

**‘Bang’ as the Community Administrative
Organization in the Chinese Early States**

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ABSTRACT

It is widely accepted by scholars from China and overseas that China has entered the phase of state in Xia, Shang, and Zhou dynasties (though some foreign scholars do not acknowledge the existence of Xia dynasty). However, they were best categorized as early states, since they held some vestiges of pre-state. Specifically, kinships and correspondent organizations adopted from primitive clan society still played important and expansive functions, which was imprinted on the community administrative organizations of the three dynasties and reflected in the management and manipulation of the state over these organizations. ‘Bang’ (chiefdom), inherited from clan society, was the unit of the community administrative organization in that era. The central management over chiefdoms was a ‘ji fu’ (or ‘fu’) system, which, based on differences in consanguinity, stipulated and distributed a gradient of obligations to ‘inner and outer domains’ (see part 3 and 4). It was clearly different from the region-based family registry system developed in mature states in the Warring States period, and Qin and Han dynasties. The following passages will explore relevant historical records and provide a detailed analysis on the community administrative organization in Chinese early states.

‘THE LAND UNDER HEAVEN’ WITH MYRIAD CHIEFDOMS

People in the three dynasties named their states as the ‘tian xia’ (the land under heaven), which comprised ‘zhong yang’ (the center) and ‘si fang’ (the four quarters). ‘Tian xia’ was formed by many ‘bang’

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with different sizes, so they were also referred as 'tian xia wan bang' (myriad chiefdoms on the land under heaven). During Chinese early states, a major chiefdom in the center reigned minor chiefdoms at its periphery.

Records and documents of Zhou dynasty indicate that the 'tian xia wan bang' pattern was well-established. For instance, Qiang pan, a famous bronze vessel (basin) manufactured in Zhou dynasty has an inscription, saying that 'The heavenly King Wen... humbly owned the land under heaven, and unified myriad chiefdoms'. It shows that the government of King Wen was extolled by chiefdoms; while people in Zhou considered King Wen as the founder of their state.

'Luogao' (Announcement Concerning Luo; 洛诰) in *Shangshu* (*The Book of Documents*) records the comment of Zhougong (the Duke of Zhou) on the significance of Luoyi (Luo) that 'from this time, by the government administered in this central spot, all the states¹ will be conducted to repose.' Myriad chiefdoms would be perfectly governed by Zhou's officers from the center of the land.

The poem 'Daya: Wenwang' (Greater Odes of the Kingdom: King Wen; 大雅文王), in *Shijing* (*The Book of Poetry*) says that 'The doings of High Heaven, / Have neither sound nor smell. / Take your pattern from king Wen, / And the myriad regions will repose confidence in you.' The logos is subtle, but if one imitates the deed of King Wen, he would be trusted by myriad chiefdoms under heaven.

At the end of the Western Zhou, similar pattern persisted in eulogies to eminent governors, as 'Xiaoya: Liuyue' (Minor Odes of the Kingdom: the Sixth Month; 小雅六月), *Shijing* lauds: 'For peace or for war fit is Ji-fu, / A pattern to all the States.' Yin Jifu was the paragon of all chiefdoms.

'Wan' (myriad) was not an exact number; instead, it merely indicated the huge number of chiefdoms. Thus it was replaced by 'duo' (many) or 'shu' (various) at times. For instance, 'Dagao' (Great Announcement; 大诰) and 'Wuyi' (Against Luxurious Ease; 无逸) in *Shangshu* documents respectively: 'The king speaks to the following effect: 'Ho! I make a great announcement to you, (the princes of) the many states, and to you, the managers of my affairs...' 'King Wen did not dare to go to excess in his excursions or his hunting, and from the various states he would receive only the correct amount of contribution.'

'Duo bang' was also called as 'duo fang' (many regions), because of the proximity in pronunciation. For example, in 'Duofang' (Numerous Regions; 多方), *Shangshu*, the announcement of the Duke of Zhou to conquered clans of Xiang and Shang starts with the phrase: 'I make an announcement to you of the four states, and the numerous (other) regions...'

The custom was inherited from people in Shang dynasty. In records of divination on oracle bones, chiefdoms were called as 'fang' by Shang people, such as 'tu fang', 'gui fang', 'qiang fang', 'qiong fang', 'ren fang', 'jing fang', 'ma fang', 'yu fang', 'lin fang', 'zhou fang', 'shao fang', 'wei fang', 'yin fang', *etc.*, which were collectively referred as 'duo fang'. For example:

In the day ding-you, (the king) asked (whether it is fortunate) to call for an assembly of many 'fang'... (Guo 1999: No. 28008)

To divine: (whether it is fortunate) to designate Ming to lead many 'fang'... (Li 1982: No. 528)

Literature in later ages referred 'bang' or 'fang' in Shang and Zhou dynasties as 'zhu hou' (vassal state) or 'guo' (state). In *Zhan Guo Ce: Qi Ce (Records of the Warring States: Ch'i; 战国策齐策)*, Yan Chu (Yen Ch'u), who was coeval with King Xuan of Qi (King Hsüan of Ch'i), said: 'I have heard that of old, in the time of Yü (Yu) the Great, there were nobles ruling over ten thousand States... Coming down to the time of T'ang (Tang), the nobles were three thousand.'² *Lüshi Chunqiu: Yongmin (Lü's Annals: the Use of People; 吕氏春秋用民)* recapitulated this statement: 'In the time of Yu the Great, there were myriad kingdoms; only more than three thousand existed in Tang's time.' It can be inferred that the 'myriad chiefdoms' pattern prevailed in the age of Xia as well.

Actually, the political pattern stemmed from pre-state legendary eras. According to documents, the 'five emperors' period was characterized by myriad chiefdoms. 'Yaodian' (Canon of Yao; 尧典, *Shangshu*, memorized achievements of Yao, saying that he 'thence proceeded to the love of (all in) the nine classes of his kindred, who (thus) became harmonious. He (also) regulated and polished the people (of his domain), who all became brightly intelligent. (Finally), he united and harmonized the myriad states; and so the black-haired people were transformed. The result was (universal) concord.' In *Shiji: Wudi Benji (Records of the Grand Historian: Annals of the Five Emperors; 史记五帝本纪)*, similar notion was rephrased as 'the various states were at peace.' Meanwhile, *Shiji* also recorded 'myriad chiefdoms' in Huangdi's (Yellow emperor) time that 'he appointed a chief and deputy superintendent over international affairs, and the various states being at peace...'³ Additionally, 'Gaoyaomo' (Counsels of Gao-yao; 皋陶谟, *Shangshu*, mentioned 'myriad chiefdoms' in Shun's era: 'I [Yu] urged them [people] (further) to exchange what they had for what they had not, and to dispose of their accumulated stores. (In this way) all the people got grain to eat, and the myriad regions began to come under good rule...' and 'So far good! But let your light shine, O Di, all under heaven, even to every grassy corner of the sea-shore, and throughout the myriad regions the most worthy of the people will

all (wish) to be your ministers.' All the quotations indicate that the notion 'myriad chiefdoms' in the age of five emperors was unanimous among ancient literature and documents. In other word, the phase of 'myriad chiefdoms' was established in China at the age of pre- and early civilization.

On the other hand, is the nature of 'bang' in clan society identical to that of the three dynasties? The answer would be positive. Except several vassal states established by the royal court of Zhou in the Western Zhou period (they were called 'bang', but should be considered as secondary⁴), the inner or outer structure of the rest of 'bang' was not fundamentally different from their precursors. The only difference was that in the three dynasties, a state began to form, as a great 'bang' governed all other chiefdoms with hereditary sovereignty. Although all chiefdoms should accept the central administration of the sovereignty, their nature was not altered radically.

Moreover, the great central chiefdom (or the king's chiefdom) was still one 'bang' among myriad chiefdoms under heaven, whose structure and nature did not change either. It was not a state independent to other chiefdoms; instead, the commonwealth of the king's chiefdom and other chiefdoms controlled by the great one formed the state. Zhao Boxiong's analysis on this issue was exemplary. Although he only discussed the nature of state in Zhou dynasty, it can be plausibly applied to Xia and Shang dynasties.

Since all chiefdoms strewed on the land submitted to the power of a single sovereignty, it is reasonable to consider them as administrative organizations subordinate to the state, which was represented by the central chiefdom. As it was reflected in 'Zicai' (Timber of the Rotlera; 梓材, *Shangshu*, the king issued decrees to chiefs, who were obliged to ensure the obedience of the people to these orders. 'The king says, 'O Feng, to secure a good understanding between the multitudes of his people and his ministers (on the one hand), and the great families (on the other); and (again) to secure the same between all the subjects under his charge, and the sovereign – is the part of the ruler of a state. If you regularly, in giving out your orders...' It was the exhortation of the King to Feng, the Duke of Kang, that his order should be regularly transferred from the great families to their subjects, from the king's court to his ministers. Moreover, 'Dagao' stated that 'The king speaks to the following effect: 'Ho! I make a great announcement to you, (the princes of) the many states, and to you, the managers of my affairs.'" While 'Duofang' documented that 'The king speaks to the following effect: "Ho! I make an announcement to you of the four states, and the numerous (other) regions. Ye who were the officers and people of the prince of Yin..." All of them

indicate that the King had the paramount power over all chiefdoms, and it is fair to take chiefdoms as community administrative organizations in the three dynasties.

THE NATURE OF 'BANG': STATE OR CHIEFDOM

Since the land under heaven consisted of myriad 'bang', it is crucial to determine the nature of 'bang'. As the answer varies among scholars, a short analysis would be necessary.

Many insist that 'bang' in the three dynasties were tiny yet solid states. Taking city states of ancient Greece and Mesopotamia as evidence, they argue that myriad 'bang' erected on the land of China during the three dynasties, even the age of five emperors, could also be defined as city states. Some maintain that, in ancient world, including China, Mesopotamia, Egypt, India, Central America and Peru, 'the majority of early civilizations were in the form of city state' and 'the discreteness of small states was a salient feature.' (Wang 1994: 254/259) This idea clearly belongs to some scholars of world history, who argue that 'as far as we know, the earliest states were city commune, city states, or polis in short,' and 'their population was small at the beginning of formation' (The editing committee of *A Brief History of Ancient World* 1979: 25).

The over simplified analogy was problematic. Firstly, to name 'bang' in China at the propinquity of early civilization era as 'city state' is inappropriate, since only a modicum of them had city (wall). Some argue that some cities were wall-less, and Sparta was an example. However, in terms of 'bang' in China, where is the necessity to adopt a name when it fails to denote the majority of cases? Secondly, the concept of city state is too generalized to demarcate phases of social development – does it belong to pre-state society or early state society? As it were, polis, city commune, and city state are intrinsically same to some scholars. But are 'commune' and 'state' in the same phase of development? The current concept of ancient Greek and Mesopotamian city state is rather vague. It includes primitive moated settlements and city states in later eras – two essentially different categories. At the very beginning, Athens incorporated merely a small piece of land around the acropolis, which was drastically distinct from the state Athens developed later. The nascent Athens resembled chiefdom rather than a state. The same notion can be applied to Mesopotamian cities. The earliest cities, such as Eridu, Uruk, and Ur, emerged around 4500 B.C.; none of them were identified as 'state'. After hundreds years of development, the growth of civilization and the expansion of population and scale made scholars conclude that these cities

entered in the phase of state at about 4000 B.C. Back to China, the scale, population, organization, and development of subordinate 'bang' in the ages of five emperors and three dynasties were not comparable to that of Greek and Mesopotamian city states. Thus, to equivocate that 'bang' were city states is unreasonable.

A thorough exploration into details of 'bang' in the ancient period of China would reveal that they were actually kinship based clans. In his analysis on myriad 'guo' of Yu and Tang's eras documented in ancient classics, Xia Zengyou pointed out that 'the astronomical number of "states" was due to the fact that a single clan was called a state, and the so-called king was actually a patriarch.' (Xia, 2000: 25) Similarly, Guo Moruo also argued that these 'states' were clannish organizations based on consanguinity with different sizes (Guo 1964: 38). Their propositions can be supported by ancient documentations and inscriptions. For instance, *Yizhoushu: Zuoluo (Lost Book of Zhou: Construction of Luo; 逸周书作洛)* recorded that 'the expedition (initiated by the Duke of Zhou) was to fight against seventeen states of Xiong and Ying clans,' which indicates that the so-called 'states' were tantamount to clans. The inscription on Li ju zun (Li's horse-shape wine vessel) said that '(may) the majestic basis of the king protect my myriad clans for myriad years.' Meanwhile, the inscription on another artifact Li yi (Li's sacrificial vessel) made by the same manufacturer reads that '(may) the majestic bless and basis of the prince of heaven protect my myriad "bang".' It shows that 'bang' and clan were interchangeable, which further indicates the clannish status of 'bang'. Taking the interchangeability of 'zong', 'shi', and 'zu' (they all mean 'clan') in ancient literature into consideration, 'bang' and 'state' should also be taken as clannish organizations and 'natural and spontaneous communities' (Engels 1909: 119). Nowadays, based on documentary support, the majority of scholars of ancient Chinese history use the term 'zu bang' (literally, clan-state) to denote these 'bang' and 'guo'.

Presumably, the misinterpretation of 'bang' and 'guo' as actual states resulted from the misunderstanding of the meaning of these terms. Presented on inscriptions of the Western Zhou, 'Bang' was the original term used in denoting basic political units in the three dynasties, such as 'wan bang' on Qiang pan, Li yi; 'Zhou bang' on Lubodong gui (food vessel of Dong, the Count of Lu), Xun gui, Dake ding (cooking and sacrificial vessel of the greater Ke); 'minor and major bang' on the lid of Jufu xu (Jufu's food vessel); 'twenty and six bang' on Hu zhong (Hu's bell). In some later documents, however, to replace 'bang' with 'guo' was to avoid the given name of the first emperor of Han dynasty, Liu Bang. Chen Yuan mentioned such cases in *Shijing*,

Shangshu, and *Lunyu* (*Analects*; 论语 (Chen 1962: 1–2). In *Kong Zi Lun Shi* (*The Commentary of Confucius on Poetry*; 孔子论诗) a set of recently exhumed bamboo slips produced in the Warring States period, cases of ‘guo’ in ‘guo feng’ (lessons of the states) were unanimously presented as ‘bang’, attesting to the fact that ‘bang’ in literature after Han dynasty was replaced by ‘guo’. Unfortunately, some scholars failed to realize this phenomenon; what is worse, they interpreted cases of ‘guo’ with the concept of ‘guo’ in later eras, ultimately incurring confusions. In fact, “bang” and ‘guo’ were distinct notions in ancient times. Philologically, ‘bang’ combines the sense of ‘yi’ (town or city) with the sound or rhyme of ‘feng’, so it denotes certain sort of settlements or towns. On the other hand, ‘guo’ was also written as ‘yu’ (land or territory), meaning a wide range of land. In the Western Zhou inscriptions, ‘dong yu’, ‘xi yu’, ‘zhong yu’, and ‘si yu’ meant the eastern quarter of land, the western quarter of land, the center of land, and four quarters of land, respectively. Every large tract of land was occupied by many ‘bang’. The above mentioned inscription on Hu zhong firstly narrated certain deeds of ‘Fuzi’ (the Viscount of Fu) in ‘nan yu’ (the southern land), who then led ‘twenty-six bang’ of eastern and southern barbarians to pay their respects to King Li. It definitely reveals the difference between ‘bang’ and ‘guo’. While the latter’s sense of a concrete political unit, and its confusion with the former was an invention of later eras.

Moreover, ‘bang’ in ancient period of China can be further interpreted as ‘chiefdom’ in anthropology. According to Zhang Guangzhi, the nature of chiefdom was the combination of a political hierarchy and a kinship system (Zhang 1983: 50–1), or, according to Elman Service (Yi 2004: 152)⁵, a ‘hierarchical clan society’, which was parallel to ‘bang’ in ancient period of China.

Firstly, in terms of magnitude, the population of ‘bang’ was approximate to that of chiefdoms all over the world recorded by modern anthropologists. Based on the number of ‘bang’ conquered by King Wu and the number of people he killed and captured (the statistics was presented in ‘Shifu’ (Massive Captives; 世俘 in *Yizhoushu*), I have calculated that the average population of ‘bang’ was about 4900 (Shen 2009). Using different methods, another scholar estimated that the average population of a regional organization at the late Shang and the early Zhou was about 8,200 (Song 1994: 109). According to anthropologist Robert L. Carneiro, in the early sixteenth century, the average population of chiefdoms in the Cauca Valley at Columbia was 6,000–9,000; the diagram of correlation between population and social development made by Johnson and Earle indicated that the population

of a chiefdom was between 1,000 and 100,000 (Yi 2004: 244/266). Hence, it is plausible to identify 'bang' in the age of five emperors, and Shang and Zhou dynasties with 'chiefdom'.

Nowadays, some archeologists who investigate pre-historic settlements discover that settlement clusters of late Yangshao and early Longshan culture were similar to 'bang' in ancient documents. For instance, Zhang Xuehai estimated that such settlements had 2,000–10,000 people or no more than 6,000–20,000 in the more developed Longshan period (Zhang 2001). Although he referred these settlements as 'ancient states', they, in terms of population, perfectly fitted in the category of chiefdom.

Secondly, the internal structure and organization of 'bang' in ancient period of China was different from that of primitive clans in early ages. A 'center-periphery' structure with certain degrees of complexity characterized 'bang', that every 'bang' was a settlement with two or three levels, formed by a major town and multiple minor towns. Similarly, a 'conical' hierarchy developed between dwellers: members of 'bang' fell into at least three categories – monarch, aristocrat, and subject. Bearing the most direct descendant of ancestors, the monarch represented the pinnacle of the hierarchical pyramid, while the status of other categories was also determined by the propinquity of kinship. They were exactly characteristics of chiefdom.

Another feature of chiefdom was theocracy. Yi Jianping, reiterating the idea of Service, stated that 'the ruler of chiefdom... reigned in the name of gods or ancestors. Thus, the chief probably also took the duty of worshiping gods or ancestors... Positions of priest and secular chief often passed down with a single family; sometimes both duties might be taken by a same person' (Yi 2004: 201). In ancient period of China, the authority of a ruler of 'bang', who had the prestige of hosting the worship of spirits of ancestors, derived from his status as the patriarch of the family claiming direct descent from the primogenitor. In *Shijizhuan* (*Collections of Commentaries on Shijing*; 诗集传), Zhu Xi proposed that "'Zong" means reverence and leading. The first heir of the official wife was obliged to lead sacrificial rites. He was revered as the leader by other family members.' In *Shijing*, the leader of 'bang' was occasionally called as 'zeng sun' (the grand progeny), which was interpreted by some annotators as 'the director of sacrifice', an accurate explanation. These facts buttress the proposition that 'bang' were, anthropologically, chiefdoms.

However, there is still an issue unsettled: in theories of many anthropologists (*e.g.*, Service), chiefdom is a basic type of social organization, preceding the phase of state society. While in China, the phe-

nomenon of myriad ‘bang’ not only formed a pattern of pre-state period (the age of five emperors), but also presented itself in early state period (the three dynasties) – a seemingly contradiction to Service’s classification. Actually, in Service’s terminology, the sense of ‘state’ was general, on the basis of interregional relationship. While the three dynasties were early states, which bore many vestiges of pre-state society. Hence, their inheritance of the myriad ‘bang’ pattern was a natural reflection of their status as early states.

INNER AND OUTER DOMAINS: THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE STATE AND ITS ‘BANG’

States in the three dynasties were ‘kingdoms’. The king, as the ruler of the state, took patriarchal control over his realm, ‘the land under heaven’. ‘Xiaoya: Beishan’ (Minor Odes of the Kingdom: Northern Hill; 小雅 北山), *Shijing* read: ‘Under the wide heaven, / All is the king’s land. / Within the sea-boundaries of the land, / All are the king’s servants.’ It indicates that the king had the utmost power over his land and people. The King of Zhou called himself ‘tian zi’ (the prince of heaven), claiming that ‘Great Heaven having given this Middle Kingdom with its people and territories to the former kings...’ (*Shangshu: Zicai*); it illustrated that (he maintained that) his power was authorized by heaven. From examples taken from Zhou dynasty, it can be extrapolated that the situation in Xia and Shang dynasties was not disparate. According to ancient documents, Yu, the purported first king of Xia initiated the hereditary system. Oracle bones showed that the king of Shang referred himself as ‘the single one’, an appellation indicating uniqueness. Moreover, words of divination frequently mentioned ‘si tu’ (four areas) of Shang, that the King was concerned about the harvest of ‘eastern, southern, western, and northern areas’ of his realm (Guo 1999: No. 36975), which especially proved that the king considered himself as the owner of all areas under heaven.

The king’s control over his land and people was not as direct as it would be in later eras. Instead of delegating authority to regional officers to implement administration of different levels of executives, he managed via clannish ‘bang’ and the time honored corresponding system. The ruler of ‘bang’ submitted to and paid tribute to the court of king, *i.e.*, the central government; the latter acknowledged the former, and granted it certain amount of land and people, in proportion to the closeness of the kindred relationship of its chief with the royal family. Meanwhile, the management of the central government over ‘bang’ was differentiated. The principal criterion was, again, whether it was

closely related to the royal family in terms of kinship and affinity. It was the system of 'inner and outer fu (domains)'.

A detailed record of the system could be found in a document written in the early Zhou dynasty – 'Jiugao' (Announcement about Drunkenness; 酒诰, *Shangshu*). It recounted the classification of officers and aristocrats in Shang dynasty, 'from him Tang the Successful, down to Di-Yi', that 'in the exterior domains, (the princes of) the Hou, Dian, Nan, and Wei (states), with their presiding chiefs and in the interior domain, all the various officers, the directors of the several departments, the inferior officers and employés, the heads of great houses, and the men of distinguished name living in retirement...' The inscription on Ling fangyi (square sacrificial vessel of Ling) recorded similar information, implying that the same system was adopted by Zhou dynasty. (In fact, Xia also made use of the system, which will be discussed later.)

The literal interpretation of 'fu' was obedience or service, which means to take certain responsibility for the kingdom. It led some scholars to understand 'fu' as inner and outer officers, which was acceptable but inaccurate. Since all official positions were taken by different aristocrats, i.e. chiefs, the inner and outer 'fu' could be considered as two different kinds of service of chiefs to the court of king. *Jiugao*, as quoted above, unequivocally recorded that leaders in outer domains – 'Hou, Dian, Nan and Wei' – were chiefs. In fact, 'all the various officers' in the inner domain were also chiefs, who bore even closer relationship with the royal family.

The meaning of 'inner (or interior)' and 'outer (or exterior)' needs further clarification. It is widely accepted that they denote, respectively, the interior or exterior of 'wang ji' (land enclosing the king/capital) – the land directly controlled by the king. A 'bang' locating in the interior domain was responsible for 'inner service'; in exterior domains, 'outer service'. Such interpretation is not necessarily fallacious, but it fails to provide a substantial comprehension of the system. Moreover, whether the notion 'wang ji' existed in Shang and Zhou dynasties and what the area of it was are moot questions.⁶ Hence, I would like to propose an alternative understanding: 'inner' and 'outer' were distinguished by levels of kindred closeness. In ancient times, relatives were 'inner', while non-relatives were 'outer'. *Liji: Daxue (The Classic of Rites: the Great Learning; 礼记大学)* noted: 'If one externalize the root and internalize the tip...' Its annotation read: 'to externalize means to make remote; to internalize means to make intimate.' In *Chunqiu Zuo Zhuan (The Commentary of Zuo on the Spring and Autumn Annals; 春秋左传)*, the 21st year of Duke Xiang of Lu, there was a phrase: '...to

recommend an outer man even if he is an enemy; to recommend an inner person even if he is a close relative...’ In the ancient period, ancestry was extremely important, that one must distinguish between people who shared the same family name with him and others who did not. The formers were called ‘(people with) inner surname’. Also in *Chunqiu Zuo Zhuan*, the 12th year of Duke Xuan of Lu, a sentence read: ‘(if one need) to select from people with inner surname, (he should firstly) consider his close relatives; (if one need) to select from people with outer surnames, (he should firstly) consider his old acquaintances.’ Again, ‘inner’ represented close or intimate. After all, in Shang and Zhou dynasties, vassal ‘states’ were ‘bang’, whose relationship with the royal family was determined by whether the leader shared the same surname with the king or whether he married a close member/relative of the royal family. If positive, he and his fief bore the inner ‘fu’ (domain/service); negative, the outer. Since the majority of close relatives (including affines) of the royal family lived near the capital, the concept ‘wang ji’ emerged, as ‘ji’ had the meaning of near or close.⁷ Furthermore, people began to consider towns within ‘wang ji’ as ‘fiefs of dukes, senior officers, or close relatives of the king.’⁸ Following the same line of thought, we can have a better understanding on the meaning of inner and outer ‘guan’ (officer). According to ‘Jiugao’, inner officers were high-rank vassals and officers, for they were closely related to the royal family, thus highly regarded. By contrast, outer officers were ‘(the princes of) the Hou, Dian, Nan, and Wei (states)’. ‘Hou’ meant to scout (for the king); ‘Dian’ was identical to ‘tian’ (field), meaning to cultivate fields and hand in grains; ‘Nan’, called as ‘ren’ (to bear) alternatively, meant to bear duties for the king; ‘Wei’ meant to guard (for the king).⁹ These civil or military service duties were distributed to chiefs with surnames different from the royal family, indicating that their obedience was somehow involuntary. The abode of an outer officer was usually remote to the center of kingdom. The inscription on Da Yu ding (the greater cooking and sacrificial vessel of Yu) was a good proof, which read: ‘...Hou and Dian at the periphery of Yin...’ This arrangement was a fair reflection of their (blood) relationship with the king.

The political system of inner and outer ‘fu’ was indispensable to early states in the three dynasties. Since consanguinity and affinity were crucial factors in social lives, it was necessary to apply them to the political mechanism of the state. As the ruler of state, king and his ‘bang’ must initially create a union formed by ‘bang’ of ‘the inner surname’ and affines, and then relied on this union to subjugate ‘bang’ of ‘outer surnames’, finally reaching the control over myriad ‘bang’ under hea-

ven. Obeying with reluctance, those chiefs of outer surnames revolted against the central court at times when they perceived the recession or degradation of it. Such cases were innumerable in ancient literature.

THE INNER AND OUTER DOMAIN/SERVICE SYSTEM OF THE THREE DYNASTIES OF XIA, SHANG, AND ZHOU

Some details about the inner and outer 'fu' system in the three dynasties can be known from ancient records.

Records about Xia were rare. The residence of Xia's inner surnames and affines, nonetheless, can roughly be determined. According to 'Xia Benji' (Annals of the Xia; 夏本紀, *Shiji*, clans sharing the same surname (ancestral name) 'Si' with Xia were Xiahou, Youhu, Younan, Zhenxun, Tongcheng, Bao, Fei, Qi, Zeng, Xin, Ming, Zhen'ge, etc. Some among them (Younan, Tongcheng, Bao, Fei, Qi, Zeng, Ming) were 'aliases' of clans with surname 'Si' after the collapse of Xia. Xiahou clan was the royal family of Xia; it burgeoned near the border of Henan and Shandong, to the southeast of Juancheng County, Shandong province. Its capitals (Yangcheng, Diqiu, Laoqiu, etc.) all located in the land between ancient courses of the Yellow River and Ji River, at the east of Henan and the west of Shandong (Shen 1994 and 1997). Interestingly, some other 'Si' clans occupied the (vicinity) of the same area: Xin (or Youshen) lived in the north of Shen County, at the west of Shandong, near Henan; Zhen'ge (or Zhenguan) lived in Fan County, at the border of Shandong and Henan; the exact location of Zhenxun is unknown, but according to *Chunqiu Zuo Zhuan*, the first year of the Duke Ai of Lu, it was very close to Zhen'ge clan (Shen 2005). Moreover, affines of Xia clans also lived near the same area. For example, Youreng lived in Cao County, Shandong; Youyu lived in Yucheng County, at the border of Shandong and the east of Henan; Tushan, traditionally believed to live in Huaiyuan County, Anhui Province, to the south of Huai River, which was a rather remote thus unlikely location then, presumably lived near the south of Cao County, since the ancient toponym 'Tushan' denoted there. Additionally, although the exact relationship of the clan of Kunwu, a count in the age of Xia, and the clan of Xue, who served as 'che zheng' (manager of chariots and attire) for the royal family, with the central court cannot be inferred from extant documents, based on the degree of their loyalty and the importance of their responsibility, it is safe to postulate that they were affines of the royal family. They, respectively, lived in Puyang, Henan, and Teng County, Shandong. Above all, the geological distribution of relatives and affines of Xia was in accordance with the above mentioned generalization: 'bang' of inner 'fu' located

near the capital. On the other hand, records about ‘bang’ of outer ‘fu’ in Xia period were scanty, while the activity of eastern barbarians was nonetheless documented. The vicissitudes of their obedience and insurrection coincided with the hypothetical relationship between clans of outer ‘fu’ and the dominating clan. To some extent, the information above also provides support for the existence of Xia dynasty, since the scrupulous documentation of the mechanism and placement, congruent with the generalization of modern anthropologists on the political and geological distribution of clan society and early states, was not likely to be the fabrication of literati in later eras.

The ‘fu’ system in Shang dynasty has been (and still is) widely studied by scholars, with the exception of a rarely mentioned point – the composition of ‘bang’ of inner ‘fu’. Presumably, primary members of such ‘bang’ in Shang dynasty were ‘duo sheng zu’ (multiple sheng clans) and ‘duo zi zu’ (multiple ‘Zi’ clans), mentioned in records of divination on oracle bones. According to the interpretation of most scholars, ‘duo zi zu’ were the clans of sons and brothers of successive kings of Shang. Their clans mainly located in the northwest Henan, near the capital at that time (*i.e.*, Anyang, Henan) (Zhu 1994: 66). Leaders of these Shang clans with the surname ‘Zi’ also took important positions in the central court, who often appeared as courtiers of king or generals in divination records. In ‘Shangshi’ (Oath Concerning Shang; 商誓, *Yizhoushu*, the King Wu announced to conquered aristocrats of Shang dynasty, calling these ‘multiple “Zi”’ as ‘chiefs of your old “bang”’, demonstrating that ‘Zi’ were leaders of Shang clans.

Similarly, ‘duo sheng zu’, interpreted by Chen Mengjia (1956: 485) as ‘multiple (clans of) nephews (specifically, sons of sisters)’ also appeared on oracle bones. Hence, they were affines of the royal family. Those ‘nephews’ were treated courteously by the king, as ‘to bestow blessed food upon multiple nephews’ often appeared in pair with ‘to bestow blessed food upon multiple “Zi”’ on oracle bones (Guo 1999: No. 27650), indicating that their status were comparable to aristocrats bearing the same family name, ‘Zi’, with the royal family. Also, phrases like ‘to grant multiple nephews the right to shoot ceremonially’ (Guo 1999: No. 24140-3) appeared on oracle bones too. It showed that nephews could participate in royal rituals, implicating that their domiciles were not far from the capital. In short, (clans of) these ‘Zi’ and nephews met the criteria of inner ‘fu’.

Combining the impression that ‘Zi’ and nephews lived near the capital with the description that ‘Hou and Dian (lived) at the periphery of Yin’, a vivid depiction of the ‘ji fu’ system in Shang dynasty comes forth.

In order to control people in conquered territories and guard the central court, kings of the Western Zhou often enfeoff sons and other close relatives with remote but strategically important land. Although it drastically contradicted with traditional 'ji fu' system, the system still operated. Many aristocrats with the surname 'Ji' and affines of the royal family lived near capitals of Zhou (Haojing and Luoyi), or near the former fief of Zhou, Zhouyuan. According to documents and inscriptions, clans with the surname 'Ji' included Zhou, Shao, Bi, Rong, Mao, Jing, two Guo (Guozhong and Guoji), Nan, Hua, and Han. Besides famous clans with the surname 'Jiang', clans of affines included Diao, San, Zhong, Tanji, Wei, Yi, etc. Inscriptions showed that they were all important vassals and officers. The picture above was compatible with the 'ji fu' system.

Nevertheless, the feudalism of the Western Zhou was a significant political reformation, which not only altered the geographical distribution formed by the long-existing inner and outer 'fu' system, but also gradually changed the political pattern of myriad 'bang'. Some political systems of mature state were initially instituted within several great 'bang' enfeoffed by kings of the Western Zhou, which is an issue irrelevant to this paper, requiring no further discussion now.

NOTES

¹ Translations of *Shangshu* (尚书) and *Shijing* (诗经) are taken from James Legge, *Sacred Books of the East* (1879), vol. III, and *The Chinese Classics* (1898), vol. 4, 1898, <http://ctext.org/ancient-classic>, in which 'state' is equivalent to 'chiefdom' in this paper.

² Translations of *Zhan Guo Ce* (战国策) are taken from Bramwell Seaton Bonsall, *Records of the Warring States*. Accessed October 22, 2014. <http://lib.hku.hk/bonsall/zhanguoce/index1.html>.

³ The translation of *Shiji* (史记) is taken from Herbert J. Allen, *Ssūma Ch'ien's Historical Records* (Royal Asiatic Society, 1894).

⁴ It was Zhao Boxiong who firstly considered vassal states in the Western Zhou as 'secondary bang' (Zhao 1990).

⁵ Originally in Elman R. Service. 1985. *A Century of Controversy: Ethnological Issues from 1860 to 1960*.

⁶ Zhao Boxiong questioned notions of 'ji nei/wai' (inside/outside of land enclosing the capital) (Zhao 1990: 26–40).

⁷ Cf. 'Dasima' (The Grand Officer of Army; 大司马), in *Zhouli: Xiaguan Sima* (*Rites of Zhou: Offices of Summer*; 周礼·夏官司马), Zheng Xuan's annotation.

⁸ Cf. 'Dazai' (The Grand General Governor; 大宰), in *Zhouli: Tianguan Zhongzai* (*Rites of Zhou: Offices of the Heaven*; 周礼·天官冢宰), Zheng Xuan's annotation.

⁹ Cf. 'Zhifang' (Various Duties; 职方), in *Yizhoushu*. Kong Chao's annotation.

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