the Director of the (nominal) Imperial Secretariat at Xu under the puppet regime of the Han, it appears the honorific title used here should infer that position, known classically as the *shangshuling* 尚書令, see Hucker, *Dictionary of Official Titles*, 412: (#5049).
[2867] Read 季和 as 和季, following TPYL:6.703.515.
[2868] Read 季和 as 和季, following TPYL:6.703.515.
[2869] Read 季和 as 和季, following TPYL:6.703.515.
[2870] Cf. TPYL:6.703.515.
[2871] For a *vita* of Xun Yu, see de Crespigny, *Biographical Dictionary*, 928–29; for the appointment of Xun Yu as Director, see de Crespigny, *Imperial Warlord*, 112.

(courtesy name Heji 和季), a Western Jin general and governor of Jingzhou who lived about a generation after Xun Yu, the old Director of the Imperial Secretariat was well-known for his appreciation of burning incense. This fact that seems to have also been understood by the lower-ranking minister Zhang Tan.[2872]

Furthermore, we know that official protocols of the Han court required members of the Imperial Secretariat to be perfumed with the smoke of sweet basil before having counsel with the emperor [HC#87], a practice we might assume continued after the emperor and his family were moved to Xu. Yet, Xun Yu's apparent favor for incense seems to go beyond formal court procedure and extend into his personal scenting habits, notably to the extent that his robes left behind a scent that lingered well after he departed. Consequently, Liu Hong could point to Xun Yu as a figure that loved incense more than himself, even when he burned it during a mundane activity such as going to the bathroom with no intention of meeting the emperor.[2873]

As a last point to underscore the potential novelty of Xun Yu's perfuming habits, we may speculate he had direct access to rare tropical aromatics arriving in the harbors of Jiaozhi in the far south. After Cao Cao forged an allegiance with Shi Xie around the year 203, the *de facto* ruler of the Red River Delta region regularly sent tribute to the court at Xu.[2874] While we have no specific record of the kinds of gifts Shi Xie sent north, we do know that festive processions held in his capital of Longbian, present-day Hanoi, involved copious amounts of incense burned on the streets by foreign "barbarians."[2875] Given the riches of his

[2872] For a citation of Liu Hong as a general and governor, see Xiong, *Historical Dictionary*, 386.
[2873] Incidentally, Liu Hong was a childhood friend of the ruler, Emperor Wu of the Western Jin, who figures in the background to another story compiled by Hong Chu, see HC#96.
[2874] SGZ:49.1192; see Taylor, *The Birth of Vietnam*, 56–57; de Crespginy, *Generals of the South*, 273.
[2875] See discussion of Shi Xie in Chapter 4, Section 10.

realm, we might expect Shi Xie to have sent luxury aromatics to the court as a tribute, possibly to the delight of Xun Yu.

95) Suckled Aromatic 含香

Ying Shao's [*Observances*] *for Han Officials* states, "The Palace Attendant[2876] Diao Cun (d.u.) was old and had foul breath. His majesty gave him cloves and had him suckle on them."

應劭漢官曰：侍中刁存，年老口臭，上出雞舌香含之。[2877]

[COMMENTS] Among the olfactory practices of the Han court, this one is notable because it used an aromatic imported from far beyond the territorial limits of the Chinese empire: cloves [HC#8]. We have seen Han-era courtiers report on the use of sweet basil [HC#87] and thoroughwort [HC#88], two aromatics that would have been readily available in the Han capitals, but cloves, first known to the Chinese as Chicken Tongue Aromatic, had to be imported from the Moluccas of the Indonesian Archipelago, far across the Southern Seas.

Sources differ on the personal name of the Palace Attendant, variously noted as Diao Cun, Nai Cun 乃存 (or 迺存), Fang Cun 方存, Xiang Cun 向存 or even Ying Shao (the author cited above) himself, who was guilty of foul breath.[2878] Whatever the case may be, the individual assigned to this esteemed court position of Palace Attendant was personally selected by the emperor and worked as his confidential adviser. Judging from the

[2876] Hucker, *Dictionary of Official Titles*, 423 (#5229).
[2877] Cf. TPYL:4.367 (citing Xiang Cun 向存), HGLZ:116.
[2878] On the various names, see HGLZ:165n.103 (the editors point out that *diao* 刁, *nai* 乃, and *fang* 方 could all be easily mistaken); see also Milburn, "Aromas," 459. On the administrative role of the Palace Attendant, see Hucker, *Dictionary of Official Titles*, 423 (#5229).

environment painted by the Han court protocols, suckling on cloves as a remedy for halitosis was one of the requisites for such close contact with the emperor who was often surrounded by officials bathed in sweet fragrances.

A more elaborate version of Ying Shao's account describes the attendant Nai Cun as working under Emperor Huan 桓帝 (r. 147–168). Because the cloves he was given were extraordinarily pungent Nai Cun dared not chew or swallow them for fear that they were poisonous. Only after he had prepared himself for sure death did a colleague examine the cloves and alert him to their harmlessness. Due to his unwarranted fears Nai Cun was consequently mocked at court.[2879] As Olivia Milburn points out, this story probably represents the "stock character of an old fool who does not keep up to date with innovations," since other members of court are apparently familiar with cloves and their use to counter foul breath.[2880]

While the work of Ying Shao is often cited as the *locus classicus* of this courtly practice, mention of cloves can also be found in Cai Zhi's *Duties and Observances for Han Officials Selected for Use*, a similar work that most likely predated Ying Shao's protocols.[2881] Cai Zhi's work reports that Secretarial Court Gentlemen were required to hold cloves in their mouths as they prostrated before the emperor and conducted business.[2882] Given the matter-of-fact nature in which Cai Zhi recounts this procedural detail we may wonder if Ying Shao's later anecdote was an attempt to provide a more illustrative origin story. Cai Zhi also left

[2879] TPYL:3.219.114 (citing Nai Cun 迺存), TPYL:8.981.858 (citing Nai Cun 乃存), HGLZ:137–138, see also full translation of this story in Milburn, "Aromas," 460.
[2880] Milburn, "Aromas," 460.
[2881] We know nothing of the life of Cai Zhi after his exile from court in 178, see de Crespigny, *Biographical Dictionary*, 32. Given that it is believed Ying Shao compiled his *Observances for Han Officials* after the fall of the capital in 190, it seems reasonable to assume Cai Zhi's work predated that of Ying Shao.
[2882] 尚書郎含雞舌香，伏其下奏事。TPYL:3.221, HGLZ:206.

behind a rare description of the ceremonial pomp during the enthronement of the empress in 171, thus we may speculate his description of clove dates to approximately the same time period.[2883]

96) Purloined Aromatic 竊香

The *Book of Jin*[2884] [states], "Han Shou (d. ca. 291), courtesy name Dezhen, was an assistant to the Minister of Works[2885], Jia Chong (217–282). Chong's daughter secretly observed Shou and liked him. Because of her servant's communications and solicitations, Shou leapt over the wall to visit [with Chong's daughter]. At that time there was a tribute of an odd aromatic from the Western Regions. With a single touch, a person would [be perfumed] for months without end. The emperor bestowed this to Chong, but his daughter stole it to give to Shou. Afterwards, Chong was entertaining Shou and smelled this fragrance. He knew his daughter was intimate with Shou, so he kept [this matter] secret and had his daughter marry Shou."
晉書: 韓壽，字德真，為賈充司空掾。充女窺見壽，而悅焉。因婢通殷勤，壽踰垣而至。時西域有貢奇香，一著人，經月不歇。帝以賜充，其女密盜以遺壽，後充與壽宴，聞其芬馥，意知女與壽通，遂秘之以女妻壽。[2886]

[COMMENTS] Longer accounts of this story provide valuable details missed in Hong Chu's abbreviated retelling. It is claimed the Han Shou's dashing appearance allowed him to

[2883] The enthronement ceremony is preserved in the comments to the "Treatises" section of the *Book of Later Han*, see HHS:5.3121–3122.
[2884] The official imperial history of the Jin dynasty (265–420) completed in 648.
[2885] Hucker, *Dictionary of Official Titles*, 450 (#5687). *Yuan* 掾 referred to a clerk or an unranked appointee, see Hucker, *Dictionary of Official Titles*, 595 (#8219).
[2886] Cf. JS:40.1172–1173, cf. TPYL:8.981.853 (where Jia Chong is replaced by Chen Qian 陳騫), cf. SSXY:35.1078–1079, trans. Mather, *Shih-Shuo Hsin-Yü*, 524–25.

initially catch the attention of Jia Chong's daughter who, according to the *Book of Jin*, was named Jia Wu 賈午.[2887] Jia Chong knew the strange foreign aromatic had been gifted to only himself and one other minister by Emperor Wu 武 (r. 236–290) of the Western Jin.[2888] Thus, when he smelled the characteristic scent on Han Shou, Jia Chong was able to deduce that his ministerial assistant received the aromatic as a present from his own daughter who had, in turn, stolen it from him.[2889] After interrogating his daughter's personal attendants he uncovered a surreptitious meeting between Han Shou and Jia Wu and consequently forced them to marry.

In my reading of this anecdote, the gifting of aromatics and scenting sachets [HC#97] were seen as tokens of affection and fidelity in the medieval period and Jia Chong immediately perceived the seriousness of such an exchange.[2890] The use of scented plants as sign of personal warmth and devotion may have originated under the different context of spellbinding and magical seduction, where the gift was intended as a love philter. Moreover, the plants could have been employed therapeutically as aphrodisiacs, and thus symbolic of courtship and the hope for sexual intercourse.[2891] In the case of the latter, numerous native aromatics are listed in recipes for increasing sexual desires and bolstering sexual prowess in the second century BCE medical manuscripts recovered from Mawangdui, including

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[2887] JS:40.1172. Han Shou and Jia Wu give birth to a son named Jia Mi 賈謐, whose biography in the *Book of Jin* contains the story about his parents courtship.

[2888] The other minister is named as Chen Qian, who curiously replaces Jia Chong in a different version of this story, see TPYL:8.981.853.

[2889] Hong Chu's text and the version of this story in the *Book of Jin* use the word *yi* 遺, "to lose, to bequeath," which may imply that the daughter involuntarily passed the scent of the aromatic from her garments on to Han Shou when they surreptitiously met. This reading could be supported by the fact the scent of the anomalous aromatic could cling to a person for an extended period of time with a single application. In any regard, it would not be abnormal for two lovers to gift aromatics to one another, and it is within this standard social context that I understand this passage.

[2890] For more on the use of scenting sachets as tokens of affection, see HC#97.

[2891] For the important distinction between love philters, the apparatus for surreptitious seduction, and aphrodisiacs, the medicine to cure maladies or increase sex drive, see Steavu, "Affairs of the Heart."

thoroughwort [HC#29], cassia bark [HC#52], ginger root, Chinese lovage root, wild ginger root (*Asarum* spp.), Sichuan peppercorns, and galangal root.[2892] The perceived magical power of aromatics and the erotic undertones of two people who share in the same scent animates the story of Han Shou and Jia Wu, important concepts that clearly did not escape the literary persona of Jia Chong.

In his commentary to this anecdote presented in the *New Account of the Tales of the World* compiled by Liu Yiqing in the fifth century, Liu Xiaobiao 劉孝標 (462–521) attempts to connect this foreign tribute to one that was reputedly bestowed by a foreign delegation to Emperor Wu of the Han centuries earlier.[2893] Specifically, Liu Xiaobiao claims it was the substance Hong Chu classified as the Incense from Yuezhi [HC#47], an aromatic that saved the people of Chang'an from a devastating epidemic once it was burned. In addition to being a tribute from a foreign nation, Liu Xiaobao apparently envisioned the connection between the two fantastic tales as a consequence that both reputed substances exhibited the miraculous effect of causing a scent that lingered for many months. This is, in fact, a commonly occurring trope in tales of the strange literature when discussing foreign aromatics and can be found with many other anomalous substances that exemplify, in the analysis of Robert Campany, "anomalies of degree."[2894]

While this story uses the trope of smell to disclose a secret affair, it was not uncommon for men in the medieval imagination to embrace personal perfuming habits. This is exhibited in the *Materia Aromatica* entries for the Western Han official Jin Midi [HC#73],

[2892] See descriptions in Harper, *Early*, 330, 335, 336, 342, 346, 347, 349, 363, 364 and 365.
[2893] SSXY:35.1078–1079, see also Mather, *Shih-Shuo Hsin-Yü*, 524–25.
[2894] Campany, *Strange Writing*, 242; see also my discussion in Chapter 2, Section 5.

the Han official Yong Zhongzi [HC#85], and the Eastern Han political and military advisor Xun Yu [HC#94].

97) Scenting Sachet 香囊

[97a] Xie Xuan (343–388) constantly wore a scenting sachet made of purple gauze. Xie An (320–385) was troubled over this but he did not want to hurt [Xie Xuan's] feelings. Due to a deceptive bet, [Xie An] took [the sachet] and [attempted to] burn it, but Xuan was able to stop him.

[97b] Furthermore there is an ancient poem [stating], "A scenting sachet he ties at my elbow…"[2895]

[97a] 謝玄常佩紫羅香囊。謝安患之，而不欲傷其意，因戲賭，取焚之，玄遂止。[2896]

[97b] 又古詩云：香囊懸肘後。[2897]

[COMMENTS] Scenting sachets have a long history in China and originate from small cloth pouches worn on the belt-sash of a garment. Because ancient Chinese clothing was without pockets, numerous daily-use items such as seals, money, or handcloths would have been carried in a belted pouch.[2898]

[2895] Birrell, *New Songs*, 52.

[2896] Cf. TPYL:6.704.518, also cf. TPYL:4.389, cf. TPYL:7.816.589; cf. JS:79.2080; also see Mather, *Shih-Shuo Hsin-Yü*, 484

[2897] This verse is taken from Fan Qin's 繁欽 (d. 218?) "We Pledged our Love" (*Dingqing shi* 定情詩) as found in the *New Songs of the Jade Terrace*; for full translation see Birrell, *New Songs*, 51–53.

[2898] Wang, Dong, and Chen, "Mawangdui Han mu," 58. Objects of self-adornment also functioned as tokens of rank and symbols of future aspiration, see comments in Sukhu, *Shaman*, 89; for the Chinese Buddhist adoption of adornment practices, see Copp, *Body Incantatory*, 44–54. Pouches used for carrying aromatics have appeared under several names historically, but today are generally regarded as "belted pouches" (*peinang* 佩囊) or "carried pouches" (*henang* 荷囊).

The literary history of the use of scenting sachets can be traced to the *Record of Rites*, where underage boys and girls were expected to wear a "pouch of scents" (*rongxiu* 容臭) on their belt-sash when meeting with their parents or venerated elders.[2899] Donning the appropriate attire was part of the morning routine in preparation for service to one's parents. The third century BCE "Categories of Land" chapter of *Master Guan* may also provide insight into what *flora* was placed inside. Citing two sets of five "scented plants," notably using the same character *chou* 臭 as seen in the "pouch of scents" in the *Record of Rites*, the *Master Guan* lists wild angelica (*baizhi*; HC#30), Sichuan pepper (*jiao* 椒), Sichuan lovage sprouts (*miwu* 蘼蕪; HC#20c), creeping fig (*bili* 薜荔), and *lian* 連 (forsythia?) for one set, as well as wild angelica, Sichuan lovage sprouts, Chinese lovage (*gaoben* 藁本), *lian* (forsythia?), and *yu* 與 (unknown), for the second set.[2900] The *Master Guan* also specifically cites wild angelica as having the ability "decrease illness and slow the process of aging," suggesting that sachets could also used therapeutically.[2901] In addition, it is also possible a sachet functioned as a kind of protective charm for children as part of a much larger tradition of travel magic.[2902]

The story of Xie Xuan above likely reflected this older practice [97a]. This story was initially presented in Liu Yiqing's *New Account of the Tales of the World*. Missing from Hong Chu's retelling, however, is that Xie Xuan was exceptionally fond of wearing his

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[2899] LJZY:27.3167. See also my comments in Chapter 2, Section 2.
[2900] GZ:19.58.1101; GZ:19.58.1106. Following the emendations and translations of Allyn Rickett, see Rickett, *Guanzi*, Vol. 2, 269–70 and 272–73), respectively.
[2901] 寡疾難老。GZ:19.58.1101, trans. Rickett, *Guanzi*, Vol. 2, 269–70.
[2902] Di Lu and Vivienne Lo read the passage in the *Record of Rites* as indicating a measure of protection for children, see Lu and Lo, "Scent and Synaesthesia," 39. See also the passing comments in Chen and Li, "Mawangdui yi hao mu," 9. The use of amulets for protection during travel is noted in Copp, *Body Incantatory*, 47–49.

fragrant sachet when he was a child, a habit that worried his uncle Xie An. The precise reason for Xie An's concern is not revealed, but it may have to do with a perceived childish infatuation with trivial things.[2903] Distinct from the received *New Account of the Tales of the World*, however, is the fact that Xie Xuan appears to foil his uncle's plans at burning the sachet as in the version above.

There is a rather rich literary history describing the use and meaning of scenting sachets. The Warring States anthology the *Songs of Chu*, and specifically the poem "Encountering Sorrow," often highlights the use of scented plants as bodily adornments. In some cases, it appears the leaves and stems were braided or strung and then tied directly to the belt-sash as fragrant ornaments (*pei* 佩), such as is described for thoroughwort in the beginning of "Encountering Sorrow."[2904] At other times the use of a "belted sack" (*peiwei* 佩幃) is specifically described.[2905] Gopal Sukhu has analyzed the symbolism scattered throughout "Encountering Sorrow," arguing that fragrant plants were not only part of an olfactory aesthetic of ornamentation, but were emblematic of ritual purity, hidden virtue, and divine presence.[2906] Consequently, a loss of purity and virtue, or the lack of spiritual presence, could be called to mind through the adornment of substances less fragrant than the idealized

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[2903] This observation is drawn from the fact that this tale is categorized under "Delusion and Infatuation" (*huoni* 惑溺) chapter in the *New Account of the Tales of the World*. Notably, Xie An appears in over one hundred anecdotes contained in this anthology and one of his characteristic attributes was his apparent otherworldly tolerance for events and phenomena that disturb most other people, see Mather, *Shih-Shuo Hsin-Yü*, xviii–xix. His concern for Xie Xuan must have been considerable for him to devise a plan to burn his cherished scenting sachet. A *vita* of Xue An and his nephew Xue Xuan can be found in Mather, 559 and 560, respectively.
[2904] CC:1.3, trans. Sukhu, *Songs of Chu*, 35. Several verses in "Encountering Sorrow" speak of stringing, twisting, or cording fragrant plants. I presume these are intended to adorn a person's body even though this use is not made explicit.
[2905] CC:1.38 and CC:1.41, trans. Sukhu, *Songs of Chu*, 44 and 46, respectively.
[2906] Sukhu, *Shaman*, 87–115; Sukhu, *Songs of Chu*, 30–34. Lu and Lo further claim that sachets "will [sic] have been part of a person's accoutrement used to entice good spirits and ward off malevolent influences," see Lu and Lo, "Scent and Synaesthesia," 40. It should be noted that "Encountering Sorrow" never speaks of malevolent forces or evil spirits, but merely the fading of favorable scents, symbolic of the loss of virtue, political status, and access to the divine.

scent of thoroughwort, sweet basil, or wild angelica. In such scenarios we find materials like mugwort (*ai*), prickly ash (*sha* 樧), dung, and dirt being packed into aromatics pouches.[2907]

Scenting sachets were also used as gifts between lovers. This is exemplified in the anonymous verse cited by Hong Chu [97b], which can be traced to Fan Qin's 繁欽 (d. 218?) "We Pledged our Love" (*Dingqing shi* 定情詩).[2908] In the poem, a scenting sachet is among the presents used to signify affection and fidelity, along with gold bands, rings, and pearls. The story of the Purloined Aromatic cited by Hong Chu [HC#96] undoubtedly reflects a similar practice where Jia Chong's daughter, Jia Wu, gifts a rare perfume to her paramour Han Shou. The secret affair is revealed only when Jia Chong smells the perfume on Han Shou's person, possibly indicating he was carrying the aromatic inside a scenting sachet. Signs of warmth and affection through the bestowal of scented plants can be found in much older works such as the *Book of Odes*, where a woman gives her suitor a peony (*shaoyao* 芍藥) when they were out collecting fragrant herbs.[2909] Based on Fan Qin's poem, it appears that by the Han the scenting sachet no longer needed to be knotted to the belt-sash, but could also be tied at the elbow where it was hidden inside the sleeve. The movement of the arms almost certainly increased the vibrancy and projection of the scent emitted from the sachet, thus casting the illusion that one's entire body was perfumed.

Scenting sachets could also be used as a sign of rank, wealth, or social status. As we have seen in previous entries in the *Materia Aromatica*, when Han-era courtiers met with the

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[2907] CC:1.36 and CC:1.41, trans. Sukhu, *Songs of Chu*, 44 and 46, respectively. This same point regarding virtue is raised by the third epigraph of Hong Chu's preface.
[2908] See relevant footnote at 97b. For later medieval love stories where scenting sachets appear, see Yan Yan, "Gudai xiangnang de xingzhi jiqi wenhua yiyi," *Neimenggu shifan daxue xuebao (zhexue shehui kexue ban)* 2 (2006): 119.
[2909] MSZY:4.732–733 (Mao #95), trans. Waley, *Book of Songs*, 76. Arthur Waley is possibly correct in claiming that the peony here did not refer to the flower of the plant, but its root.

emperor they were expected to be draped in sweet-smelling scents, one of which was identified as thoroughwort [HC#88]. The use of this specific aromatic, likely held within a sachet attached to courtier's body or clothing, recalls its symbolic use "Encountering Sorrow" to denote the virtuous and the presence of the spirits, which is this case would imply having audience with the imperial Son of Heaven. The Tang-era *Miscellaneous Compilation from Duyang* extends the imperial use of scenting sachets to the carriages which transported the women of the court [HC#46]. A better documentary source for the Eastern Han is the anonymous narrative poem now known as "A Peacock Southeast Flew" (*Kongque dongnan fei* 孔雀東南飛).[2910] The poem describes the use of four scenting sachets hung from the curtains surrounding the bed [HC#125b]. For the Han elite, beds were multipurpose pieces of furniture fitted with a tent-like frame that was covered with brightly colored silk to keep in warmth and repel insects.[2911] The addition of aromatics provided another layer of sensual luxury to those who already enjoyed a life bathed in bodily perfumes. Hong Chu preserves one late medieval blending recipe using aloeswood and mashed goose pears that was reputedly taken from the court of Li Yu 李煜 (937–978), the third and final ruler of the Southern Tang (937–976), who used the dried mixture to scent the bed curtains of the royal palaces [HC#127]. While it is not explicitly stated, it is also possible such scenting sachets

[2910] The preface, translated by Anne Birrell, notes how the poem was composed out of sympathy for the love between the Eastern Han official Liu Lanzhi 劉蘭芝 and his wife Jiao Zhongqing 焦仲卿 who both committed suicide when they could no longer be together. For a full translation of the preface and poem, see Birrell, *New Songs*, 53–62.

[2911] Yan, "Gudai xiangnang," 120; Chen and Li, "Mawangdui yi hao mu," 9. For further descriptions and illustrations of Han-era beds, see Sun, *Handai wuzhi wenhua*, 261–64.

were used to help repel vermin or insects from entering the bed, since it is also noted that they were inserted in book cases to help preserve and protect them.[2912]

Closely related to pest control was the use of scenting sachets for medicinal therapy and apotropaic protection, as cited earlier. For example, Tao Hongjing claims that if one carries musk that it will ward off malignities [HC#2b]. A similar effect is noted for children who wear lakawood [HC#17d]. While both of these passages employ the simple verb "to carry" (*dai* 帶) it is certain the implication was that these scented materials would be placed in a pouch, as was the common custom throughout the medieval period. We find, for example, musk [HC#2] filled scenting sachets gifted by a woman to her husband in a story contained in Liu Yiqing's fifth century *Records of the Hidden and Visible Realms* (*Youming lu* 幽明録).[2913] The protagonist, who was also gifted three medical formularies and travels around as a healer, undoubtedly used the scenting sachets as part of his therapeutic repertoire.

A similar therapeutic use may also be related to medieval mortuary practices where sachets were interred with the dead.[2914] Such practices extend back to the second century BCE, where pouches filled with aromatics have been recovered from the tombs at Mawangdui. Tomb 1 contained the remains of Xin Zhui 辛追, the wife of the enfeoffed chancellor for the kingdom of Changsha, who died around 163 BCE. When her coffin was opened, she was found clutching two small embroidered silk bags filled with an assortment

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[2912] Yan, "Gudai xiangnang," 120. For more on medieval book protection thorough the use of aromatics, see the entry and commentary on Yun Aromatic [HC#28]. For the use of sweetgrass as an insect repellent, see Chen and Li, "Mawangdui yi hao mu," 9

[2913] T2122:851c10–852a04; cf. trans. Zhenjun Zhang, *Hidden and Visible Realms: Early Medieval Chinese Tales of the Supernatural and the Fantastic* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2018), 9–11. See also SSJ:618–619, trans. Kenneth DeWoskin and J. I. Crump Jr., *In Search of the Supernatural: The Written Record* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1996), 45–46. Throughout the medieval period, many other plants, minerals, and magical compounds without a characteristic odor were also worn for protection, see Copp, *Body Incantatory*, 48–49.

[2914] See brief comments in Yan, "Gudai xiangnang," 120.

of aromatics, including Sichuan peppercorns, cassia bark, galangal root, and sweetgrass.[2915] Based on a postmortem analysis of the body and investigation into the contemporary therapeutic application of these aromatics, it has been suggested that these pouches were potentially used as a drug treatment for Xin Zhui while she was living.[2916]

Additionally, four larger embroidered bags, identified in the contemporaneous bamboo tomb inventory slips as "perfuming sachets" (*xun$_1$nang* 熏囊), were also recovered.[2917] One of these was filled with the roots and stems of sweet grass, while another was filled with Sichuan peppercorns. The final two contained a mixture of sweet grass and magnolia flower buds.[2918] Because these perfuming sachets were between 32.5 centimeter to 50 centimeters long, it is thought that these items were not intended to be worn on the body, but were to be used to decorate interior domestic spaces, such as being hung on bed curtains as noted above.[2919] These were found in two separate storage chests on the north and east sides of the tomb, suggesting the sachets were intended for use in the afterlife.

In the medieval period, scenting sachets are occasionally referenced in Chinese Buddhist works. They are noted as part of a stock phrase in Xuanzang's seventh century

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[2915] Hunan yixueyuan, *Mawangdui yi hao Han mu*, 262.
[2916] Hunan yixueyuan, 263–64. For more on these issues, see Chapter 2, Section 3.
[2917] The text of the slips is transcribed in Hunan sheng bowuguan, *Mawangdui yi hao Han mu*, Vol. 1, 151 (see slips 269, 270, 271, and 272); photographs of the bamboo slips can be found in Hunan sheng bowuguan, *Mawangdui yi hao Han mu*, Vol. 2, 240. Notably, this is evidence for the use of *xun* as meaning "to perfume," in addition to meaning "to diffuse smoke."
[2918] Hunan yixueyuan, *Mawangdui yi hao Han mu*, 262; Chen and Li, "Mawangdui yi hao mu," 6; Wang, Dong, and Chen, "Mawangdui Han mu," 59; Lu and Lo, "Scent and Synaesthesia," 42. These are identified in the excavation reports as items 65-1, 65-2, 65-4, and 442. To these items we should add the discovery of six additional large bags of aromatics (items 355-1, 355-2, 355-3, 355-4, 355-5, and 355-6) and an embroidered pillow filled with thoroughwort (item 440), see Hunan yixueyuan, *Mawangdui yi hao Han mu*, 262. Mawangdui Tomb 3 contained additional aromatic pouches, including one filled with sweet grass and galangal root (item 130) and one filled with thoroughwort, galangal root, cassia bark, Sichuan peppercorns, and ginger root (item 172). Another embroidered pillow was also discovered, again containing thoroughwort (item 150). Finally, within the coffin, a silk bag was found containing sweet grass, cassia bark, Sichuan peppercorns, Chinese lovage, and the mineral cinnabar. See Liu, "Mawangdui san hao Han mu," 856; Wang, Dong, and Chen, "Mawangdui Han mu," 62; Lu and Lo, "Scent and Synaesthesia," 43.
[2919] Chen and Li, "Mawangdui yi hao mu," 9; Lu and Lo, "Scent and Synaesthesia," 42.

translation of the *Mahāprajñāpāramitā Sutra* (*Da bore boluomiduo jing* 大般若波羅蜜多經; T220), whereby virtuous men and women who fearful for their safety are instructed to copy the *prajñāpāramitā* great spiritual king of knowledge (*bore boluo miduo dashen zhou wang* 般若波羅蜜多大神呪王) among participating in other standard Buddhist offerings practices. But somewhat unexpectedly the supplicants are also told to carry a scenting sachet, a practice that would have been foreign to an Indian Buddhist milieux.[2920] The act of adorning the body with protective charms would become more normalized within the Chinese Buddhist community by the eighth century.[2921]

Furthermore, Huilin's ninth century Buddhist lexicon defines a scenting sachet in a manner that is very inconsistent with earlier Chinese tradition. He glosses a scenting sachet as a "spherical devices for burning incense," adding that "[those] knowledgeable of crafts [made] devices that could revolve and not overturn, thus allowing the interior [chamber] to remain level."[2922] This is a description of the gimbaled incense burner, a specially engineered spherical mechanism that kept an interior tray level for burning incense, regardless of the orientation of the device [HC#101]. Two excellent examples of gimbaled censers were recovered from the ninth century crypt discovered under the pagoda of Famen Temple in 1987. The tomb inventory list described both of them as scenting sachets, showing that by

[2920] E.g. T220:552a01. I have been unable to identify potential parallel passages among the other Chinese translations of the *prajñāpāramitā* corpus. It is more typical to find instructions on making standard offerings of scented pastes, fragrant unguents, and incense, but the explicit instruction to carry a scenting sachet has strong undercurrents of traditional Chinese religio-medical practice. For an analysis on the use of *zhou* 咒 as a translation for an underlying *vidyā*, or knowledge, in *prajñāpāramitā* literature, see Jatarava Attwood, "'Epithets of the Mantra ' in the *Heart Sutra*," *Journal of the Oxford Centre for Buddhist Studies* 12 (2017): 26–57.

[2921] Copp, *Body Incantatory*, 53.

[2922] 燒香圓器也。巧智機關轉而不傾，令内常平。T2128:342a22. Elsewhere Hulin notes that these devices were used by the empress, imperial concubines, and other members of the court, see T2128:346c20.

the ninth century the traditional embroidered silk pouch had evolved into a far more complex device for burning incense.

98) Aloeswood Bed 沈香牀

The *Garden of the Strange*[2923] [states], "The Śramaṇa Zhi Facun[2924] (ca. 3rd or 4th cent.) possessed an eight *chi* [in length] aloeswood plank bed."

異苑: 沙門支法存[2925]有八尺沈香板床。[2926]

[COMMENTS] According to his biography in the *Forest of Pearls in the Garden of the Dharma*, the Buddhist monk Zhi Facun, who likely lived in the third or fourth century, was of foreign ancestry but raised in the provincial region of Guangzhou in the far south. He was skilled in medicinal arts and consequently became very wealthy. This allowed Zhi Facun to procure an eight *zhang* long woolen carpet (*tadeng*) and commission a hundred radiant images of the Buddha. As highlighted by Hong Chu, he also had a bed constructed of aloeswood, of which we are told allowed him to "dwell constantly in fragrant perfumes."[2927] This ostentatious display of wealth caught the ire of an unknown local magistrate's son who

[2923] The *Garden of the Strange* was compiled by Liu Jingshu 劉敬叔 in the fifth century. This work collects many ghost stories and similarly themed tales of the strange, see Campany, *Strange Writing*, 78–80, Zheng et al., *Dictionary of the Ben Cao Gang Mu*, 600. A partial translation of this work can be found in Robert F. Campany, *A Garden of Marvels: Tales of Wonder from Early Medieval China* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2015), 78–106.

[2924] A Western Jin dynasty Buddhist monk of Indian ancestry, he is best known as a wondrously skilled physician who compiled the *Formulary for Explaining Revival* (*Shensu fang* 申蘇方) and who was a specialist in *jiaoqi* 腳氣 ("lower leg *qi*"), see Zheng et al., *Dictionary of the Ben Cao Gang Mu*, 667. Being of Indian ancestry, it is possible his name should be emended to Zhu Facun 竺法存.

[2925] Read 法 as 法存, following TPYL:6.706.529 and T2122:866b04.

[2926] Cf. TPYL:6.706.529; cf. TPYL:8.982.865; cf. T2122:573c22–24; cf. T2122:866b04–10.

[2927] 居常芬馥。T2122:866.b05.

schemed with his father, Wang Tan 王談 (d.u.),[2928] to have Zhi Facun killed. The full biography tells us that Zhi Facun reappeared as an "aggrieved spirit" (*yuan hun* 寃魂) who would constantly strike a drum by Wang Yan's quarters, never allowing him to forget his evil deed.[2929]

As is apparent in this short story, possession of large amount of aloeswood was a considered a conspicuous display of wealth and invited both jealousy and danger as much as gold, silver, or other precious goods might garner. In the later medieval period, a lesser commercial grade of aloeswood, called Water Basin Aromatic [HC#24], was identified as ideal by some authorities for carving larger sculptures, such as Buddhist images or mountain landscapes.

99) Golden Incense Burner 金香爐

[Emperor] Wu of Wei's *Document of Offered Miscellaneous Items* [states], "Among the thirty imperial items, there is one solid gold incense burner."

魏武上雜物疏曰：御物三十種，有純金香爐一枚。[2930]

[COMMENTS] Emperor Wu of Wei is the posthumous name given the to the warlord Cao Cao, whose rise to power during the final years of the Eastern Han gave him *de facto* authority over a large area covering the North China Plain, a territory known later as Cao-Wei during the Three Kingdoms period (220–280). According to a variety of documents

[2928] Cited as Wang Dan 王淡 in TPYL:6.706.529; cited as Wang Yan 王琰 in TPYL:8.982.865.
[2929] T2122:866.b03–10. In one version of this tale preserved in the *Imperial Readings of the Taiping Era*, the son falls ill, not the father, see TPYL:6.706.529.
[2930] Cf. TPYL:6.703.515; cf. CCJ:1.21.

relating to Cao Cao's life, we can piece together his use and attitudes towards aromatics more than any other historical figure previously in China, which in turn can tell us a good amount about how they were viewed during this period.

The first document, excerpted by Hong Chu above, refers to the items offered by Cao Cao to Emperor Xian 獻 of the Han (r. 189–220) after the child emperor was relocated to Xu in 196 and a puppet court was established under Cao Cao's command. An advancing rebel army forced the emperor to flee the Han capital of Luoyang in 190, subsequently taking up residence in Chang'an further westward. Many valuables were abandoned or lost during travel and further depletions occurred when the emperor was forced to flee Chang'an in 195. The following year, Cao Cao offered to bring the itinerant Emperor Xian under his protection.[2931] Among the gifts offered to the emperor and his retinue was a solid gold incense burner which we are told was attached to a baseplate.[2932] This most likely refers to a *boshan* censer [HC#100], an incense burner designed to look like a mountain that was also emblematic of imperial authority (the name *boshan* was not yet in use). In longer citations to the *Document of Offered Miscellaneous Items*, Cao Cao also reportedly offered four silver censers to the imperial princesses, four silver censers to the heir apparent, and a total of thirty bronze censers to the courtiers of the West Garden. The other types of gifts also included pillows, mirrors, and bathing kits – all sundry items of daily use.[2933]

Despite Cao Cao's gifts, he is perhaps most well-known for his apparent dislike of perfumes and incense. In one of his recorded *Proclamations for Regulating Households*

[2931] For further discussion of these events, see de Crespigny, *Imperial Warlord*, 51–96.
[2932] "A baseplate is attached," 下盘自副。CCJ:1.21.
[2933] CCJ:1.21–22.

(*Neijie ling* 内誡令), likely issued after 216, Cao Cao set forth the following sumptuary ordinance:

> In the past, when all under heaven was just starting to settle, I set forth a prohibition disallowing my family members from perfuming with aromatics. Afterwards, my daughters were matched with the imperial family and perfumed [garments?] for them. Because of this, they were allowed to burn incense. I do not like burning incense and I regret failing to have success with the prohibition. I hereby proclaim another prohibition disallowing the burning of incense. Perfumes concealed in clothing against the body are also disallowed.[2934]
> 昔天下初定，吾便禁家內不得香薰。后諸女配國家，為其香，因此得燒香。吾不好燒香，恨不遂所禁。令復禁，不得燒香。其以香藏衣著身，亦不得。

The practice initially prohibited likely involved the use censers and diffusion cages, the latter of which supported garments over the censer as they were perfumed and fumigated. The new formal ordinance also targets personal perfuming devices, which could refer to scenting sachets tied to the belt-sash or around the elbow of the arm [HC#97b]. It is believed Cao Cao's sumptuary regulations for households extended beyond members of his own family to all ministers holding office and even to the general public.[2935] The punishment for breaking his later sumptuary ordinances could be exceedingly harsh: Cao Cao is reported to have ordered his daughter-in-law to kill herself when she defied his restriction against wearing embroidered silk.[2936]

Overall, this proclamation should be read in light of Cao Cao's broad desire for frugality and dislike of ornamentation. These traits are revealed through his other

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[2934] TPYL:8.981.856, CCJ:3.53; cf. Guoli gugong bowuyuan, *Xiangju tulu*, 34 (which erroneously cites the *Imperial Readings of the Taiping Era* as claiming foreign aromatics arrived from Parthia and surrounding countries). Liu Jingmin believes the proclamation was issued after Cao Cao was enfeoffed as the vassal king of Wei, an event that occurred in 216, see Liu, *Songdai Xiangpu*, 31; de Crespigny, *Imperial Warlord*, 395–96, respectively. Three of Cao Cao's daughters entered the imperial harem in the fall of 213, all of whom were named Honorable Ladies (*guiren* 貴人), second in rank to the empress, early the following year, see de Crespigny, 381, 398. This means Cao Cao's initial prohibition for his family members occurred before the fall of 213. It remains indeterminate as to when all under heaven "was just starting to settle."
[2935] de Crespigny, *Imperial Warlord*, 373.
[2936] de Crespigny, 373. For the proclamation on silk, see CCJ:3.53.

Proclamations for Regulating the Household, as well as his wish for a simple and relatively somber funeral.[2937] It is also notable that Cao Cao himself admits to disliking incense and that the act is principally framed as an unnecessary show of personal vanity. This could also be read as an indirect comment on the decadence of the Han court who received over three dozen censers from Cao Cao two decades earlier. It might also be read as a comment on the formal procedures of the old Han imperial house, as we know the garments of the Imperial Secretariat required perfuming before the courtiers sought audience with the emperor [HC#87].

We might also speculate that Cao Cao's sumptuary ordinance was issued in response to a rapidly changing smellscape, possibly as more foreign aromatics started appearing in markets in and around the city of Ye, the seat of power for Cao Cao's growing domain, and the old Han capital of Luoyang, the location of Cao Cao's death in 220. The latter was a thriving cosmopolis of nearly half a million people.[2938] We know the Han imperial court was aware of Mediterranean storax and even tried to procure some from the frontiers of the Western Regions at the end of the first century.[2939] Furthermore, Cao Cao was claimed to have personal access to Moluccan cloves [HC#8] while his son, Cao Pi, was reputed to have Mediterranean rosemary growing in his courtyard garden [HC#42]. Buddhist translation teams in Luoyang at the end of the second century had identified both aloeswood and sandalwood through their work on Indic Buddhist scriptures, suggesting these aromatics could have also been slowly making their way into Chinese markets. Due to the increasing supra-regional movement of people and goods during this period, it would appear Cao Cao

[2937] de Crespigny, *Imperial Warlord*, 221, 440–443, 446–447.
[2938] de Crespigny, *Imperial Warlord*, 334.
[2939] See my commentary to HC#5.

envisioned more than native *flora* when issuing his proclamation banning perfumes and incense.[2940] Scarce new commodities, being sold at exorbitant prices, would have been the ideal target of sumptuary laws curtailing practices perceived as decadent.

Such a strong and wide-ranging prohibitive ordinance will need to be weighed against other evidence where Cao Cao appears much more tolerant of perfumes and incense. For example, the mid-fifth century *Treatise on the Guang Region* asserts not only that Cao Cao enjoyed burning sweet basil incense, but also wore the aromatic sprouts of Sichuan lovage concealed in his garments.[2941] The former case may be directly related to another proclamation issued by Cao Cao. Issued as instructions concerning buildings that were deemed unclean (*bu jie* 不潔), Cao Cao directs his subjects to burn a mixture of liquidambar gum and sweet basil.[2942] Additional historical context motivating this proclamation is not provided in the language of the ordinance, but in 217 there was a devastating plague that ravaged most of China, killing several of Cao Cao's family members and friends.[2943] Such an event could have spurred a decision to issue such an ordinance dealing with unclean spaces. If this is the case, it is perhaps not surprising that the *Treatise on the Guang Region* claims Cao Cao had a preference for both sweet basil and the sprouts of Sichuan lovage; the classical work of mythic geography, *Guideways through the Mountains and Seas*, asserts that sweet basil had the power to halt epidemics, and moreover, that it possessed a scent very

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[2940] Evidence for a growing trend in burning incense for pleasure can also be inferred through the story (although presented as hearsay) of Xun Yu, an influential advisor to Cao Cao who died in 212, see HC#94. Additionally, the use of foreign tribute aromatics among the harem of Emperor Ling of the Han is also noted in a fourth century compilation, although the story is likely apocryphal, see HC#56.

[2941] TPYL:8.983.872 and TPYL:8.983.871, respectively. For more on these two aromatics, see HC#32 and HC#20c, respectively. It is likely he placed the Sichuan lovage into scenting sachets.

[2942] 房屋不潔，聽得燒楓膠及蕙草。TPYL:8.982.863; T2122:573c12–13, cf. trans. Milburn, "Midiexiang," 37n.53 (who reads maple-resin and loosestrife). For further analysis of this proclamation, see Chapter 5, Section 4.

[2943] de Crespigny, *Imperial Warlord*, 420–21. Liu Jingmin, without providing the rationale for her claims, asserts that Cao Cao issued this proclamation in 219 or 220, see Liu, *Songdai Xiangpu*, 31.

similar to that of Sichuan lovage sprouts [HC#20c]. The *Classic of Materia Medica of the Divine Husbandman*, a work edited up through the Eastern Han, supports this belief, noting that sweet basil had the ability to drive away malign *qi*, while Sichuan lovage could ward off evil malignities.[2944]

If we interpret the claims of the *Treatise on the Guang Region* withing this medical context, we can say that while Cao Cao defied the letter of the law, he did not break the spirit of its intent. On one hand, he did not wear perfumes as a sign of personal ostentation, but in accordance with contemporary medical theory. On the other hand, the perfumes worn by Cao Cao were not rare imported goods, but well-known native aromatics that were presumably found in far greater supply (the same could be said for native liquidambar). From this perspective, Cao Cao would not have necessarily contravened his own sumptuary proscriptions against the use of effete perfumes and incense.

As referenced above, Cao Cao also possessed cloves, reportedly presenting them as a gift to Zhu Geliang, an advisor to his enemy Liu Bei. While the context of the gift is unclear, it has been treated recently as having an implied political message, and thus not necessarily directly related to perfuming.[2945]

Based on the anecdotes above, aromatics, broadly conceived, were deeply embedded within the social fabric of the time. Thus, in spite of Cao Cao's ordinance regulating the use of bodily perfumes, this early medieval olfactory culture, with its specific inflections expressed through medical treatments and gift giving, probably accounts for the reason why Cao Cao had ultimately acquired a personal collection of aromatics during his lifetime. Cao

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[2944] XXBC:20.834 and XXBC:7.190, respectively. In his annotations to this work, Tao Hongjing cites the *Guideways through the Mountains and Seas* concerning sweet basil, see XXBC:20.834. Liquidambar gum was not added to the materia medica corpus until the seventh century, see my comments to HC#33.
[2945] Tian, "Letters and Gifts," 183. See also my comments to cloves at HC#8.

Cao's will, known as his *Proclamation of Bequeathment* (*yiling* 遺令), explicitly states that "my incense can be divided among my consorts," before adding, "it is not to be used for sacrifice (*ji* 祭)."[2946]

100) Boshan Incense Burner 博山香爐

[100a] The *Old Affairs of the Eastern Palace* states, "When the crown prince is first venerated, there is a bronze *boshan* incense burner."

[100b] The *Miscellaneous Records of the Western Capital* [states]: "Ding Huan (d.u.) also made a nine-layered *boshan* incense burner."

[100a] 東宮故事曰：皇太子初拜，有銅博山香爐。[2947]

[100b] 西京雜記：丁緩又作九层博山香爐。[2948]

101) Incense Burner Amid the Coverlets 被中香爐

The *Miscellaneous Records of the Western Capital* [states]: "The Incense Burner Amid the Coverlets was originally made by Fang Feng (d.u), but the techniques were later lost until the craftsman from Chang'an, Ding Huan, started to make them. The device made of rings could revolve in four directions so the body of the censer always remained level and could be placed among the coverlets and quilts. Therefore, it takes this name.

[2946] 餘香可分與諸夫人，不命祭。CCJ:3.58. I address the larger historical context of this testament in Chapter 4, Section 10.
[2947] Cf. TPYL:6.703.514; cf. trans. Kirkova, "Sacred Mountains," 61.
[2948] Cf. TPYL:6.703.514; cf. trans. Kirkova, "Sacred Mountains," 60.

西京雜記: 被中香爐，本出房風，其法後絕。長安巧工，丁緩始更之，機環運轉四周，而爐體常平，可置於被褥，故以為名。[2949]

[COMMENTS] The description of this incense burning device, also sometimes referred to as the "Incense Burner Laid upon Quilts" (*woru xianglu* 卧褥香炉), reveals an astonishing feat of mechanical engineering, known historically in Europe as the Cardan suspension. This was named after the Italian Renaissance author Girolamo Cardano (1501–1576) who first described its operation in detail.[2950] Based upon the above textual description and recovered archaeological exemplars, this Chinese incense burner was fashioned by placing a central chamber inside a series of circular pivoted supports, known as gimbals, so that its horizontal orientation would remain fixed and level regardless of the rotational movement of the mechanism's outside frame. This prevents the spillage of burning incense and allows the device to be placed amid the quilts and bedcovers, or among other fabrics and garments, so they can be perfumed or fumigated without concern for damage.

According to the *Miscellaneous Records of the Western Capital*, this ingenious mechanism was first invented by the otherwise unknown Fang Feng 房風, but after an indeterminate period of time in which the relevant engineering knowledge was lost to later craftsmen, the famed artisan and inventor, Ding Huan, rediscovered the means for making the gimbaled incense burner. Ding Huan, reputed to have also invented the Boshan Incense

[2949] Cf. TPYL:6.703.514; cf. trans. Smith, "Ritual," 668.
[2950] Berthold Laufer, "Cardan's Suspension in China," in *Holmes Anniversary Volume: Anthropological Essays Presented to William Henry Holmes in Honor of His Seventieth Birthday, December 1, 1916*, ed. Frederick Webb Hodge and Ella Leary (Washington: J.W. Bryan Press, 1916), 288; Joseph Needham and Ling Wang, *Science and Civilisation in China, Vol 4, Physics and Physical Technology, Part II: Mechanical Engineering* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1965), 228–29; Barbieri-Low, "Artisans," 199.

Burner [HC#100], is not mentioned among the imperial Han histories, but because he figures in the *Miscellaneous Records of the Western Capital*, a text reputedly based on Han-era documents from the capital of Chang'an, he is oftentimes considered a craftsman of that period. For reasons that are not made explicit, Joseph Needham and Wang Ling consider him a subject of the Eastern Han, living approximately around 180 CE.[2951] Needham and Wang were also integral in potentially identifying an even earlier textual passage that describes this unique incense burning device. In the "Rhapsody to a Beauty" (*Meiren fu* 美人賦) by the Western Han court poet Sima Xiangru 司馬相如 (179–117 BCE), an erotic scene it set amidst the bedroom of a beautiful woman where the sheets and coverlets are fumigated by, in the language of Needham and Wang, "metal rings [containing] burning perfume."[2952] Anthony Barbieri-Low has further shown that medieval accounts of Ding Huan infer his service under Emperor Wu of the Western Han, thus evincing even stronger support for the invention (or rediscovery) of the Incense Burner Amid the Coverlets during the second century BCE.[2953] This would place the creation of the so-called Cardan suspension more than a millennium before its earliest description in European documents.[2954]

There is reason to be dubious of such an early attestation for the gimbaled incense burner in China. While Needham and Wang treat a third century BCE Latinized Greek description of a gimbaled ink-well with suspicion, they do not treat their Chinese sources

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[2951] Needham and Wang, *Science and Civilisation in China*, Vol 4, Part 2, 233. Laufer dates Ding Huan more generally to the Han period, but claims he more likely lived during the Eastern Han, see Laufer, "Cardan's Suspension," 292n.1.
[2952] 金鉦薰香。As cited, with minor revision, in Needham and Wang, *Science and Civilisation in China*, Vol 4, Part 2, 234.
[2953] Barbieri-Low, "Artisans," 198. Barbeiri-Low cautiously notes that the received stories of Ding Huan may have only been first written down during the Eastern Han, yet he still speculates Ding Huan was an artisan employed at the court of Emperor Wu of the Western Han, see Barbieri-Low, 197–98.
[2954] Needham and Wang, *Science and Civilisation in China*, Vol 4, Part 2, 229–31, 234.

with equal caution.[2955] The title of the *Miscellaneous Records of the Western Capital* only first appears in Chinese sources of the mid-sixth century, making it a suspiciously late witness to events that reputedly occurred over five hundred years earlier.[2956] Moreover, the authenticity of Xima Xiangru's "Rhapsody to a Beauty" has also been strongly challenged, with the poem itself not appearing in sources until the Tang.[2957] Taken together, this points to a later medieval discovery of the gimbaled incense burner, possibly after the fall of the Han. Such a stance is further supported by other medieval textual sources and more recent archaeological finds. As documented by Needham and Wang, additional textual references to gimbaled devices, not just gimbaled incense burners, do not appear until the sixth century.[2958] Notably, this is roughly contemporaneous with the likely compilation of the *Miscellaneous Records of the Western Capital*. Moreover, as is well known, the earliest surviving example of a Chinese gimbaled censer is from the eighth century, as seen by a particularly fine gilded silver specimen found among the Hejiacun hoard from Xi'an in 1970.[2959] Another example in gilded silver dated to the eighth century was found in the Carl Kempe Collection.[2960] While these still predate European descriptions of gimbaled devices, there is no firm evidence to trace the Chinese origins of gimbaled incense burners to the Western or Eastern Han, nor

[2955] Needham and Wang, 231, cf. Laufer, "Cardan's Suspension," 288–90.
[2956] For the earliest Chinese citations of this text, see Knechtges and Chang, *Reference Guide*, Vol. 1, 1651. See also the comments in Kirkova, "Sacred Mountains," 60n.23.
[2957] Robert Joe Cutter, "To Make Her Mine: Women and The Rhetoric of Property in Early and Early Medieval Fu," *Early Medieval China* 19 (2013): 49n.52. Scholarly suspicion of the authenticity of this work is noted in Barbieri-Low, "Artisans," 304n.133.
[2958] Needham and Wang, *Science and Civilisation in China*, Vol 4, Part 2, 234. Needham and Wang read these references as evidence for Ding Huan's lasting mechanical genius.
[2959] Barbieri-Low, "Artisans," 200–01 (with photographic illustration); also see Yang, *Xiang shi*, 81.
[2960] Needham and Wang, *Science and Civilisation in China*, Vol 4, Part 2, 231 (for photograph, see Plate CLXVIII, Fig. 478). Other examples from approximately the same period include a censer held by the Victoria and Albert Museum, London (Accession Number M.98-1938) and the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York (Accession Number 21.146).

specifically to the individual genius of Ding Huan, to whom many clever inventions are attributed in sources that post-date his reputed lifetime.[2961]

By the Tang a new nomenclature had developed to describe these devices. One such term was the "scenting globe" (*xiang qiu* 香毬), which is attested in poetry of the era.[2962] This should not be confused with the similarly named item, the "fragrance ball" (*xiang qiu* 香球 or 香毬) which was not to be burned, but tossed around in play (nor confused with incense beads [HC#106]).[2963] As noted by Yang Zhishui, the gimbaled censer appears to have fallen out of favor during the Song, and the term scenting globe came to refer to a spherical incense burner that was attached to a support plate for placing on an altar or table, thus negating the need for an internal suspension system.[2964]

Moreover, by the end of the Tang it appears the term "scenting sachet," which originally referred to cloth pouches tied to the body as perfume and protective charm, started to refer to these gimbaled incense burning devices. As described by the ninth century Buddhist monk Huilin, "[those] knowledgeable of crafts [made] devices that could revolve and not overturn, thus allowing the interior [chamber] to remain level."[2965] That such devices were intimately known to Tang Buddhists was proven through the excavation of the underground crypt at Famen Temple in 1987. Sealed in 874 and sitting undisturbed for 1100 years, the crypt revealed a dazzling assortment of objects, including nine different scenting

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[2961] For a brief discussion of Ding Huan's most famous inventions, see Barbieri-Low, "Artisans," 197–201. Notably, none of the devices cited by Barbeiri-Low, as he himself states, have been attested in the Han archaeological record.
[2962] Yan, "Gudai xiangnang," 121; Yang, *Xiang shi*, 81–82.
[2963] Yan, "Gudai xiangnang," 121. Absent a description of how the object/device works, it would be impossible to distinguish textually between scenting globes and fragrance balls.
[2964] Yang, *Xiang shi*, 82–83; see also the discussion in Liu, *Songdai Xiangpu*, 359–67.
[2965] 燒香圓器也。巧智機關轉而不傾，令内常平。T2128:342a22.

devices.[2966] Among these was the largest silver gilded gimbaled censer found in East Asia, measuring at 12.8 centimeters in diameter.[2967] A second gimbaled censer, with the diameter of 5.7 centimeters, was also discovered. According to the inventory of the Famen Temple crypt, which was carved on two stone steles in the front chamber, Emperor Xizong 禧宗 (r. 862–888) had gifted two "scenting sachets" (*xiangnang*), a term that we now know referred to these intricate metal censers.[2968] The surviving Tang examples of the Incense Burner Amid the Coverlets, which are more commonly referred to as "perfuming globes" (*xun₁qiu* 熏球) in modern scholarship, are often fitted with eyelets or rings to attach a chain, suggesting the device was intended to be hung or perhaps gently swayed to scent the air.

102) Mountain-sized Bonfires of Aloeswood 沈香火山

The [*Miscellaneous*] *Compilation from Duyang* [states]: Emperor Yang of the Sui (r. 604–618), on the eve of the Lunar New Year, set up dozens of mountain-sized bonfires [made] from the roots of the aloeswood tree in front of the halls. Every single bonfire burned [enough] aloeswood [to make] several carriages. When smoldering, onycha reduction was poured over them and its fragrance could be smelled for several dozens of *li*.

杜陽編：隋煬帝每除夜，殿前設火山數十，皆沈香木根，每一山焚沈香數車。暗則甲煎沃之，香聞數十里。[2969]

[2966] Yan, "Gudai xiangnang," 121.
[2967] Patricia Eichenbaum Karetzky, "Esoteric Buddhism and the Famensi Finds," *Archives of Asian Art* 47 (1994): 81. A larger censer at 18 centimeters in diameter, but made of less valuable copper, is housed at the Shōsōin, see Karetzky, 84n.32.
[2968] The relevant inventory line is cited in Yan, "Gudai xiangnang," 121.
[2969] I have been unable to identify a parallel for this passage, it is not in the received version of the *Miscellaneous Compilation from Duyang*.

[COMMENTS] Emperor Yang, the second and final emperor of the Sui to wield real political power, is often vilified as profligate and wantonly extravagant in traditional histories. The burning of such a large amount of aloeswood [HC#3] and onycha [HC#35], even during a highly anticipated yearly festival, could easily be interpreted as an ostentatious display of wealth. Unlike sandalwood [HC#4], high-quality aloeswood deposits found in *Aquilaria* trees were oftentimes small and irregular in shape, thus an amount that would be sufficient to create "several carriages" would be emblematic of extreme excessiveness. In addition, onycha was made by crushing the operculum of sea mollusks, a time intensive task that yielded a minute amount of scented material. Moreover, onycha, even when transformed into onycha reduction by combining it with honey or wine, was considered an additive to incense and perfume blends, titrated in only very small proportions. When burned in isolation the marine-sourced aromatic gives off an unfavorable fishy odor, strongly suggesting this story should not be taken at face value. Thus, the anecdote above concerning Emperor Yang principally employs these two aromatics to signal vast imperial wealth and habits of conspicuous consumption.

Also encoded within this story is the natural wealth and commercial prestige of the far south. The Sui re-unified China by conquering their southern rivals, directly reconnecting the northern capitals to trade with the tropics where both aloeswood and onycha were produced. The mid-to-late third century *Treatise on Strange Things of the Southern Regions* speaks of both aromatics coming from the south: aloeswood from Rinan in present-day central Vietnam, and onycha from the Southern Seas. By the fifth century the methods of aloeswood harvesting were introduced into China proper, but were still limited to the regions around present-day Guangdong. By placing these goods into the hands of the emperor, this

story is also emphasizing the reach of the imperial domain and unhindered access to the natural resources of the far south.

103) Sandalwood Pavilion 檀香亭

The [*Miscellaneous*] *Compilation from Duyang* [states]: "The Xuanzhou Surveillance Commissioner[2970] Yang Shou (816–870) constructed a Sandalwood Pavilion. When it was first completed, he had guests come to appreciate it.

杜陽編：宣州觀察使，楊收造檀香亭子，初成，命賓樂之。[2971]

[COMMENTS] As recounted by James McHugh, the narrative use of sandalwood [HC#4] for large construction projects in India can be seen in stories such as the *Pūrṇāvadāna*. In this tale, the wealthy merchant Pūrṇa becomes a monk under the Buddha and builds for him a pavilion made of ox-head sandalwood [HC#79].[2972] More than simply providing a fragrant space of recumbence, the construction material was an exotic and rare commodity and thus also symbolic of royalty.[2973]

While the received version of the late Tang-era *Miscellaneous Compilation from Duyang* does not include the above anecdote regarding the minister Yang Shou, sandalwood is elsewhere cited in the text as a precious woodworking material. For example, both sandalwood and aloeswood were reportedly carved into a sculpture depicting a Ten-Thousand Buddha Mountain (*wanfo shan* 萬佛山) inlaid with pearls and jade. According to

[2970] Hucker, *Dictionary of Official Titles*, 283 (#3265).
[2971] I have been unable to identify a parallel for this passage, it is not in the received version of the *Miscellaneous Compilation from Duyang*.
[2972] A full translation of the *Pūrṇāvadāna* can be found in Tatelman, *Glorious Deeds* 151–56; for a summary, see McHugh, *Sandalwood and Carrion*, 203–05.
[2973] McHugh, 208–09.

the description, the largest buddhas were no more than a *cun* in height, while the smaller buddhas were seven or eight *fen*, thus making each figure no taller than the width of a thumb. Moreover, each head was claimed to be the size of a millet grain, yet every feature was rendered in meticulous detail.[2974] Elsewhere, this text describes a similar miniature landscape carved into wood that is honored by the emperor with Phoenix Brain Incense [HC#58].

In contrast to this delicate craftsmanship, the *Miscellaneous Compilation from Duyang* further records the construction of a building called the Hall of Yun Splendor (*Yunhui tang* 芸輝堂) in the last half of the eighth century. It was named for the application of Yun Aromatic [HC#28] as scented plaster for the walls and reputedly incorporated sandalwood and aloeswood for the rafters and beams, as well as gold and silver for the trim around the windows and doors.[2975] Such extravagant construction projects as the Hall of Yun Splendor and Yang Shou's Sandalwood Pavilion found earlier precedents in the Pavilion of Four Fragrances [HC#116] and the imperial Aloeswood Pavilion [HC#117], both constructed earlier in the eight century.

104) Aloeswood Pavilion 沈香亭

Li Bai's (701–762) "Postscript" [states], "During the *kaiyuan* era (713–741), the Forbidden Palace started to cherish the tree-peony, now [known as] the peony. [The emperor] obtained trees with red, purple, pink, and white [flowers] and transplanted them to the front of the Aloeswood Pavilion east of the Xingqing Pool.

[2974] DYZB:1.3. This carving is briefly noted in Stein, *World in Miniature*, 285n.83.
[2975] DYZB:1.5.

李白後序：開元中，禁中初重木芍藥，即今牡丹也。得四本紅，紫，淺紅，通白者，上因移植於興慶池東沈香亭前。

[COMMENTS] Li Bai was one of the most acclaimed poets in Chinese history and the passage above prepares the setting for what emerged as one of the more iconic events of his hagiography – his drunken visitation with *Emperor Xuanzong* 玄宗 (r. 713–756). It was at the Aloeswood Pavilion where Li Bai, reportedly hungover from the previous night's reveries, was able to spontaneously compose stunning examples of occasional verse for a festive gathering, alluding not only to the beautiful peonies of the palace grounds, but also to the beauty of the emperor's favored consort, Yang Guifei.[2976]

A building made entirely of highest quality aloeswood [HC#3] remains squarely in the realm of the figurative and symbolic. Oleoresin saturated aloeswood pieces were relatively small and irregular in shape, carved out from the unscented wood typically encasing the valued aromatic, thus there is no reason to believe high grade aloeswood could have been utilized as timber. Lower-quality, less-aromatic aloeswood was known to be used for carvings, such as the so-called Water Basin Aromatic [HC#24], and consequently may have also been fashioned into planks for smaller construction projects.[2977] If strongly scented

[2976] For discussion and translation of the three quatrains composed by Li Bai for this occasion, see Paula M. Varsano, *Tracking the Banished Immortal The Poetry of Li Bo and Its Critical Reception* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2003), 245–56 (note that Varsano mistakenly renders the Aloeswood Pavilion as the Sandalwood Pavilion).

[2977] Edward Schafer similarly speculates that planks of the "healthier and less odorous wood, may have been used, see Schafer, *Golden Peaches*, 165. Dinah Jung, on the other hand, notes in general that "*Aquilaria* heartwood is too soft to be used as timber," see Jung, "Cultural Biography of Agarwood," 112–13n.58. It is worth noting that the twelfth century *Materia Medica of Expanded Meaning* acknowledges *Aquilaria* wood as "weak and soft" (*xu rou* 虛柔), but nevertheless reports the tribes living in the mountains in the far south use the wood for building cottages and bridges, see DZ768.21.25b; see also Yamada, *Tōa kōryō shi kenkyū*, 190. The current Aloeswood Pavilion, located on the reconstructed Xingqing Palace Park on the suburbs of Xi'an, is a modern construction of the 1950s.

aloeswood was indeed used, it was more than likely utilized as decorative finishings that still undoubtedly rendered the site with a pleasing fragrance.

105) Pentachromatic Scented Smoke 五色香煙

The *Pearl Satchel of the Three Caverns* [states], "When permitted to roam freely afar and burn incense, pentachromatic scented smoke will always appear."

三洞珠囊：許遠遊燒香，皆五色香煙出。[2978]

106) Incense Beads 香珠

The *Pearl Satchel of the Three Cavern* [states], "Take the various aromatics and crush them. Then form into pellets the size of parasol tree[2979] seeds and string them with a green cord. These are the True Prime Incense Beads of the Three Sovereigns. Burn them and the fragrance will penetrate into the Heavens.

三洞珠囊: 以雜香擣之，丸如桐[2980]子大，青繩穿。此三皇真元之香珠也。燒之香徹天。[2981]

[COMMENTS] Directions for making these incense beads are preserved in the late sixth century Daoist encyclopedia, the *Essence of the Supreme Secrets*, as well as the *Supreme Scripture on the Registration as a Divine Immortal through the Precious Retreat of the Three*

[2978] This passage is not found in the received Ming edition of the *Pearl Satchel of the Three Caverns*.
[2979] *Firmiana simplex* (syn. *Firmiana platanifolia*), see Hua, Buell, and Unschuld, *Dictionary of the Ben Cao Gang Mu*, 439 (#1559). The original text of the *Materia Aromatic* has *tong* 桐, *Paulownia fortunei*, see Hua, Buell, and Unschuld, *Dictionary of the Ben Cao Gang Mu*, 428 (#1177). For a different blending recipe, Hong Chu uses the metrological standard of parasol tree seeds, see HC#144.
[2980] Read 桐 as 梧桐, following DZ854:02b.
[2981] Cf. DZ854:02b–03a, cf. DZ1138.50.8b–9a.

Sovereigns (*Taishang sanhuang baozhai shenxuan shanglu jing* 太上三皇寶齋神仙上錄經; DZ854), hereafter *Precious Retreat of the Three Sovereigns*, a short liturgical work tentatively assigned to the Tang (see below for further dating analysis).[2982] The instructions are listed under the title "Recipe for Incense Beads that Merge with the Upper Prime" (*He shangyuan xiangzhu fa* 合上元香珠法). The ingredient list and directions are as follows:

> [Ingredients]: Use aloeswood (three *jin*), frankincense (one *jin*), costus (nine *liang*), cloves (five *liang*), figwort (three *linag*), nutsedge (six *liang*), elemi (three *liang*), wild angelica (two *liang*), sandalwood (four *liang*), mugwort (three *liang*), gum guggul (four *liang*), and Mulan magnolia (three *liang*).
> 用沉香三斤。薰陸一斤[2983]。青木九兩。雞舌五兩。玄參三兩。雀頭六兩。詹[2984]香三兩。白芷二兩。真檀四兩。艾香三兩。安息膠四兩。木蘭三兩。
>
> [Directions]: Take each of these twelve ingredients and crush them separately. Sift them with gauze. Once complete, fold them into ten *liang* of dried jujubes and then stir thirty-thousand times with a pestle. Place this inside a white vessel, seal with a lid, and steam the incense for one day. Once complete, mix with honey, stir, and make pellets like the [size of the] seed of the parasol tree. String them with a dark green cord and set them under the sun until dried. These are the True Prime Incense Beads of the Three Sovereigns. When these are burned all [the fragrances] penetrate into the Nine Heavens, [causing] the Perfected and Jade Maidens to all sing aloud in the sky.[2985]
> 凡一十二種別擣絹篩之。畢納[2986]乾棗十兩，更擣三萬杵，納[2987]白器中，密盖蒸香一日。畢更蜜和擣之丸，如梧桐[2988]子，以青繩穿之，日曝令乾。此三皇真元之香珠也。燒此皆徹九天，真人玉女，皆歌此於空玄之中。

[2982] DZ1138.50.8b–9a and DZ854:02b–03a, respectively. For brief comments on this pair of works, see Schipper and Verellen, *The Taoist Canon*, 118–19 and 504, respectively.

[2983] Var. 二斤, see DZ1138.50.8b.

[2984] Var. 占城, see DZ1138.50.8b. The variant *zhancheng* 占城 referred to the Champa kingdom in present-day central and southern Vietnam. It would appear that *zhan* 占 was an error for *zhan* 詹, as appears in our base text, which was then corrected to *zhancheng*, "Champa." Turning to the base text, on one hand, *zhan* could be read as a corruption of *zhantang* 詹糖, or elemi [HC#10]. This emendation finds support in the "Recipe for Nine Blend Incense" which uses the variant *zhantang* 詹唐; see my comments to Nine Blend Incense at HC#66. On the other hand, one could read *zhan* as an error for *zhanbo* 詹匐 (or 薝蔔), which refers to Indian *campaka* flowers [HC#81]. This emendation finds support in the "Recipe for Incense Beads to Draw Down the Perfected" which uses *zhangbo*, see my comments to the Aromatic that Draws Down the Perfected at HC#17. Based on a lack of evidence for a medieval commercial trade in *campaka* flowers, I have chosen to treat *zhan* as regionally available elemi.

[2985] DZ854:02b–03a (as base) and DZ1138.50.8b–9a (noted variants).

[2986] Var. 內, see DZ1138.50.9a.

[2987] Var. 內, see DZ1138.50.9a.

[2988] Var. 梧, see DZ1138.50.9a.

The *Essence of the Supreme Secrets* cites this recipe as extracted from a generic Dongshen scripture (*dongshen jing* 洞神經).[2989] This likely points to the *Precious Retreat of the Three Sovereigns*, within which the adept refers to himself as a disciple of the Dongshen tradition (*dongshen dizi* 洞神弟子).[2990] Furthermore, the *Essence of the Supreme Secrets* elsewhere cites a recipe for making scented lamp oil, again extracted from a "Dongshen scripture," which is also found in the *Precious Retreat of the Three Sovereigns*.[2991] This suggests the Tang dating for the *Precious Retreat of the Three Sovereigns* can be pushed back to at least the sixth century, previous to the late sixth century compilation of the *Essence of the Supreme Secrets*.[2992]

The liturgy outlined in *Precious Retreat of the Three Sovereigns* follows a simple sequence of ablutions, burning incense, lighting lamps, and the presentation of offerings to the Three Sovereigns. Both the lamp and the censer are to be attended to constantly, allowing neither to extinguish until the liturgy is complete. Notably, incense beads are used during two other occasions in preparation for the rites where they are not burned as incense. First, the incense beads are used as one of the five ingredients for making the scented lamp oil. Three *liang* of incense beads are to be mixed with hemp oil (one *dou*), sandalwood (one *jin*), costus (one *jin*), and figwort (one *liang*). The lamp oil is complete after simmering the mixture over a low fire for half a day.[2993] Second, the above recipe for incense beads is also used as a base for making pills with miraculous effects. After adding realgar (half a *jin*) and musk (four *liang*) to the above ingredients, the mixture is formed into individual pellets the size of large

[2989] DZ1138.50.9a.
[2990] DZ854.5b.
[2991] DZ1138.50.8a–8b and DZ854.4a–4b, respectively.
[2992] John Lagerwey has shown this text was compiled at the request of the Zhou emperor after a military victory in 577, see Schipper and Verellen, *The Taoist Canon*, 118.
[2993] DZ854.4a–4b.

beans. After ingesting one pill each day for nineteen days, the person will have constant contact with spiritual beings, be able to defeat all illnesses and malign influences, and release a sweet fragrance from his mouth.[2994]

At some point in the late medieval period, the recipe and directions for the Incense Beads that Merge with the Upper Prime were copied over, with minor modifications, to make the Incense Beads to Draw Down the Perfected.[2995] It is perhaps notable that all of these directions describe only how incense beads can be burned for use in ritual. The *Newly Compiled Materia Aromatica* (*Xinzuan xiang pu* 新纂香譜) of the late Song is more explicit in the use of incense beads as bodily ornamentation, providing instructions to keep them clean of oil, salt, and filth and proper procedures for storing them.[2996]

107) Golden Spice 金香

[The *Pearl Satchel of the Three Caverns* states]: The Righthand Lord Master of Fate, Wang Yidu was roaming the east and he caught sight of a Heavenly maiden, in the district of Guangchang[2997], in the village of Changle, making a soup of *pinglu*[2998], golden spice, and *bahui*[2999], along with magnificent and mysterious dried meats.[3000]

[2994] DZ854.3a.
[2995] This is discussed in my comments to the Aromatic that Draws Down the Perfected at HC#17.
[2996] See discussion in Liu, *Songdai Xiangpu*, 323–26.
[2997] Present-day Guangchang is in Jiangxi province, see Hua, Buell, and Unschuld, *Dictionary of the Ben Cao Gang Mu*, 153.
[2998] The *Charts of Auspicious Correspondences* by Sun Rouzhi records a tree known as *pinglu* 平露 that grows in the palace courtyards of rulers who fail to employ worthy people as ministers in their court. Moreover, the tree will grow in the direction opposite from where there is political disruption in the country, thus signaling the failures of the ruler, see TPYL:7.873.
[2999] I cannot identify *bahui*, "eight conjunctions," in this context; for discussion on the "eight conjunctions" as primordial form of Daoist writing, see Steavu, *Three Sovereigns*, 62–66; Raz, *Emergence of Daoism*, 169–76.
[3000] The inclusion of dried meats in the above recipe suggests *tang* 湯 does not refer to a decoction for bathing or a balneotherapeutic wash, but as a soup for eating.

右司命君，王易度游於東板廣昌之城，長樂之鄉，天女灌以平露金香，八會之湯，瓊鳳玄脯。[3001]

108) Magpie-Tail Incense Burner 鵲尾香爐

[The *Pearl Satchel of the Three Caverns* states]: Song Yuxiang was from Shanyin. When she was growing into womanhood, her ambitions were entirely lofty and focused. When she reached the age of marriage and was to be matched to the Xu clan, she secretly gathered sacred garments. She rode a carriage to her husband's gate and at the time of the marriage ceremony, she changed into her yellow turban and jacket, held a magpie-tail incense burner, and refused the wedding ceremony. The guests were startled, but not even the pressure of the husband's family could bend her. Thus, they released her back to her family. At the beginning of the *datong* era (535–546) of the Liang, she became a recluse in the region of Ruo River.

宋玉賢，山陰人也。既稟女質，厥志彌高自專，年及笄應適女兄。許氏密具法服登車，既至夫門，時及交禮，更著黃巾裙，手執鵲尾香爐，不親婦禮。賓客駭愕，夫家力不能屈，乃放還出家。梁大同初，隱弱溪之間。[3002]

[COMMENTS] Incense burners fashioned with long handles for easy maneuverability have been recovered from Western Han tombs.[3003] It is believed that the increased use of incense during medieval period, especially for Buddhist rites, caused an increase in the popularity of

[3001] Cf. DZ1139.8.18b–19a, 8.27b.
[3002] Cf. DZ1139.4.10b.
[3003] Yang, "Handai tong xunlu yanjiu," 85.

the long-handled censer, many of which were designed with Buddhist floral motifs.[3004] One shape that was particularly popular in Chinese Buddhist circles (and within Daoist circles according to the story above) was a censer with a handle that arched downward at the end and then splayed out, similar in shape to the tail feathers of a bird. This magpie-tail censer form appears to have been well-known through the medieval period, before slowly disappearing by the Southern Song.

109) Hundred Graduations Incense [Seal] 百刻香

In recent times, those who value oddities produce incense seals. The patterns conform to the twelve double-hours and are divided into one hundred graduations. They generally burn throughout the day and night.[3005]

近世尚奇者，作香篆，其文准十二辰，分一百刻，凡然晝夜乃已。

[COMMENTS] This item is a specific variant of an incense seal [HC#111] designed to keep track of a twenty-four hour period of time which was divided into one-hundred *ke* 刻, "graduations." This time unit originally derived from the hundred notches (*ke*) used to measure time with a clepsydra.[3006] A illustration of the unicursal labyrinth-like design that

[3004] For a discussion of the history and terminology of long-handled incense burners, see Liu, *Songdai Xiangpu*, 347–53. Silvio Bedini's presumption that magpie-tail censers referred to incense seals is mistaken, see Bedini, "Trail of Time," 202n.48.
[3005] Cf. trans. Bedini, 103.
[3006] Eight and one-third *ke* constituted one Chinese *shi* 時, or "double-hour." For a brief description of the *shi-ke* system time-keeping, see Bedini, 14–16. For further discussion and analysis of the Hundred Gradations Incense Seal, see Bedini, 93–110.

was intended to be carved into wood was preserved in the late Song *Newly Compiled Materia Aromatica* and the seventeenth century *Cart of Aromatics*.[3007]

110) Floating on Water Incense [Seal] 水浮香

If one burns paper into ash and uses it as an incense seal, it will float on the surface of the water. Even while burning it will not sink. Painted metal creatures used for incense include the *suanni*,[3008] *qilin*,[3009] and mallard duck. The hallow interiors are for burning incense, causing smoke to spew out of the mouths. Some consider this a toy. There are also ones carved from wood and molded in clay.

然紙灰以印香篆，浮之水面，爇竟不沈。香獸以塗金為狻猊，麒麟，鳧鴨之狀，空中以然香；使煙自口出，以為玩好。復有雕木，埏土為之者。

[COMMENTS] The entry headword points to the particular use of an incense seal [HC#111] where powdered incense is mixed with paper ash so as to allow it to float atop water. The rest of the entry describes the various animalistic forms into which incense burners were made, some of which were made to look as if they were spewing out smoke.[3010]

[3007] See SKQS:844.267b-268b (without illustration) and SKQS:844.530a (with illustration), respectively; also reprinted in Bedini, "Scent of Time," 9 and Bedini, "Trail of Time," n.p. (Fig. 43).

[3008] Since at least the third century the *suanni* was equated with the lion, an animal that was first known to the Chinese through contact with merchants and tributary delegations from the Western Regions, see Liu, *Songdai Xiangpu*, 333–37.

[3009] The *qilin* is traditionally described as a chimera-like creature with the body of a deer, tail of an ox, and a single horn on its head. This latter feature has caused many to equate this auspicious beast, which was believed to only appear during the reign of benevolent rulers, with that of the Western unicorn. Formally, *qi* 麒 referred to the male of this species, while *lin* 麟 referred to the female of the species.

[3010] Various animal shaped incense burners are discussed in Liu, *Songdai Xiangpu*, 332–45; Yang, *Xiang shi*, 54–79.

111) Incense Seal 香篆

Carved wood is used to make them. Incense powder is formed into the design of a seal script graph and burned during feasts or in front of Buddhist images. They are often up to two or three *chi* in diameter.[3011]

鏤木以為之，以範香塵為篆文，然于飲席或佛像前，往往有至二三尺徑者。

[COMMENTS] Silvio Bedini was the first to study incense seals extensively, investigating them through the lens of the history of horology and technology.[3012] In general, incense seals (*xiang yin* 香印) referred to a unicursal pattern of incense powder that could be burned to keep track of the passage of time [HC#109]. The design could be formed on top of a heat-resistant pan, board, or stone using a mold. Alternatively, incense powder could be poured to fill grooves carved into wood and then ignited. Hong Chu also notes a special method that allows the incense seal to float atop water [HC#110]. Some unicursal designs employed a stylized "seal script" (*zhuan* 篆), the style of writing used for engraving and name seals popularized during the Han, and thus also came to be known as an "incense seal-graph" (*xiang zhuan* 香篆). Ultimately, however, this latter term also came to be used for any geometric design formed with incense powder, not just Chinese graphs. Because fine incense powder burned constantly at an even rate, these incense seals could be used to accurately measure specific units of time.

[3011] Cf. trans. Bedini, "Trail of Time," 103.
[3012] Bedini, "Scent of Time" and Bedini, "Trail of Time"; see also Schafer, *Golden Peaches*, 160–61; Needham and Lu, *Science and Civilisation in China,* Vol. 5, Part 2, 146–47.

According to Bedini, the earliest literary evidence for the use of incense seals can be found in Tang poetry.[3013] He further hypothesizes their principal use was in Buddhist temples for keeping track of the six time periods of the day so as to attend in a timely manner to the various daily activities and services.[3014] The design for such a seal can be found in the *Ritual of the Great Compassionate Wisdom Seal of Avalokiteśvara Bodhisattva which Pervades the Dharma Realm, Benefits Sentient Beings, and Perfumes Thusness* 觀自在菩薩大悲智印周遍法界利益衆生薰眞如法; T1042), a translated work attributed to Amoghavajra 不空 (705–774). A preserved illustration of the mold shows a stylized Siddhaṃ script *hrīḥ*, the sacred seed-syllable of Avalokiteśvara.[3015] The particular Buddhist use of incense seals can also be confirmed through the inventory of a monastery established by the nun Shan Sheng 善勝 and preserved in a Dunhuang manuscript (P. 3638) dated to 911. The manuscript records the possession of both a square and round incense seal (*xiang yin*) in addition to storage containers for surplus incense.

Because incense seals could be used for keeping time, powdered incense blends that burned at a specific rate must have been prepared for this purpose. Notably, Hong Chu preserves two different blends listed specifically as “Recipes for Incense Seals” [HC#139, HC#140].[3016]

[3013] Bedini, “Trail of Time,” 89–90.
[3014] Bedini, 81.
[3015] The single *juan* text is translated and discussed in Bedini, “Trail of Time,” 69–80. The use of Indic script instead of Chinese graphs for incense seals is also attested in Tang poetry, see Schafer, *Golden Peaches*, 161.
[3016] Additional recipes are discussed in Bedini, “Trail of Time,” 90–92.

112) Burning Incense while Reading the *Classic on Filial Piety* 焚香讀孝經

The *Book of Chen*[3017] [states,] "Cen Zhijing (519–579), courtesy name Sili, was honest, sincere, and practiced filial piety. Ever since he was five years old when he read the *Classic on Filial Piety*, he always burned incense and sat upright.

陳書: 岑之敬，字思禮，淳謹有孝行，五歲讀孝經，必焚香正坐。

113) Vermifuge 防蠹

Xu Ling's (507–583) *New Songs of the Jade Terrace*[3018] states, "By warding off stench, one gives rise to fragrance. This will defend against the bookworms of Yuling.

徐陵玉台新詠曰：辟惡生香，聊防羽陵之蠹。[3019]

[COMMENTS] The passage above is taken from the preface to the *New Songs of the Jade Terrace* and attributed to its compiler, Xu Ling 徐陵. Anne Birrell notes the bookworms of Yuling are an allusion to an old story about Emperor Mu 穆 (r. 976–922 BCE) of the Zhou whose book collection was overtaken by bookworms during his travels.[3020] Birrell further identifies musk [HC#2] as the aromatic hinted in Xu Ling's preface to ward off these pests.[3021] Birrell does not provide her rationale for identifying musk, but we can point to the commentary by Wu Zhaoyi 吳兆宜 (fl. 1672) on a poem in the *New Songs of the Jade*

[3017] The official dynastic history of the short-lived Chen Dynasty (557–589), one of the Southern Dynasties of China, and compiled by Yao Silian 姚思廉 (557–637).
[3018] The *New Songs of the Jade Terrace* (*Yutai xinyong* 玉台新詠) is an anthology of 656 early medieval poems compiled by Xu Ling 徐陵 around the year 545, see Birrell, *New Songs*, 1. An English translation of the anthology can be found in Birrell, *New Songs*.
[3019] Cf. YTXY, p.11.
[3020] Birrell, *New Songs*, 346.
[3021] Birrell, 342.

Terrace to provide insight. A line in the "Song of Yan" (*Yange xing* 燕歌行) by Yu Xin 庾信 (513–581) contains the same line as above: "by warding of stench [or evil], one give rise to fragrance."[3022] Wu Zhaoyi comments on this by quoting the Eastern Han official Qin Jia 秦嘉 (ca. 134–ca. 164) who in a preserved letter to his wife gifts her a portion of musk, saying that "it is able to ward off stench."[3023] Moreover, Wu Zhaoyi cites a similar claim regarding musk in Tao Hongjing's comments to the *Classic of Materia Medica of the Divine Husbandman*.[3024]

In spite of such clear parallels, musk was not often cited as an effective insecticide or vermifuge in medieval works. One of the most famous in this regard is Yun Aromatic, which is described in the third century *Abridged Archives* as having to power to "ward off silverfish and bookworms" [HC#28b]. While Yun Aromatic is often identified as common rue (*Ruta graveolens*), there is scant evidence this plant native to the Mediterranean was imported in sufficient quantities throughout the medieval period to warrant widespread usage for the preservation of manuscripts.[3025] Despite this questionable identification, there were native Chinese plants also believed to have the ability to drive away library pests. One such plant was thoroughwort, which by the third century was reportedly crushed into a powder and scattered over the top of scrolls and garments.[3026] Additionally, the eighth century *Supplement to the Materia Medica* cites Cart-Halting Aromatic, possibly a type of loosestrife, as having

[3022] 辟惡生香。YTXY:9.463. In the context of medical treatment, *e* 惡, "evil," was often viewed as a pathogenic agent, as in "malign *qi*" (*eqi* 惡氣), but in this sense it could also refer to bad odor, see Zhang and Unschuld, *Dictionary of the Ben Cao Gang Mu*, 142.
[3023] 可以辟惡氣。YTXY:9.463.
[3024] YTXY:9.463; see also HC#2b.
[3025] See my comments to Yun Aromatic at HC#28.
[3026] See my comments to Yun Aromatic at HC#28 [sic]. Joseph Needham considered *yun* and thoroughwort (*lan*) as the only two plants used for the preservation of books in antiquity, of which the latter was no longer known as such by the Song, see Needham, Lu, and Huang, *Science and Civilisation,* Vol. 6, Part 1, 508.

the power to "drives away stench as well as insects, fish, and vermin" [HC#39a]. Finally, the tenth century *Materia Medica of Overseas Drugs* claims the wood of Bili Aromatic, possibly a species of *Platycarya*, "can be used as a roller for scrolls to ward off silverfish" [HC#37b]. Modern scholars have further identified many other *flora* that could be used to protect against household pests, such as silverfish, moths, boring beetles, termites, and so forth.[3027]

114) Scented Creek 香溪

[The *Records Narrating the Strange* states], "The former imperial palace of the Wu had a Scented Creek where Xi Shi[3028] would bathe. It was also called Cosmetics Creek."

吳宮故有香溪，乃西施浴處，又呼為脂粉溪。[3029]

115) Bedside Incense Lads 牀畔香童

The *Lost Affairs of the [Kaiyuan] and Tianbao Eras*[3030] [states], "Wang Yuanbao (ca. 8th cent.) enjoyed guests and visitors and devoted himself to magisterial extravagance. His [collection of] vessels, antiques, and clothing surpassed those of the princes and dukes and thus the ministers of the four regions admired him. Whenever he laid down in front of the bed curtains there were two carved images of small lads holding *boshan* censers [encrusted

[3027] See lengthy discussion in Needham, Lu, and Huang, *Science and Civilisation,* Vol. 6, Part 1, 471–508.
[3028] Xi Shi 西施 is considered one of the four great beauties (*sida meiren* 四大美人) of ancient China, who according to legend helped bring about the demise of the state of Wu in the fifth century BCE due to her beauty.
[3029] Cf. TPYL:8.981.855–856. The *Imperial Readings of the Taiping Era* cites the *Records Narrating the Strange*.
[3030] The *Lost Affairs of the Kaiyuan and Tianbao Eras* (*Kaiyuan Tianbao yishi* 開元天寶遺事) is a collection of anecdotes not preserved in the official histories concerning the reign of Emperor Xuanzong 玄宗 (r. 713–756) of the Tang. It was compiled by Wang Renyu 王仁裕 (880–956) and completed sometime after 925.

with] the seven jewels. From dark to day-break they would burn incense. Indeed, his vast wealth was such as this.

天寶遺事: 王元寶好賓客，務于華侈器玩，服用僭于王公，而四方之士盡歸仰焉。常於寢帳前，雕矮童二人，捧七寶博山香爐，自暝焚香徹曙，其驕貴如此。

116) Pavilion of Four Fragrances 四香閣

The *Lost Affairs of the [Kaiyuan] and Tianbao Eras* [states], "Yang Guozhong (d. 756) used aloeswood for his pavilion and sandalwood for his balustrade. Taking musk and frankincense, he had them sifted and mixed with clay to plaster and decorate [the walls]. In springtime, each wall of the pavilion was bordered by tree-peonies in full bloom. Whenever guests and friends congregated at the pavilion he gave them a flower. Even the Aloeswood Pavilion of the Forbidden Palace was far from comparable to such magnificence.

天寶遺事云：楊國忠用沉香為閣，檀香為欄，攬以麝香，乳香篩土和為泥飾。閣壁每于春時，木芍藥盛開之際，聚賓友于此閣上賞花焉。禁中沈香之亭，遠不侔此壯麗者也。

[COMMENTS] The high court official Yang Guozhong 楊國忠 (d. 756) is most famous for his familiar ties to the favored imperial consort, Yang Guifei 楊玉環 (719–756), and his feckless scheming in a ruinous, yet ultimately quelled, rebellion that led to his execution and that of his distant cousin, Consort Yang. The *Lost Affairs of the Kaiyuan and Tianbao Eras* records an anecdote not found in official imperil histories about the life of Yang Guozhong before the political tumult, presenting him as fond of extravagance and ostentation. His

pavilion, of which nothing else is known, was reportedly constructed with four valuable and fragrant substances, aloeswood [HC#3], sandalwood [HC#4], musk [HC#2], and frankincense [HC#9]. The former pair were used to construct and outfit the building, while the latter pair were crushed into plaster to decorate the walls.[3031] Naming the structure the Pavilion of Four Fragrances also subtly referenced the fact that any visitor would be assaulted from all four sides by perfumes and sweet scents. As we see from the description, if the olfactory stimulation came not from the expensive and rare constructions materials, then it came through the blooming tree-peonies surrounding the building. Ultimately, Yang Guozhong's pleasure building is compared favorably to the Aloeswood Pavilion [HC#104], a building erected under the order of the emperor himself.

117) Realm of Odors 香界

The *Śūraṃgama Sutra* [states], "Due to the arising of odors, [consciousness] takes odors as the perceptual base."

楞嚴經云：因香所生，以香爲界。[3032]

[COMMENTS] According to traditional Buddhist epistemology, when a sensory faculty comes into contact with its corresponding sensory object, in this case, the nose with odors, a specific sensory consciousness arises. Consequently, this consciousness, what we might call the perceptual processes of olfaction, is aware of the sensorial object which has come into contact with the sensory faculty.

[3031] Yang Guozhong's pavilion is noted in passing in Schafer, *Golden Peaches*, 165.
[3032] Cf. T945.116c07–08.

118) Fragrant Adornment Prince 香嚴童子

The *Śūraṃgama Sutra* states, "The Fragrant Adornment Prince addressed the Buddha saying, 'I [observed] all the *bhikṣus* burn aloeswood; its fragrance was serene as it entered my nose. It was neither wood nor emptiness, neither smoke nor fire, it went to no place and came from no place, and due to this, my thoughts vanished and I generated a wisdom without affliction, thus attaining arhatship.'"

楞嚴經云：香嚴童子白。佛言我諸比丘。燒水沈香。香氣寂然。來入鼻中。非木。非空。非煙。非火。去無所著。來無所從。從由是意。銷發明無。漏得阿羅漢。[3033]

119) "Traditions of Heavenly Aromatics" 天香傳 [partial][3034]

The use of fragrances goes back to distant antiquity where they were used as offerings to spirits and could be used to attain purity.[3035] The *yin*-sacrifice during the Three Dynasties [of Xia, Shang, and Zhou] was chiefly an offering of fragrances, and yet aloeswood and frankincense were not yet known.[3036] Scholars have transmitted, recorded, and compiled the praise of a multitude of fragrances, yet southernwood, millet, and *yu*-spiced *chang*-ale have not been so honored.

香之為用從上古矣，所以奉神明，所以達蠲潔。三代禋祀, 首惟馨之薦，而沉水，薰陸無聞焉。百家傳記萃眾芳之美，而蕭蒿鬱鬯不尊焉。

[3033] Cf. T945.125c22–26.

[3034] The editors of the *Siku quanshu* edition of Hong Chu's *Materia Aromatica*, as well as the editors of the unrevised Huacheng edition, omit this entry, see SKQS:844.232b03–04 and *Huacheng* edition, p. 1825, respectively. I have used the *Siku quanshu* edition of the *Newly Compiled Materia Aromatica* (*Xinzuan xiang pu* 新纂香譜) by to reconstitute a portion of this entry, see SKQS:844.333a07–b9. For more on the life and work of Ding Wei, see Liu, "Tianxiang zhuan"; Liu, *Songdai Xiangpu*, 150–56.

[3035] This refers to the purity of sacrifice (*jiesi* 潔祀), as was associated with performing the *yin*-sacrifice, see Chapter 1, Section 2.

[3036] This is a playful use of the word *wen*, meaning both "to hear" and "to smell."

The [*Record*] *of Rites* [states], 'These utmost offerings are not indulged for their taste, but valued for their *qi* aroma.' Thus, we know their use [of aromatics] was of the utmost importance, but [descriptions of] their gathering and processing are cursory and generalized, their names and realities are complicated, and their gradations and classifications are jumbled and fragmentary. Looking at the books of ancient emperors and the explanations found in Buddhist and Daoist scriptures we can catalogue what was [once] remote, praise what was considered crucial, itemize what was an utter jumble, and systematize what was lost.
禮云：至敬不享味貴氣臭也。是知其用至重，採製粗略，其名實繁而品類叢脞矣。觀乎上古帝皇之書，釋道經典之說，則記錄綿遠，贊頌嚴重，色目至眾，法度殊絕。

The Western Sage [i.e. the Buddha] says: "In great or small worlds, above and below, within and beyond, there are all kinds of fragrances."[3037] He also says, "The thousands of tens-of-thousands of kinds of blended aromatics, whether incense, pellets, powders, or pastes, or the fragrances of flowers, fruits, or trees, these are heavenly blends of aromatics."[3038] He also says, "[Along with] the divine aromatics in the heavens above there is also a Buddha world named Many Fragrances. Its scents, in comparison to the fragrances of the humans and heavenly beings of the ten directions, are the most supreme."[3039]
西方聖人曰：大小世界，上下內外，種種諸香。又曰：千萬種和香，若香，若丸，若末，若塗，以至華香，果香，樹香，天和合之香。又曰：天上諸天之香，又佛土國名

[3037] A minor rephrasing of Kumarajīva's translation of the *Lotus Sutra*; see original passage at T262.48b18–19.
[3038] A minor rephrasing of Kumarajīva's *Lotus Sutra*; see T262.48b19–23.
[3039] This is a pastiche and paraphrase of Kumarajīva's *Lotus Sutra* (T262.48b28) and Kumarajīva's *Vimalakīrti Sutra* (T475.552a11–13). The Buddha world is known in Sanskrit as *sarvagandhasugandha*, "all-fragrances good-fragrances."

眾香，其香比於十方人天之香，最為第一。

The books of the immortals [i.e. the Daoists] state, "The high sages burned Hundred Jewel Incense[3040], the August One of the Heavenly Perfected burnt the Thousand Blend Incense [HC#75], and the Yellow Emperor considered Sinking Elm [HC#55] and *mingjia*[3041] as incense." They also say, "When the Perfected immortals burn incense, all can smell it for a hundred *li*. The accumulated smoke becomes clouds, and the accumulated clouds become rain, thus giving the human realm that which they all collectively value: aloeswood and frankincense." Therefore, the scripture[3042] says, "Aloeswood is the firm [part] of the tree trunk." Another says, "As for aloeswood, when the sages descend in the evening, it is the aromatic in the censers held by the spirits who guide. The smoke raises more than a *zhang* high and its color is true red." Is this not an aromatic from the celestial heavens?"

仙書云：上聖焚百寶香，天真皇人焚千和香，黃帝以沉榆，蓂莢為香。又曰：真仙所焚之香，皆聞百里，有積煙成雲，積雲成雨，然則與人間所共貴者， 沉水，薰陸也。故經云：沉水堅株。又曰：沉水香，聖降之夕，神導從有捧爐香者，煙高丈餘，其色正紅。" 得非天上諸天之香耶?

[3040] Hundred Jewel Incense appears in the Daoist canon as part of a ritual for purifying the six senses in preparation for receiving instruction on the Golden Elixir 金丹 (DZ1067.13.10b), but this text postdates the life of Ding Wei, see Schipper and Verellen, *The Taoist Canon*, 1179–81. Discussion of a jeweled incense may obliquely refer to the high value of foreign aromatics, the hardened appearance of fragrant aromatics resins, or even the crushing of rare stones and metals in the preparation of powdered incense. Composed before 753, the *Scripture of Jade Purity of the Great Dao of the Most High* (*Taishang dadao yuqing jing* 太上大道玉清經) discusses a "hundred jeweled incense burner" 百寶香爐, see DZ1312.10.3b; for more on this text, see, Schipper and Verellen, *The Taoist Canon*, 527.

[3041] *Mingjia* is a mythical plant that grows in response to the virtuous conduct of a ruler, see my comments to Wei Aromatic at HC#60.

[3042] I have been unable to identify this text.

The *Precious Retreat of the Three Sovereigns*[3043] [states]: "According to the Recipe for Incense Beads [HC#106], this [requires] mixing and pulverizing [the aromatics] into many fine particulates. Afterwards, collect everything and stir with a pestle thirty-thousand times. Seal it inside a good vessel, then steam and mix. Divide and make this into pellets the size of beans. String the beads and place them in the sun. At dawn, burn the incense so it penetrates up into the heavens." In fact, aloeswood is considered the primary [ingredient] and frankincense is considered auxiliary.

三皇寶齋: 香珠法，其法雜而末之，色色至細，然後叢聚杵之三萬，緘以良器，載蒸載和，豆分而丸之，珠貫而暴[3044]之，旦日此香焚之，上徹諸天。蓋以沉水為宗，薰陸副之也。

Thus, know [aloeswood is what] the ancient sages venerated with the utmost solemnity. Therefore, the objects prepared were treasures and marvels without limit.

是知古聖欽崇之至厚，所以備物寶妙之無極。

[Omitted passage: SKQS:844.333b9–335b14]

120) Old Poem: "Singing of the Incense Burner" 古詩詠香爐[3045]

All seated around, not so loud!	四座且莫諠，
Please listen as I sing a song!	願聽歌一言。

[3043] For more on this text and the recipe it contains, see my comments to Incense Beads at HC#106.
[3044] Read 暴 as 曝.
[3045] I follow Kirkovas's translation with only stylistic changes, see Kirkova, "Sacred Mountains," 67. Another translation can be found in Birrell, *New Songs*, 32 ("The Bronze Censer").

Let me tell you of a bronze incense burner,	請說銅香爐，
Precipitous and rocky as the Southern Mountain.	崔嵬象南山。
Above, its branches are like pine and cypress,	上枝似松柏，
Below, its roots rest on a bronze dish.	下根據銅盤。
Carved patterns are each of a different kind,	雕文各異類，
Intricately worked and mutually interwoven.	離婁自相連。
Who could make such a vessel?	誰能為此器，
Only Gongshu Ban of Lu.[3046]	公輸與魯般。
Vermilion flames burn within it,	朱火然其中，
Azure smoke billows inside it,	青煙颺其間，
Upon the breeze, it enters into the lord's bosom.	順風入君懷。
None of you seated around could not be pleased!	四座莫不歡，
But the fragrant breeze cannot linger long,	香風難久居，
It is in vain, as it causes the sweet basil to disappear.	空令蕙草殘。[3047]

121) Liu Hui (482–502) of Qi: "Poem on Singing of the *Boshan* Censer" 齊劉繪詠博山香爐詩[3048]

An undulating tangle of thicket; what outstanding beauty!	參差鬱佳麗，

[3046] A famous craftsman of antiquity, see Kirkova, "Sacred Mountains," 67n.42. Both Kirkova and Birrell render the name as two people, see Kirkova, "Sacred Mountains," 67 and Birrell, *New Songs*, 32.
[3047] Cf. TPYL:6.703.515.
[3048] I follow Kirkovas's translation with only stylistic changes. I further point the reader to her informative annotations, see Kirkova, "Sacred Mountains," 74–75. I have also retained the textual variants of Hong Chu's version of this poem, it does not change the meaning in a substantial way.

Conjoined, clustered, and disorderly; how lovely!	合沓紛可憐。
Concealed in part, a thousand kinds of trees,	蔽虧千種樹，
Appearing and disappearing, a ten-thousand tier mountain.	出沒萬重山。
Above is carved the Prince of Zhou,	上鏤周王子，
Riding a crane, he mounts the purple smoke.	駕鶴乘紫煙。
Below, is an engraved dish and the might of dragons,	下刻盤龍勢，
Raising their heads, half-grasping lotus in their jaws.	矯首半銜蓮。
Beside them is the Beauty of the River Yi,	徬為伊水麗，
A patch of fungi appears among the cliffs.	芝蓋出岩間。
There are also the roaming maidens of the River Han,	復有漢游女，
Folding their wings and sporting their excessive beauty.	拾羽弄餘妍。
Glorious are the hues, with such a variety,	榮色何雜糅，
Like embroidered fabric, the enhance each other.	褥繡更相鮮。
River deer and stag, now prance, now stand,	麚麚或騰倚，
The forest is cold and dark, lush and sleepy.	林薄杳芊眠。
The hidden flowers are as if not in bloom,	掩華如不發，
The contained sweet basil is not yet lit.	含熏未肯然。
Wind issues from the trees all around the stairs,	風生四階樹，
Dew drops on the lotuses in the meandering pool.	露湛曲池蓮。
Cold insects fly in the nighttime room,	寒蟲飛夜室，
Autumn clouds inundate the morning sky.	秋雲没曉天。

122) Crown Prince Zhaoming (501–531) of Liang: "Rhapsody on the Bronze *Boshan* Incense Burner" 梁昭明太子銅博山香爐賦[3049]

Bestowed with the pure quality of the ultimate essence,	稟至精之純質，
Crafted are the secluded depths of the numinous mountain.	產靈嶽之幽深，
Traverse the wondrous principle of Ban Chui!	採[3050]般倕之妙旨[3051]，
Encounter the ingenious mind of Gongshu!	運公輸之巧心。
There are basil sashes and cliff recluses,	有蕙帶而岩隱，
Rainbow garments and ascending immortals.	亦霓裳而升僊。
Rendered are the steep heights of Mount Song,	寫嵩山之巃嵸，
Modeled is the lushness of Deng Forest.	象鄧林之芊眠。
At that time the azure smoke overtook the cold,	於時青煙司寒，
The dusk-red rays screened the sun.	夕光翳景。
Halcyon-plume curtains hang low,	翠帷已低，
the thoroughwort paste has not yet been put aside.	蘭膏未屏。
Inside the glimmering flames are bright,	炎蒸內耀，
outside the perfumed fragrance spreads.	芯芬外揚。
Similar in color to iridescent clouds,	似慶雲之呈色，
Like the shimmering lights of bright stars.	若景星之舒光。

[3049] While sometimes significantly different versions of this poem are in circulation, I have chosen to retain the wording as preserved by Hong Chu, with only slight modifications as seen in the *Imperial Readings of the Taiping Era*.
[3050] Read 深 as 經 following TPYL:6.703.515.
[3051] Read 旨 as 指 following TPYL:6.703.515.

Have faith in excellent reputations and beautiful objects, 信名嘉而用美，

For they will forever be cherished in the halls of splendor. 永為玩于華堂。[3052]

123) Liu Xiang (77–6 BCE) of Han: "Censer Inscription" 漢劉向薰爐銘[3053]

How excellent this proper vessel! 嘉此正氣[3054]，

Precipitous and rocky like a mountain. 嶄岩若山。

The top strings together Mt. Tai and Mt. Hua, 上貫太華，

And yet is held by a bronze dish.[3055] 承以銅盤。

It contains thoroughwort and musk, 中有蘭綺[3056]，

Vermilion flames and azure smoke! 朱火青煙。

124) Emperor Xianyuan (508–555) of Liang: "Censer Inscription" 梁孝元帝香爐銘[3057]

Storax, obscuring and dense, 蘇合氤氳，

Its soaring smoke is like a cloud. 飛煙若雲。

Sometimes heavy, sometimes faint, 時濃更薄，

Suddenly it gathers and then dissipates. 乍聚還分。

The fire is weak and difficult to burn out, 火微難燼，

[3052] Cf. TPYL:6.703.515.

[3053] I have profited from the translation of this inscription by Erickson, "Boshanlu," 15 and Kirkova, "Sacred Mountains," 66. A full translation and discussion of the inscription can be found in Schipper, *The Taoist Body*, 218n.12; Kirkova, "Sacred Mountains," 65–66.

[3054] Read 氣 as 器 following Kirkova, "Sacred Mountains," 66.

[3055] I have borrowed this reading from Richard Mather, see Erickson, "Boshanlu," 15.

[3056] Read 綺 as 麝 following Kirkova, "Sacred Mountains," 67.

[3057] Otherwise known as Emperor Yuan 元 (r. 552–555) of the Liang.

When the breeze is constant, it is easy to smell. 風長易聞。

Who claims this is the power of the Way, 孰云道力，

Or the perfume of compassion? 慈悲所薰。

125) Old Verse Poetry 古詩[3058]

[125a] "A Hundred Blend Incense in a *boshan* censer, saffron, storax, and *douliang*…"

[125b] "Red gauze funnel bedcurtains, at the four corners hang scenting sachets…"[3059]

[125c] "From opened boxes she gathers fragrant perilla[3060]…"[3061]

[125d] "The gold censer's sinking gleams die…"[3062]

[125e] "Gilt clay, storax…"[3063]

[125f] "Perfumed garments, mixed with the scent of jujube…"[3064]

[125g] "A cart of seven perfumes and crimson hubs…"[3065]

[125h] "Hundred Blend perfume for binding inside garments…"[3066]

[125a] 博山爐中百和香，鬱金蘇合及都梁。[3067]

[3058] All of the following are brief excerpts from different poems in the *New Songs of the Jade Terrace* anthology.
[3059] Slightly modified from Birrell, *New Songs*, 55.
[3060] *Su* 蘇 was a native Chinese plant with purple leaves and well-known for its fragrance. It might refer to a plant in the mint family, possibly *Perilla frutescens*, see Hua, Buell, and Unschuld, *Dictionary of the Ben Cao Gang Mu*, 426 (#1116).
[3061] Slightly modified from Birrell, *New Songs*, 118.
[3062] Birrell, 135.
[3063] Slightly modified from Birrell, 163.
[3064] Slightly modified from Birrell, 214.
[3065] Slightly modified from Birrell, 255.
[3066] Slightly modified from Birrell, 260.
[3067] Cf. YTXY:9.420. This verse is taken from Wu Jun's 吳均 (469–520) *yuefu* 樂府, "Travelling the Road is Difficult" (*Xinglu nan* 行路難), which was written in imitation of the work by Bao Zhao 鮑照 (ca. 414–466). It is preserved in the sixth century anthology, the *New Songs of the Jade Terrace*. A full translation of Wu Jun's poem can be found in Birrell, 251–52 and Kirkova, "Sacred Mountains," 70–71. For more on the life and works of this poet, see Knechtges and Chang, *Reference Guide*, Vol. 2, 1369–78. The poem of Bao Zhao is translated as discussed in Kirkova, "Sacred Mountains," 69–71.

[125b] 紅羅複斗帳，四角垂香囊。[3068]

[125c] 開奩集香蘇。[3069]

[125d] 金爐絶沈燎。[3070]

[125e] 金泥蘇合香。[3071]

[125f] 薰爐[3072]雜棗香。[3073]

[125g] 丹轂七車香[3074]。[3075]

[125h] 百和裛衣香。[3076]

[3068] Cf. YTXY:1.43. This verse is taken from an anonymous, untitled poem found in the *New Songs of the Jade Terrace*, see Birrell, *New Songs*, 53–62 (where it is titled with the first line, "A Peacock Southeast Flew"). A brief preface dates the work to around the end of the Eastern Han.
[3069] Cf. YTXY:4.143. This verse is taken from Pao Chao's "Dreaming of Home" (*Menghuan shi* 夢還詩) as found in the *New Songs of the Jade Terrace*; for full translation see Birrell, *New Songs*, 117–18.
[3070] Cf. YTXY:5.180. This verse is taken from Jiang Yan's 江淹 (444–505) "Unhappy Parting" (*Renyuan bie* 人怨別) as found in the *New Songs of the Jade Terrace*; for full translation see Birrell, 135.
[3071] Cf. YTXY:6.233. This verse is taken from Wu Jun's "The King of Qin Wraps a Gift Robe (*Qin wang juan yi* 秦王卷衣) as found in the *New Songs of the Jade Terrace*; for full translation see Birrell, 163.
[3072] Read 爐 as 衣, following YTXY:8.336.
[3073] Cf. YTXY:8.336. This verse is taken from Wang Xun's 王訓 (511–536) "If Only" (*Eryou yong* 爾有詠) as found in the *New Songs of the Jade Terrace*; for full translation see Birrell, 214.
[3074] Read 七車香 as 七香車, following YTXY:9.427.
[3075] Cf. YTXY:9.427. This verse is taken from Xiao Gang's 蕭綱 (503–551) untitled work to the tune of the "Song of the Roosting Crow" (*Wuqi qu* 烏棲曲) as found in the *New Songs of the Jade Terrace*; for full translation see Birrell, 255 (where it is titled with the first line, "Black Ox, Crimson Hubs").
[3076] Cf. YTXY:9.435. This verse is taken from Wang Yun's 王筠 (481–549) "Travelling the Road is Difficult" (*Xinglu nan* 行路難), which was written in imitation of the work by Bao Zhao. It is preserved in the *New Songs of the Jade Terrace* and a full translation can be found in Birrell, 260.

[IV] Aromatic Recipes 香之法

[Section Four: Twenty-Two Entries]

126) Recipe for Fumigating the Royal Clothing of the Kings of Shu 蜀王薰御衣法

[Ingredients]: cloves, Jian Aromatic [second-tier aloeswood], aloeswood, sandalwood, musk (one *liang* each of above); onycha (three *liang*; processed in the standard method[3077])

丁香　　薧香　　沈香

檀香　　麝香 (已上各一兩)

甲香 (三兩制如常法。)

[Directions]: Take the above aromatic ingredients and crush them into a powder. Use pale crystalized honey[3078] and gently refine it; do not apply too much heat. It is then ready to use. Combine and mix [all ingredients] until evenly distributed. It is then ready to use.[3079]

右件香擣為末，用白沙蜜輕煉過，不得熱用，合和令勻，入用之。

[3077] As noted in Hong Shu's entry for onycha, this ingredient needs to be processed with alcohol and honey before use, see HC#35.

[3078] This refers to crystalized honey which is more granular in texture and pale white in color. According to the *Systematic Materia Medica*, the twelfth century Daoist pharmacologist, Kou Zongshi, comments this important point: "Since milk [clarified] sugar is called 'stone honey,' then the 'stone honey' in the *chong* division [of the *Materia Medica*] should not be called 'stone." The 'stone' graph is simply an error for 'white,' thus people nowadays call [honey], 'white granular honey.' Concealed fresh honey is gooey and yellow, while exposed honey is white and granular." 乳糖既曰石蜜，則蟲部石蜜，不當言石矣，石字乃白字誤耳，故今人尚言白沙蜜。蓋新蜜稀而黃，陳蜜白而沙也。In addition to differentiating between small, hardened sugar cakes, confusingly called "stone honey," and honey made by bees, Kou Zongshi distinguishes between fresh honey and aged honey which has naturally crystalized and turned pale. Hong Chu directs the perfumer to use the latter type. For more on the milk clarification of sugar and the production of sugar cakes, see Schafer, *Golden Peaches*, 152–54.

[3079] This recipe is briefly examined in King, *Garden of Paradise*, 91

[COMMENTS] There is disagreement over who the "kings of Shu" should refer. On one hand, Liu Jingmin believes the name should point to the rulers of the late medieval state of Shu, comprising most of present-day Sichuan, during the Five Dynasties and Ten Kingdoms period (907–979).[3080] On another hand, according to Yamada Kentarō, this recipe is one of several that are named in deference to China's illustrious and long history, thus Shu should be historically placed in antiquity.[3081] This would potentially point to the ancient state of Shu, also in Sichuan, that was conquered in 316 BCE.[3082] Both interpretations are feasible and have their merits, but I find favor with Yamada's speculation in this case, especially since there are other examples of anachronistic naming, such as the "Palace Aromatics of the *Jianning* Era of the Han" (*Han jianning gongzhong xiang* 漢建寧宮中香), and potentially the "Palace Aromatics of the *Kaiyuan* Era of the Tang" (唐開元宮中香).[3083]

Hong Chu's directions for this recipe, and many others below, include the use of honey. Honey functions as an agglutinant and minor adjuvant for the finished incense product. It primarily allows the incense blend to be formed into pellets or other shapes that could be placed atop burning coals. In the entry above, Hong Chu calls for the honey to be refined (*lian* 煉) which involves the application of gentle heat.[3084]

[3080] Liu, "Hong Chu ji qi Xiangpu," 61.
[3081] Yamada, *Tōa kōryō shi kenkyū*, 177.
[3082] Yamada, *Tōa kōryō shi kenkyū*, 177.
[3083] SKQS:844.271b16–272a05 and SKQS:844.272a06–09, respectively.
[3084] More specific directions can be found in later materia aromatica, see e.g. SKQS:844.265a16–b5; see also the discussion of honey in Yamada, *Tōa kōryō shi kenkyū*, 176–77; Liu, *Songdai Xiangpu*, 276–78.

127) Perfume Recipe for the Bed Curtains of Li [Yu], the Ruler of Jiangnan 江南李王帳中香法[3085]

[Directions]: Use one *liang* of aloeswood and file it down into a fine powder. Add this to the extracted juice of ten mashed goose pears, then using a silver vessel to contain [the ingredients] steam [the liquid] three times. When the pear juice is dried it is then ready to use.

右件用沈香一兩細剉，加以鵝梨十枚，研取汁，於銀器內盛，卻蒸三次，梨汁乾即用之。

128) Recipe for Blended Incense from Tang Huadu Temple 唐化度寺牙香法[3086]

[Ingredients]: aloeswood (one and a half *liang*), sandalwood (five *liang*), storax (one *linag*), onycha (one *liang* after boiling[3087]), camphor (half *liang*), musk (half *liang*)

沈香 (一兩半)	白檀香 (五兩)	蘇合香 (一兩)
甲香 (一兩煮)	龍腦 (半兩)	麝香 (半兩)

[Directions]: Take the above aromatic ingredients and file or grind them into a powder. Use a horse tail mesh to sift [the powder]. Once the refined honey is incorporated and mixed the product is ready to use.

[3085] Read 王 as 主. This recipe was use to scent the fabric canopies and curtains of the royal palaces, here attributed to Li Yu 李煜 (937–978), the third and final ruler of the Southern Tang (937–976), later simply referred to as the state of Jiangnan. A variant recipe is recorded where aloeswood and sandalwood powder are placed inside a hollowed-out pears which are then steamed. Afterwards the pear skin is removed and the perfumed pear flesh is made into a power and used as incense. For more on these recipes, see Liu, *Songdai Xiangpu*, 311–12.

[3086] This temple is located in the northwest of Chang'an. This recipe is also noted in Schafer, *Golden Peaches*, 159; King, *Garden of Paradise*, 91.

[3087] This refers to the "standard method" noted in HC#126.

右件香細剉擣為末，用馬尾篩羅，煉蜜溲和得所用之。

129) Recipe for Blended Incense from Yong Wenche, the Gentleman of the Interior 雍文徹郎中牙香法

[Ingredients]: aloeswood, sandalwood, onycha, and Jian Aromatic [second-tier aloeswood] (one *liang* [each]); Yellow-Aged [third-tier aloeswood] (one *liang*), camphor and musk (half *liang* each)

沈香	檀香	甲香
薄荷香 (各一兩)	黃熟香 (一兩)	龍麝[3088] (各半兩)

[Directions]: Take the above ingredients, crush and sift them into a powder. Using refined honey, toss and mix [all ingredients]. Once evenly distributed, place inside a new porcelain vessel to store. Seal and bury [the vessel] underground for one month. After digging it out, [the blend] can be used.

右件擣羅為末，煉蜜拌和，匀入新瓷器中，貯之密封埋地中一月，取出用。

130) Floriate Incense Recipe of the Duke of Yan'an 延安郡公藥香法

[Ingredients]: figwort (half *jin*; wash to remove dirt, then boil in water inside a silver vessel until cooked; dump out, dry off, and add into a pan to pan fry until a slight amount of smoke is released); spikenard (four *liang*; remove excess foliage and dirt and weight to the correct amount; file this down finely); sandalwood (filed down) and musk (take the pods, but wait

[3088] I presume this to be a shorthand for two ingredients, Dragon Brain Aromatic, i.e. camphor, and musk.

before making them into a powder; according to the method, take frankincense and grind into a fine powder, then incorporate and do the same with the musk[3089]) (two *jian* for each of the above three ingredients)

玄參 (半斤，淨洗去塵土，於銀器中以水煮令熟，控乾，加入銚中，慢火炒，令微煙出。)

甘松 (四兩，揀去雜草，塵土方秤定，細剉之。)　　白檀香 (剉)

麝香 (顆者，俟別藥成末，方入研的乳香細研，同麝入。)　(上三味各二錢)

[Directions]: Take all [ingredients], of fresh and good quality, and crush and sift them into a powder. Using refined honey mix [all ingredients] until evenly distributed. Form into pellets the size of chicken heads. For each pellet, use one *liang* of powder and one *liang* of refined honey. Before forming into pellets, stir with pestle in a mortar one hundred times. Seal the pellets in oil and store them in a porcelain vessel. Soon thereafter one can take them and burn them.

右並新好者，杵羅為末，煉蜜和匀；丸如雞頭大，每藥末一兩，使熟[3090]蜜一兩；未丸前再入，杵臼百餘下；油單密封；貯瓷器中，旋取燒之。

131) Incense Paste Offered to the Buddha 供佛濕香

[Ingredients]: sandalwood (two *liang*), sweet basil, Jian Aromatic [second-tier aloeswood],

[3089] The translation for preparing the musk pods is tentative.
[3090] Read 熟 as 煉.

patchouli, wild angelica, clove bark[3091] and sweetened ginseng (one *liang* each); spikenard and frankincense (half *liang* each); saltpeter[3092] (one *fen*)

檀香 (二兩)	零陵香	藖香
藿香	白芷	丁香皮
甜參 (各一兩)	甘松	乳香 (各半兩)
消石 (一分)		

[Directions]: Take the above ingredients and apply the standard methods of breaking, filing, roasting, and crushing them into a fine powder. Separately, take eight *liang* of lemongrass and break and split [the reeds], removing the mud. Roast it until dry and then use fire to incinerate it. When the fire is about to die out, immediately cover it with basin. Surround the basin mouth with hand towels and do not allow air to pass through. Remove when cooled. Take the lemongrass ash and sift it, creating a powder. Bring all the previous aromatics together in one place and one-by-one pour them into a refined good honey. Once mixed together, again pour this into a mortar and stir it until it is flexible and firm. Store the final product in a vessel that does not leak. Soon thereafter one can take it and burn it.

右件依常法事。治碎剉焙乾，擣為細末，別用白茅香八兩，碎劈去泥，焙乾，用火燒；候火焰欲絕，急以盆蓋，手巾圍盆口，勿令通氣；放冷。取茅香[3093]灰，擣為末，

[3091] Most medieval Chinese treated this as the bark of the clove tree that was also effective in treating toothaches. Due to the existence of the reputed "chimera tree," whose flowers could be turned into cloves and whose bark constituted cinnamon, it is possible that "clove bark" referred to cinnamon, see Ptak, "Cloves," 3; Schafer, *Golden Peaches*, 318n.177.

[3092] Also known as niter, this is a soluble salt (cognate *xiaoshi* 消石 is literally "solvent mineral") that was more commonly found as a medicinal ingredient employed by alchemists for it fluxing properties, see Schafer, *Golden Peaches*, 181, 218–19. When mixed with hot water it can be found in early Han medical treatises as a treatment for wounds, see Harper, *Early*, 227.

[3093] Read 茅香 as 白茅香.

與前香一處，逐旋入經煉好蜜，相和，重入藥，臼擣令軟硬得所，貯不津器中，旋取燒之。

132) Recipe for Blended Incense 牙香法

[Ingredients]: aloeswood, sandalwood, frankincense, Dark Cassia [branch aloeswood], lakawood, onycha (boil for a short time with ash and juices, then remove [from the heat] and allow it to cool; steep in fresh water overnight then remove [from the water] and dry over a fire), camphor, and musk (half *liang* for above eight ingredients)

沈香	白檀香	乳香
青桂香	降真香	甲香 (灰汁煮少時，取出放冷，用甘水浸一宿取出，令焙乾。)
	龍腦	麝香 (已上八味，各半兩)

[Directions]: Crush and sift them into a powder. Using refined honey toss [all ingredients] until evenly distributed. [First?] separate the camphor and musk and place them into a clean vessel and grind them into a fine powder. Incorporate [all ingredients] until evenly distributed. It is then ready to use.

擣羅為末，煉蜜拌令勻。右別將龍腦，麝香於淨器中研細，入令勻，用之。

133) Another Recipe for Blended Incense 又牙香法

[Ingredients]: Yellow-Aged [third-tier aloeswood], Jian Aromatic [second-tier aloeswood], and aloeswood (five *liang* each); sandalwood, sweet basil, patchouli, spikenard, and clove bark (three *liang* each); musk and onycha (three *liang* [each]; use a yellow mud paste and

boil [with onycha] for one day, afterwards, use alcohol and boil for one day); saltpeter and camphor (three *fen* each); frankincense (half *liang*)

黃熟香	棧香	沈香 (各五兩)
檀香	零陵香	藿香
甘松	丁香皮 (各三兩)	麝香
甲香 (三兩，用黃泥漿煮一日後，用酒煮一日。)		硝石
龍腦 (各三分)	乳香 (半兩)	

[Directions]: Take the above ingredients and separate out the saltpeter, camphor, frankincense, and musk and grind them together into a fine powder. The take [the other] aromatics and crush and sift them into a powder. First use storax oil and a single tea plant stem as a pestle, then incorporate into two *jin* of honey that has been refined. Blend until evenly distributed. Store this inside porcelain and bury in the ground for a month. Exhume it and it is ready to use.

右件除硝石，龍腦，乳，麝同研細外，將諸香擣，羅為散，先用蘇合香油一茶腳許，更入煉過蜜二斤，攪和令勻，以瓷合出貯之，埋地中一月，取出用之。

134) Another Recipe for Blended Incense 又牙香法

[Ingredients]: aloeswood (four *liang*), sandalwood (five *liang*), [Freshly]-Produced Aromatic [fourth-tier aloeswood] (four *liang*), patchouli, sweet basil, and spikenard (four *liang* each of above); clove bark and onycha (two *fen* [each]); musk and camphor (three *fen* [each]); sweetgrass (four *liang*; burned to ash)

沈香 (四兩)	檀香 (五兩)	結香[3094] (四兩)
藿香	零陵香	甘松 (已上各四兩)
丁香皮	甲香 (各二分)	麝香
龍腦 (各三分)	茅香 (四兩燒灰)	

[Directions]: Take the above ingredients and make them into a fine powder. Using refined honey mix [all ingredients] until evenly distributed. It is then ready to use.

右件為細末，煉蜜和勻用之。

135) Another Recipe for Blended Incense 又牙香法

[Ingredients]: Freshly-Produced Aromatic [fourth-tier aloeswood], Jian Aromatic [second-tier aloeswood], sweet basil, and spikenard (three *liang* [each]); patchouli, cloves, onycha (one *liang* [each]); musk (one *jian*)

生結香	薾香	零陵香
甘松各 (三兩)	藿香	丁香皮
甲香各 (一兩)	麝香 (一錢)	

[Directions:] Take the above as coarse powder. Using refined honey that has been cooled, mix [all ingredients] until evenly distributed. After cellaring it according to standard methods[3095], burn it.

[3094] Read 結香 as 生結香.

[3095] See Method for Cellaring Aromatics at HC#145.

右為粗末，煉蜜放冷和匀，依常法窖過，蒸之。

136) Another Recipe for Blended Incense 又牙香法

[Ingredients]: sandalwood and figwort (three *liang* each); spikenard (two *liang*), frankincense, camphor, and musk (half *liang* each; ground separately)

檀香　　玄參 (各三兩)　　甘松 (二兩)

乳香　　龍麝 (各半兩另研)

[Directions] First take the sandalwood and figwort and file them into a fine powder, then place them into a silver vessel and submerge in water. With a low heat, boil the water until it evaporates and dry [the ingredients] with heat. Take the spikenard at the same time and crush and sift it into a powder. Subsequently follow with the frankincense powder and so forth. Bring [everything] together and using fresh honey mix until evenly distributed. After a duration of cellaring it is then ready to use.

右先將檀，玄參剉細，盛於銀器內，以水浸，慢火煮水，盡取出焙乾，與甘松同擣羅為末，次入乳香末等，一處用生蜜和匀，久窖然後用之。

137) Another Recipe for Blended Incense 又牙香法

[Ingredients:] sandalwood (eight *liang*; finely split into chips and soak overnight in clear wax tea, then dump them out and dry over a fire; use honey mixed with alcohol and immerse [the materials] again overnight, then roast over a low heat), aloeswood (three *liang*), Freshly-Produced Aromatic [fourth-tier aloeswood] (four *liang*), camphor and musk (half *liang* each);

onycha (one *liang*; first boil it with ash, then boil it with fresh soil, then boil it with honey and alcohol, and after straining it is ready to use)

檀香 (八兩細劈作片子，以臢[3096]茶清浸一宿，控出焙令幹，用蜜酒中拌，令得所再浸一宿，慢火焙乾。)　沈香 (三兩)　生結香 (四兩)

龍腦　麝香 (各半兩)　甲香 (一兩，先用灰煮，次用一生土煮，次用酒蜜煮，濾出用。)

[Directions:] From the above, take the camphor and musk and grind them separately, then crush and sift all of the aromatics and incorporate them into fresh honey, tossing until evenly distributed. Save in a porcelain vessel and cellar it underground for more than a month. Then take it out.

右將龍，麝另研外，諸香同擣羅，入生蜜，拌勻，以瓷罐貯，窖地中月餘取出。

138) Recipe for Incense Seals 印香法

[Ingredients:] Jia Jian Aromatic[3097] and sandalwood (half *liang* each); lemongrass (two *liang*), patchouli (one *fen*), spikenard, licorice root, and frankincense (half *liang* each); Jian Aromatic [second-tier aloeswood] (two *liang*), musk (four *jian*), onycha (one *fen*), camphor (one *jian*), aloeswood (half *liang*)

夾馥香　白檀香 (各半兩)　白茅香 (二兩)

藿香 (一分)　甘松　甘草

乳香 (各半兩)　馥香 (二兩)　麝香 (四錢)

[3096] Read 臢 as 臘.
[3097] This might refer to Jian Aromatic with dark striations, see Jian Aromatic at HC#22.

甲香 (一分)　　龍腦 (一錢)　　沉香 (半兩)

[Directions:] From the above, separate the camphor, musk, and frankincense and grind them, then crush and sift all [ingredients] into a powder. Toss and mix until evenly distributed. It is then ready to use.

右除龍，麝，乳香別研，都擣羅為末，拌和令勻，用之。

139) Another Recipe for Incense Seals 又印香法

[Ingredients:] Yellow-Aged Aromatic [third-tier aloeswood](six *jin*), nutsedge (five *liang*), clove bark (five *liang*), patchouli, sweet basil, sandalwood, and wild angelica (four *liang* each); jujubes (half a *jin*, dried), sweetgrass (two *jin*), fennel (two *liang*), spikenard (half a *jin*), frankincense (one *liang*), Freshly-Produced Aromatic [fourth-tier aloeswood](four *liang*)

黃熟香 (六斤)　　香附子 (五兩)　　丁香皮 (五兩)

藿香　　零陵香　　檀香

白芷 (各四兩)　　棗 (半斤焙)　　茅香 (二斤)

茴香 (二兩)　　甘松 (半斤)　　乳香 (一兩)

生結香 (四兩)

[Directions:] Crush and sift the above [ingredients] into a fine powder. Heat it according to the standard method. Then it is ready to use.

右擣羅細末，燒如常法，用之。

140) Recipe for Fragrant Powder Applied to the Body 傅身香粉法[3098]

[Ingredients:] zircon powder, costus, ephedra, monkshood, spikenard, patchouli, and sweet basil (each of the above divided into equal parts)

英粉　　青木香　　麻黃根

附子　　甘松　　藿香

零陵香 (已上各等分。)

[Directions:] Take the above ingredients and separate out the zircon powder, then crush and sift all into a fine powder. Fill a new silk pouch and after bathing, apply it to the body.

右件除英粉外，同擣羅為細末，用生絹袋盛，浴了傅之。

141) Recipe for Plum Blossom Incense 梅花香法[3099]

[Ingredients:] spikenard and sweet basil (each one liang); sandalwood and fennel (half *liang* each), cloves (one hundred buds), camphor (a pinch)

甘松　　零陵香 (各一兩)　　檀香

茴香 (各半兩)　　丁香 (一百枚)　　龍腦 (少許)

[Directions] Take the above and make them into a fine powder. Using refined honey combine and mix [all ingredients]. It can be used either dry or wet.[3100]

[3098] The use of scented cosmetics, which Liu Jingmin trances back to the Eastern Han, is discussed in Liu, *Songdai Xiangpu*, 328–30.
[3099] An incense blend created to simulate the scent of plum blossoms.
[3100] Wet and dry refer to the relative moisture of the blend. This aspect can be modulated to some degree and impacts the burning speed of the incense.

右為細末，煉蜜令合和之，乾濕得中用。

142) Perfume Recipe for Garments 衣香法

[Ingredients] sweet basil (six *jin*), spikenard and sandalwood (ten *liang* each); clove bark (half *liang*), Yulan magnolia (half *liang*), fennel (one *fen*)

零陵香 (六斤)	甘松	檀香 (各十兩)
丁香皮 (半兩)	辛夷 (半兩)	茴香 (一分)

[Directions] Take the above and crush into a powder and incorporate into a little bit of camphor and musk. Then it is ready to use.

右擣為末，入龍麝少許，用之。

143) Method for Cellaring Alcohol and Camphor Pellets 窖酒龍腦丸法

[Ingredients] camphor and musk (two ingredients, grind together); cloves, costus, cassia, black pepper, red beans, white ginger lily, and wild angelica (one *fen* of each above); *mabo* (a pinch).

龍	麝 (二味同研)	丁香
木香	官桂	胡椒
紅豆	縮砂	
白芷 (已上各一分)	馬哱 (少許)	

[Directions] Take the camphor and musk and grind them separately, then crush everything into a fine powder and form into pellets the size of cherries using honey. Take one *dou* of alcohol and place a single pellet inside. Seal it closed and hide it for three to five days, then open it and drink it, its scent will be especially fragrant and beautiful.

右除龍，麝另研外，同擣為細末，蜜為丸，和如櫻桃大；一斗酒置一丸於其中，却封繫，令密三五日，開飲之，其味特香美。

144) Recipe for Globes of Incense 毬子香法[3101]

[Ingredients] tree moss (one *liang*; this is the green coating atop pine trees), sour jujubes (one *sheng*; place them in a little water and grind them, then take a single bowl of this juice and simmer it until it becomes a paste; it is then ready to use), cloves, sandalwood, sweetgrass, nutsedge, and wild angelica (half *liang* each of the five ingredients); cardamom and camphor (a pinch)

艾蒻 (一兩，松樹上青衣是也。)	酸棗 (一升，入水少許研，取汁一碗，煎成膏用。)	
丁香	檀香	茅香
香附子	白芷 (五味，各半兩)	草荳蔻
龍腦 (少許)		

[Directions] Take the camphor and grind it separately, then crush and sift everything. Take

[3101] There are some potential issues of terminology that should be noted here. This recipe is for making incense pellets, which so happen are also made the same size as incense beads, but which are not strung together. As indicated by the instructions above, the use of the term globe or ball not only refers to the finished shape of the product, but also to the spherical plume of smoke the incense creates. This terminology is also distinct from round incense burners known in the later medieval period as scenting globes (*xiang qiu*), as well as fragrance balls (also *xiang qiu*) which are to be tossed around in play; for more on these latter two items see my comments to the Incense Burner Amid the Coverlets at HC#101.

the jujube paste and refine with honey, combine and mix everything. Place this into a mortar and stir with a pestle until it is no longer sticky, then stop stirring. Form into pellets the size of parasol tree seeds.[3102] Burn each pellet for as long as one desires, the smoke will truly rise up as a single spherical plume and when it moves [the smoke plume] will not disperse.

右除龍腦另研外，都擣羅，以棗膏與熟[3103]蜜合和得中，入臼杵，令不粘杵即止；丸如梧桐子大。每燒一丸，欲盡，其煙直上如一毬子，移時不散。

145) Method for Cellaring Aromatics 窖香法[3104]

In general, when blending perfumes, one must cellar them. This appreciates the value of dry and wet [blends] as is suitable. After making each blend, take the appropriate amount and using a vessel that does not leak[3105], store it. Seal [the vessels] using wax and paper and bury them in a clean room of the house three to five *cun* deep. They can be recovered after more than a month. On the appropriate day, dig out [the vessels] and individually unseal and open them. When one takes out [the perfume] and burns it, the scent will be astonishingly fragrant.[3106]

凡和香，須入窖，貴其燥濕得宜也。每合香和訖約多少，用不津器貯之，封之以蠟紙，於淨室屋中，入地三五寸，痊之月餘，日取出，逐旋開取然之，則其香尤旖旎也。

[3102] This is also the metrological standard for making incense beads, see HC#106.
[3103] Read 熟 as 煉.
[3104] See brief discussion in Liu, *Songdai Xiangpu*, 396–97.
[3105] The implication here is that the vessel has no cracks or irregularities that, once sealed with wax and buried, would allow liquid or air into or out of the vessel.
[3106] Cf. SKQS:844.266a04–10.

[COMMENTS] The process of cellaring (*yin* 窨) involved hermetically sealing aromatic blends inside jars and burying them underground, typically for around a month. The stable temperature and humidity of the controlled microclimate allows the blends to mellow and mature, creating a more harmonized and complex bouquet of scents. Cellaring is explicitly directed for around half of Hong Chu's recorded incense blends [HC#129, 130, 131, 133, 135, 136, 137, 143], clearly indicating the popularity of this practice among perfumers of the Song. This method of age-cellaring is first described in the now lost *Materia Aromatica* of Shen Li, but portions are preserved in Chen Jing's 陳敬 (ca. 13th cent.) *Newly Compiled Materia Aromatica* of the late Song. Although not evident from the entry above, Hong Chu has preserved the second half of Shen Li's instructions; the first half runs as such:

> All aromatics are not the same. Wet ones are easy to blend, but dry ones are difficult to harmonize. Soft ones burn quickly, while firm ones have delayed transformations. When refining [aromatics] with fire, one then releases their scents. Therefore, one must use clean vessels that are wiped thoroughly and dry to store and cellar [the aromatics]. Stash them in a hole dug into the ground, then their coarser aromatic qualities will [co-]penetrate and no longer be released. Newly blended aromatics must be cellared…[3107]
> 香非一體，濕者易和，燥者難調，輕軟者燃速，重實者化遲。以火煉結之，則走洩其氣，故必用淨器，拭極乾貯窨。蜜[3108]掘地藏之，則香性粗入不復離解。新和香必須窨。

The use of cellaring also appears in religious scriptures. The Daoist recipe for Nine Blend Incense, preserved in the Tang-era *Protocols for the Section of Ritual Registers of the Zhengyi Canon*, directs the adept to seal the finished blend inside a vessel for three days and three nights before use [HC#66]. Furthermore, a Buddhist recipe known in Dunhuang documents as "Avalokiteśvara Bodhisattva's Method for the Utmost Marvelous Incense Pill" also directs the adept to cleanse incense pellets with scented water and bury them

[3107] Cf. SKQS:844.266a05–07; see also Liu, *Songdai Xiangpu*, 469.
[3108] Read 蜜 as 密.

underground for thirty-seven days.[3109] Moreover, the late sixth century *Sutra on the Spell of Five Thousand Five Hundred Buddha Names for Dispelling Obstructions and Extinguishing Sin* suggests something similar, instructing the perfumer to wipe the incense with scented oil before storing it inside a stone vessel.[3110] While we do not know when cellaring aromatics became commonplace, but process similar to cellaring, when a vessel is sealed and buried, is noted in the Mawangdui medical manuscripts from the second century BCE.[3111]

146) Method for Perfuming [Garments] with Aromatics 薰香法[3112]

When perfuming garments, take one large bowl of boiling water and place it under the diffusion cage. Take the garment to be fumigated and drape it over the top [of the cage]. Allow the steam to pass through [the garment] so the fine perfumes can pervade into the garments and not easily disperse.[3113] Afterwards, in a censer, burn incense with single charcoal piece [HC#147] covered in ash. Or use a thin silver sheet, [an option] which is particularly elegant.[3114] Place the incense [under the cage] so it fumigates [the garment], constantly causing the smoke to come in contact with it. When fumigation is finished, fold the garments and store them overnight. When they are worm [the fragrance] will linger for several days.

[3109] See discussion in Chapter 4, Section 8.
[3110] T443.338a04–05; see also my comments to frankincense at HC#9.
[3111] Harper, *Early*, 335.
[3112] For garment perfuming, see Liu, *Songdai Xiangpu*, 262–65.
[3113] The belief is that a steamed fabric that is slightly damp will more readily absorb the perfume.
[3114] This was to shield the incense pellets from direct contact with the burning charcoal and avoided the creation of a strong burnt odor, see Yamada, *Tōa kōryō shi kenkyū*, 181; Guoli gugong bowuyuan, *Xiangju tulu*, 26, 113n.63; Liu, *Songdai Xiangpu*, 399. See also the comments in Horiguchi and Jung, "Kōdō," 73.

凡薰衣，以沸湯一大甌，置薰籠下，以所薰衣覆之，令潤氣通徹，貴香入衣難散也。然後於湯爐中，燒香餅子一枚，以灰蓋或用薄銀碟子尤妙。置香在上薰之，常令煙得所。薰訖，疊衣，隔宿衣之，數日不散。

147) Recipe for Making Charcoal for Incense 造香餅子法[3115]

[Ingredients]: Softened charcoal (three *jin*), hollyhock leaves or flowers (one and a half *jin*; the best kind are sticky).

軟炭 (三斤)　　蜀葵葉或花 (一斤半貴其粘)

[Directions]: Take the ingredients above and crush them until evenly distributed. Take the powder and form it into pellets or further still incorporate it into a delicate paste. Each should be the size of a marble. Flatten them into cakes and dry them in the sun. After storing them inside a porcelain vessel [HC#145], unseal [the vessel] and burn them. They are ready for use. If one has no hollyhock, then take half the amount of charcoal and incorporate safflower, crushing them together. Mixing this with a delicate paste is also possible.

右同擣令勻，如末可丸，更入薄糊少許，每如彈子大，捍作餅子曬乾，貯瓷器內，逐旋燒用。如無葵，則以炭末中半入紅花滓同擣，用薄糊和之亦可。

[3115] *Xiang bing* 香餅 could refer to "incense cakes," or small, flattened discs made of incense that can be burned. In this case, however, *xiang bing* refers to charcoal appropriate for burning incense; see comments in Liu, *Songdai Xiangpu*, 398–399.

Postscript[3116]

I have recently examined the *Materia Aromatica* of Shen Li and regret that it is not comprehensive. I have thought to expand and rectify it, thus I have composed an addendum to [Shen Li's] catalogue, divided into five sections.[3117]

余頃見沈立之香譜，惜其不完，思廣而正之，因作後譜，拆為五部。

[3116] This postface, preserved as part of Zeng Zao's twelfth century florilegium entitled the *Leishuo*, is not part of the *Siku quanshu* edition of the *Materia Aromatica*. The postscript has been reproduced in Shang, "Xiang houpu," 7. For a facsimile of the passage from the printed *Leishuo*, see Shang, 32 (illustration 4.2). Some consider this postscript to be the work of Zeng Zao, but Shang has shown that to be inaccurate, see Shang, "Xiang houpu," 6–8.

[3117] The *Materia Aromatica* was originally divided into five sections, see Shang, "Xiang houpu"; see also introductory chapter to the translation.

Appendix 1: Pre-Imperial Native Chinese Aromatics

Wang Yingzhu, Ma Qinglin, and Li Yanxiang[3118]	**Fu Jingliang**[3119]	**Liu Jingmin**[3120]	**Joseph Needham and Gwei-Djen Lu**[3121]	**Common Name**
Flora				
ai 艾 [*Artemisia argyi*]	*ai* 艾 (*Artemisia* Spp.)	-----	-----	mugwort
xiao 蕭 [*Artemisia subdigitata*]	*xiao* 蕭 (*Artemisia* Spp.)	-----	-----	southernwood
fan 蘩 [*Artemisia sieversiana*]	-----	-----	-----	white artemisia
hao 蒿 [*Artemisia carvifolia*]	-----	-----	-----	green artemisia
lou 蒌 [*Artemisia selengensis*]	-----	-----	-----	water artemisia
pin 蘋[3122] [*Marsilea quadrifolia*]	-----	-----	-----	pepperwort
mao 茅 [*Imperata cylindrica*]	*mao* 茅 (*Cymbopogon* Spp.)	-----	*mao* 茅 (citronella)	cogongrass/ lemongrass
pu 蒲 [*Typha latifolia*]	-----	-----	-----	bulrush
lan 蘭 [*Eupatorium japonicum*]	*lan* 蘭 (*Eupatorium* Spp. or member of *Orchidaceae* family)	*lanxiang* 蘭香	-----	thoroughwort
jiao 椒 [*Zanthoxylum bungeanum*]	*jiao* 椒 (*Zanthoxylum* Spp.)	-----	-----	Sichuan pepper
shi 蓍 [*Achillea alpina*]	-----	-----	-----	yarrow
chang 鬯 [ale spiced with *Curcuma aromatica*]	*yu* 郁 (*Curcuma* spp.)	*yujin* 鬱金	-----	turmeric (spiced *chang*-ale)
-----	*hui* 蕙 (*Lycopus* spp. or *Ocimum* spp.)	*huicao* 蕙草 & *xunxiang* 薰香[3123]	*luole xiang* 羅勒香 (basil)	sweet basil
-----	*gui* 桂 (*Cinnamomum* Spp.)	-----	*guixiang* 桂香 (cassia)	cassia

[3118] Wang, Ma, and Li, "Zhongguo gudai xiangliao," 64. All scientific nomenclature for Wang, Ma, and Li has been added according to the identifications made in Pan, *Shijing*.
[3119] Fu, *Xiang wenhua*, 15–16. Fu provides his own botanical referents.
[3120] Liu, *Songdai Xiangpu*, 19.
[3121] Needham and Lu, *Science and Civilisation in China,* Vol. 5, Part 2, 136–37. Needham and Lu provide their own botanical referents.
[3122] Pan identifies the homonym *ping* 苹 as *Anaphalis margaritacea*, see Pan, *Shijing*, 219.
[3123] *Huicao* is now generally regarded as synonymous with *xunxiang*. Liu undoubtedly listed these plants separately because the editors of the *Imperial Readings of the Taiping Era*, the encyclopedia from which she draws, also classified them separately.

Wang Yingzhu, Ma Qinglin, and Li Yanxiang[3118]	**Fu Jingliang**[3119]	**Liu Jingmin**[3120]	**Joseph Needham and Gwei-Djen Lu**[3121]	**Common Name**
-----	*zhi* 芷 (*Angelica* Spp.)	*baizhi* 白芷	-----	wild angelica
-----	*mulan* 木蘭 (*Magnolia* spp.)		-----	Mulan magnolia
-----	*xinyi* 辛夷 (flower buds of *Magnolia* spp.)	-----	-----	Yulan magnolia
-----		*yunxiang* 芸香	-----	goldenbanner
-----	-----	*miwu* 蘼蕪	-----	Sichuan lovage sprouts
-----	-----	*qieche* 藒車	-----	loosestrife
-----	-----	*duheng* 杜衡	-----	wild ginger
-----	-----	*quanxiang* 荃香	-----	calamus
-----	-----	-----	*guangmu xiang* 廣木香 (putchuk [costus])	costus
-----	-----	-----	*gansong xiang* 甘松香 (spikenard)	spikenard
-----	-----	-----	*zhangnao* 樟腦 (chang camphor)	common camphor
-----	-----	-----	*zhizi xiang* 梔子香 (gardenia)	gardenia
-----	-----	-----	*dunou xiang* 篤耨香 (terebinth)	terebinth
-----	-----	-----	*huixiang* 茴香 (anise)	anise
Fauna				
-----	*she* 麝 (*Moschus* Spp.)	*she* 麝	*she* 麝 (musk)	musk
-----	-----	-----	*lingmao xiang* 靈貓香 (civet)	civet
-----	-----	-----	*jiaxiang* 甲香 (onycha)	onycha
Legend: Grey indicates items shared by two or three sources				

*For further discussion and analysis of these native Chinese aromatics, see Chapter 2, Section 2.

Appendix 2: Incense and Aromatics associated with Emperor Wu of Han[3124]

Name	Origin/Association	Physical Description	Anomalous Effects	Source [*Materia Aromatica* entry]
Douyi Aromatic (*douyi xiang* 都夷香)[3125]	Associated with the barbarian Batushe 跋途閣, seeker of immortality	resembles jujube pits	satiates hunger for months; incense the size of rice grain will fill water basin	*Records of Cavern Darkness* [HC#44]
quanmi 荃麋, *chunwu* 春蕪[3126] (related to *quanwu* 荃蕪[3127]/*tuwu* 荼蕪[3128])	Tribute from Bozhi 波祇, Boyi 波弋 (tribute from Boyi)	Stalk/rhizome with hundred stems, epidermis fibers like silk threads (separated into fragments)	Perfumes palace and people (perfumes earth and stone, restores blossoms to dead plants, restores flesh to bones)	*Records of Cavern Darkness* (*Uncollected Records* [HC#45])
Mili Aromatic (*mili zhi xiang* 靡離之香)[3129]	Burned atop the Pavilion for Summoning Immortals	Size of millet grains	Burn one grain and fragrance will not fade for three months	*Records of Cavern Darkness* [comments to HC#45]
Sinking Light Incense (*chenguang xiang* 沈光香)[3130]	Tribute from Tuhun 塗魂, burned with master of methods Dongfang Shuo	Firm and difficult to crush	produces light when burned	*Records of Cavern Darkness* [HC#54]
Spirits and Demons Incense 祇精香[3131]	Export from Tuhun, burned with Dongfang Shuo	-----	Goblins, demons, and spirits flee in fear when burned	*Records of Cavern Darkness* [HC#71]
Perfuming the Flesh Incense (*xun$_1$ji xiang* 熏肌香)[3132]	burned with Dongfang Shuo	-----	Prevents illness up through old age	*Records of Cavern Darkness* [HC#64]
Jin [Mi]di Incense (*jindi xiang* 金磾香)[3133]	Blended by Jin Midi, burned with Dongfang Shuo	-----	Perfumes garments, enhances women's charms	*Records of Cavern Darkness* [HC#73]

[3124] This list is not comprehensive. I have only drawn from the Six Dynasties works devoted to the lore of Emperor Wu and a few entries from other tales of the strange that appear in Hong Chu's *Materia Aromatica*. Moreover, I have excluded generic references to Emperor Wu burning incense or using other kinds of aromatics that are not explicitly given names. There are additional individual episodes scattered throughout other medieval tales of the strange that discuss Emperor Wu and aromatics, many of which can also be found in later materia aromatica compilations.
[3125] TPYL:8.981.855, trans. Smith, "Ritual," 597.
[3126] TPYL:8.983.875, trans. Smith, "Ritual," 601–02.
[3127] SYJ:4.91.
[3128] SKQS:844.225a–b.
[3129] TPYL:8.981.855, trans. Smith, "Ritual," 605–06.
[3130] SKQS:844.225a–b, trans. Smith, "Ritual," 609.
[3131] SKQS:844.227a; Smith, "Ritual," 610.
[3132] SKQS:844.226a; Smith, "Ritual," 610.
[3133] SKQS:844.227a; Smith, "Ritual," 610.

Name	Origin/Association	Physical Description	Anomalous Effects	Source [*Materia Aromatica* entry]
Luminous Court Incense (*mingting xiang* 明庭香)[3134]	Export of Xutuohan 胥池寒, burned with Dongfang Shuo	-----	-----	*Records of Cavern Darkness*
Bright Sky Sun-Revealing Incense (*mingtian fari xiang* 明天發日香)[3135]	Export of Xutuohan 胥池寒, made from Sun-Revealing Tree (*fari shu* 發日樹)	[Implication that it is similar to pine sap]	-----	*Records of Cavern Darkness*
Doumo Incense (*doumo xiang* 兜末香)[3136]	Tribute from Douqu 兜渠	Resembles large beans	Fragrance smelled for several hundred li, stops deaths from epidemic, linked to Queen Mother of the West's descent	*Tales of Emperor Wu* [HC#53]
Hundred Blend Incense (*baihe zhi xiang* 百和之香)[3137]	-----	-----	Associated with Queen Mother of the West's descent	*Exoteric Biography* [comments to HC#74]
White Incense of Ying[zhou] in the East (*dong ying baixiang* 東瀛白香)[3138]	[implication that it originates on one of the islands of the immortals, Yingzhou 瀛洲[3139]]	-----	Consumption will lead to ascent to heaven in broad daylight	*Exoteric Biography*
Startling the Spirits Aromatic (*jingjing xiang* 驚精香), Rousing the Numina Pellets (*zhenling wan* 震靈丸)[3140], Returning to Life Aromatic (*fansheng xiang* 反生香)[3141], Quaking Sandalwood (*zhentan* 震檀香),	Derived from tree, called Soul Summoning Tree (*fanhun shu* 反魂樹) that resembles liquidambar with fragrant flowers and leaves on mythical continent of Juku[3144]	Pellets made from black decoction boiled out from tree roots	Fragrance smelled for several hundred *li*, returns the dead to life	*Records of the Ten Continents* [HC#48]

[3134] Smith, "Ritual," 609, 609n.22.
[3135] Smith, "Ritual," 638–39.
[3136] T2122:574a17–20, TPYL:8.983.874, trans. Smith, "Ritual," 414–15.
[3137] DZ293:1b, trans. Schipper, *L'Empereur Wou*, 70; Smith, "Ritual," 482.
[3138] DZ293:7b, trans. Schipper, *L'Empereur Wou*, 88; Smith, "Ritual," 495.
[3139] Schipper, *L'Empereur Wou*, 88n.3.
[3140] Also called Rousing the Numina Aromatic (*zhenling xiang* 振靈香), see SKQS:844.224b.
[3141] An item with a similar name, Resuscitation Aromatic (*yousheng xiang* 又生香), also known as Returning to Life Numinous Aromatic (*fansheng ling xiang* 反生靈香), is listed in Daoshi's catalogue of flowers and aromatics, see T2122:574a21–23.
[3144] According to the *Records of the Ten Continents*, this tree is responsible for producing an aromatic with six different names (not all sources list all six names).

Name	Origin/Association	Physical Description	Anomalous Effects	Source [*Materia Aromatica* entry]
Man-and-Bird Essence (*renniao qing* 人鳥精)[3142], Retreating from Death Aromatic (*quesi xiang* 卻死香)[3143]				
Spirit Incense (*shenxiang* 神香),[3145] Resurrection Spirit Pellet (*gengsheng zhi shenwan* 更生之神丸), Numinous Incense (*lingxiang* 靈香)[3146] (also known as Incense from Yuezhi [*Yuezhi xiang* 月支香])	Tribute from Yuezhi 月支 [originated from tree on Juku[3147]]	Size of sparrows' eggs, black as mulberries (appearance like swallows' eggs, pellets the size of jujubes)	Dispels illness that brings on early death, returns the dead to life, fragrance lasts three months	*Records of the Ten Continents* [HC#47]
Hengwu Aromatic 蘅蕪香	Received in a dream from Lady Li (*Li furen* 李夫人)	-----	Fragrance lingered on garments and pillow for months	*Uncollected Records* [HC#65]
Dragon Pattern Incense 龍文香	Tribute from unknown country	-----	-----	*Compilation from Duyang* [HC#62]

[3142] Or Horse Spirit Aromatic (*majing xiang* 馬精香), see SKQS:844.224b.

[3143] DZ598.6a; cf. T2122:574a29-b06, TPYL:8.983.874, trans. Smith, "Ritual," 547–48.

[3145] T2122:574a24-28, TPYL:8.981.855. The story of Spirit Incense (the name used in Daoshi's catalogue of flowers and aromatics), also called Numinous Incense, spans four different passages in the *Records of the Ten Continents*, see DZ598:6b, DZ598:7a, DZ598:8a, and DZ598:8b; the relevant passages are translated in Smith, "Ritual," 548, 549, and 551, and 552, respectively. Hong Chu's catalogue contains a passage that is similar to the last passage; he calls the item Incense from Yuezhi.

[3146] This name is also cited by Hong Chu as appearing in the *Esoteric Biography*, but it does not appear in the received version of this text, see SKQS:844.225a.

[3147] While this is implied through the sequence of passages in the *Records of the Ten Continents*, the author also makes this explicit, see DZ598:9a.

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