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Research Article

A Fatal Case of *Gu* 蠱 Poisoning in Fourth-Century BC China?¹

Constance A. Cook

[C. A. Cook is a professor of Chinese at Lehigh University, Bethlehem, PA, USA. She specializes in BC excavated texts. Books include *Birth in Ancient China*, co-authored with Luo Xinhui, SUNY Press, 2017; *Stalk Divination: An Alternative to the I-ching*, co-authored with Zhao Lu, Oxford University Press, 2017; *Ancestors, Kings, and the Dao*, Harvard University Asian Center, 2017; *Ancient China: A History*, with J. Major, Routledge Press, 2016; *Death in Ancient China: The Tale of One Man's Journey*, Brill Publishers, 2006; *A Sourcebook of Ancient Chinese Bronze Inscriptions*, ed. and written with P. Goldin, Society for the Study of Early China Monograph 7, 2016; *Defining Chu: Image and Reality in Ancient China*, ed. and written with J. Major, University of Hawaii Press, 1999. Contact: cac8@lehigh.edu]

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Abstract: This essay reexamines the fourth century BC divination records found in the tomb of Shao Tuo 邵佗 in Baoshan 包山, Jingzhou 荊州, Hubei. Using charts, rules, and examples for divination from a newly discovered trigram divination text, called by modern scholars, the *Shifa* 筮法 (Stalk Method), and preserved in the Tsinghua University collection of Warring States period bamboo manuscripts, the author suggests a radical new way to interpret stalk divination results and speculates upon a possible diagnosis. Essentially, the author unpacks the Baoshan results according to the rules of trigram divination given in the *Shifa* and not of hexagram divination as in the *Zhouyi* 周易 (Changes of Zhou).

As early as the late Shang dynasty (c. 1200-c. 1046 BC) oracle bones, cases of toxic *gu* 蠱 poisoning have been reported. By the Warring States era (c. 475-221 BC), it was understood as an affliction suffered by men who spend too

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much time with women and become “confused” (*huo* 惑). The Han dictionary, the *Shuowen* 說文 (Explicated Patterns; 121 AD) links it to intestinal worms.² It is mentioned at the end of the “Heat Illness” (“Re bing” 熱病) section of the *Lingshu jing* 靈樞經 (Classic of the Numinous Pivot) and the symptoms are described as “the waist and spine of the body feel as if they are breaking apart, so that [the patient] does not feel like eating or drinking” (*shenti yao ji ru jie, bu yu yinshi* 身體腰脊如解, 不欲飲食).³ Antidotes mentioned in the *Shanhai jing* 山海經 (Classic of Mountains and Seas) (“Nanshan jing” 南山經, “Zhongshan jing” 中山經) include ingesting a nine-tailed fox-like monster that eats people, God Platform stones (*di tai zhi shi* 帝臺之石), the four-legged Di fish (*di yu* 鯀魚), Kang wood (*kang mu* 亢木), or a three-legged straight-tailed turtle (*bie* 鱉).⁴ In the section on officers associated with criminal justice in the *Zhouli* 周禮 (Zhou Rites) (“Qiuguan Sikou” 秋官司寇), the office of Shushi 庶氏 “handles the exorcism of toxic *gu* by expelling it by means of *gong* (attack)-style *shuo* (persuasion), and with auspicious grasses to attack (*gong*) it” (*zhang chu du gu, yi gongshuo gui zhi, jiacao gong zhi* 掌除毒蠱, 以攻說禱之, 嘉草攻之).⁵ According to Zheng Xuan 鄭玄 (127-200), the first part of the ritual involved prayer to seek and expel the responsible agent and the second part may have involved using burning herbs to smoke it out of the body. Tang commentator Jia Gongyan 賈公彥 (fl. mid seventh century) explained that Zheng later added that the procedure was similar to bursting the fluids out of a boil. As we will see in the discussion below, different types of *gong* were employed by the Chu doctors including the use of “command” or “thought” (*ming* 命, *si* 思) in order to “expel” *tuo* 脫 (a word possibly confused with *shuo* 說 by the Han compilers?). There is no clear evidence in Baoshan, what implements the process of *gong* actually involved.

² Dingwen shuju bianji bu, comp., *Shuowen jiezi gulin zhengbu hebian* 說文解字詁林正補合編 (Compilation of Corrections and Additions to the Forest of Commentaries to the Explicated Patterns and Analyzed Graphs) (Taipei: Dingwen, 1977), Vol. 10, 1011-1015.

³ Guo Aichun 郭霽春, trans., *Huangdi neijing Lingshu jiaozhu yuyi* 皇帝內經靈樞校注語譯 (Translation and Annotation of the Numinous Pivot of the Inner Classic of the Yellow Emperor), Tianjin kexue jishu, 1989, 220. Guo suggests that *gu* for men felt like a hernia or intestinal blockage between the spleen and kidneys.

⁴ Hao Yixing 郝懿行, ed. *Shanhai jing jianshu* 山海經箋疏 (Annotated Classic of Mountains and Seas) (Taipei: Yiwen, 1974), 12 (“Nanshan jing”), 218, 226, 228, 263 (“Zhongshan jing”).

⁵ *Zhouli zhushu* 周禮注疏 (Annotated Zhou Rites) 37.250 (*Shisanjing zhushu* 十三經注疏, Beijing: Zhonghua, 1987 rpt, Vol. 1).

Stalks besides being exorcist tools used in curing the illness could also be used to diagnose.⁶ Although in transmitted texts, records of stalk use invariably seemed to refer to the *Zhouyi* hexagram method of interpretation, this essay will suggest that the trigram divination method found in the recently discovered text *Shifa* 筮法 (Stalk Method), may better explain a case found in the fourth century BC bamboo record dating from 318-316 BC of divination and sacrifice discovered in Tomb 2 in the burial site of Baoshan 包山, north of the ancient Chu city of Jinancheng 紀南城 in modern Jingzhou 荊州, Hubei.⁷ This chronicle documented the efforts of a team of diviners using different methods to determine the source of “spiritual blame” or “harm” (*jiu* 咎) caused by supernatural curses (*sui* 祟) upon the nobleman’s body, career, and home. Out of eight divination events, six included the results of stalk divination recorded in two parallel series of six numbers each. Without evidence of other methods, scholars recognized these as hexagrams, but all attempts to correlate the hexagrams and the diviners’ concerns and actions with the mantic statements in either the *Zhouyi* 周易 (Changes of Zhou) or the *Guicang* 歸藏 (Returned to Concealment; hexagram text with different statements from the *Zhouyi*, discovered in Wangjiatai 王家台, Hubei) have failed to reveal any relationship to the results given in the Baoshan text.⁸ Now however, we find that breaking the two parallel lines of

⁶ *Zuozhuan* 左傳 (Zuo’s Commentary), Zhao 1.12 discussed in more detail below; see also M. Kalinowski, “Diviners and Astrologers under the Eastern Zhou: Transmitted Texts and Recent Archaeological Discoveries,” in J. Lagerwey and M. Kalinowski, eds., *Early Chinese Religion, Part One: Shang through Han (1250 BC-220 AD)*, Leiden: Brill, 2009, 359. This famous case reverts to a discussion of the Gu hexagram in the *Zhouyi*, see discussion of the case and the hexagram in T. J. Hinrichs & L. L. Barnes, eds. *Chinese Medicine and Healing: An Illustrated History*, Cambridge, MA: Belknap of Harvard University, 2013, 18-21.

⁷ The *Shifa* is published in Li Xueqin 李學勤, ed., *Qinghua daxue cang Zhanguo zhujian* 清華大學藏戰國竹簡 (Warring States Bamboo Texts Stored at Tsinghua University), Vol. 4, Shanghai: Zhongxi, 2013. For the Baoshan material, see Hubeisheng Jingsha tielu kaogudui 湖北省荊沙鐵路考古隊, *Baoshan Chu jian* 包山楚簡 (Chu Bamboo Texts of Baoshan), Beijing: Wenwu, 1991, 32-37; Chen Wei 陳偉, *Baoshan Chu jian chutan* 包山楚簡初探 (Preliminary Investigation into the Chu Bamboo Texts of Baoshan), Wuhan: Wuhan daxue, 1996; C. A. Cook, *Death in Ancient China: The Tale of One Man’s Journey*, Leiden: Brill, 2006; M. Kalinowski, “Diviners and Astrologers,” 374-385; L. Raphals, *Divination and Prediction in Early China and Ancient Greece*, Cambridge: Cambridge University, 2013, 333-337.

⁸ See, for example, Yan Changgui 晏昌貴, *Wuqi yu yinsi – Chu jian suo jian fangshu zongjiao kao* 巫鬼與淫祀 -- 楚簡所見方術宗教考 (Shamans, Ghosts, and Lewd Rites: Examination of the Magical Arts and Religion in the Chu Bamboo Texts), in Chen Wei, ed., *Chu di chutu Zhanguo jiance yanjiu* 楚地出土戰國簡冊研究 (Studies in the Warring States Bamboo Texts Excavated in the Chu Region), Vol. 7, Wuhan: Wuhan University, 2010. For the *Guicang*, see Wang Mingqin 王明欽, “Wangjiatai Qin mu

six numbers each into four trigrams in the *Shifa* are read as the “four positions” (*si wei* 四位) for determining “intentions and issues” (*zhi shi* 志事, a term also found in the Baoshan record). The reading of the four positions is determined by the positions and relative values of the individual trigrams calculated along with external factors such time, curse origin, male-female values, and “extraordinary number” images (*xian* 象) provided in the manual. This type of divinatory equation correlates much better with the Baoshan diviners’ readings than any attempt to use the *Zhouyi*.⁹ Indeed, from our reading of the stalk divination events in the Baoshan record, we may speculate that their client, Shao Tuo 邵佗, died in 316 BC less from a failure of divination to determine the source of the curse but from an overwhelming case of *gu* poisoning.

The Baoshan record covers the last three years of Shao Tuo’s illness. While his concerns began with worries with his government career and what seemed a minor health issue, over time his physical problems became an acute issue. His symptoms included lack of appetite, pain in “heart and abdomen” (*xinfu* 心服), the “breath” (*qi* 氣) going up (instead of down as is proper), and finally an inability to stand. The bamboo text records eight days

zhujian gaishu” 王家台秦墓竹簡概述 (Overview of the Qin Bamboo Text from Wangjiatai), in Ai Lan and Xing Wen, eds., *Xinchu jianbo yanjiu: xinchu jianbo guoji xueshu yantaohui wenji 2000 nian 8 yue*, Beijing 新出簡帛研究：新出簡帛國際學術研討會文集 2000 年 8 月，北京 (Studies on Recently Discovered Chinese Bamboo and Silk Manuscripts: Proceedings of International Conference on Recently Discovered Chinese Bamboo and Silk Manuscripts, August 2000, Beijing), Aurora Centre for the Study of Ancient Civilizations, Peking University Publication Series, No. 8, Beijing: Wenwu, 2004, 26-49.

⁹ Other scholars who also apply the *Shifa* to Chu divination records, include Ma Nan 馬楠, Li Rui 李銳, and Cai Feizhou 蔡飛舟: Ma Nan, “Qinghua jian *Shifa* er ti” 清華簡《筮法》二題 (Two Points Concerning the Tsinghua Bamboo *Stalk Method*), *Shenzhen daxue xuebao* 深圳大學學報 (Shenzhen University Academic Journal) 2014.1: 64-65; Li Rui, “Du Qinghua jian *Shifa* zhaji” 讀清華簡《筮法》札記 (Notes on Reading the Tsinghua Bamboo *Stalk Method*), ms.; Cai Feizhou, “Qinghua jian *Shifa* bushi” 清華簡《筮法》補釋 (Additional Interpretations of the Tsinghua Bamboo *Stalk Method*), *Zhouyi yanjiu* 周易研究 (Studies of the Changes of Zhou) 2015.2: 10-18. For other relevant studies on the *Shifa*, see Xie Bingyun 謝炳軍, “Qinghua jian *Shifa* lilunxing yu tixing xintan” 清華簡《筮法》理論性與體系性新探 (New Investigations into the Theories and System of the Tsinghua Bamboo *Stalk Method*), *Lilun yuekan* 理論月刊 (Theory Monthly) 2015. 6. I note that each of these scholars have different approaches and are not the same as that suggested in this essay and in an earlier version of these ideas expressed by me in Ke Heli 柯鶴立, “Shiyong Qinghua jian *Shifa* jiedu Baoshan zhanbu jilu zhong gua yi” 試用清華簡《筮法》解讀包山占卜記錄中卦義 (Using the Tsinghua Bamboo *Stalk Method* to Explain the Meaning of the Gua in the Baoshan Divination Record), *Jianbo yanjiu* 簡帛研究 (Studies of Bamboo and Silk Manuscripts) 2016: 12-22.

of rituals, some being performed as annual seasonal rites but others being clearly emergencies. Of the eight events, the second and sixth included only sacrifices but no divination. The remaining six days included divination by twelve different diviners using ten differently named methods. Of these, three diviners specialized in stalk methods that produce the two parallel lines of numbers, which can be read as four trigrams. The results of the stalk divination is according to the diviners proclaimed as “auspicious” (*ji* 吉) in every case, but with certain mitigating factors called “minor concerns” (*shao you* 少憂). We will examine each result using the *Shifa* method for insight into the minds of Shao Tuo’s diviners.

The *Shifa* (name provided by the Tsinghua University Warring States bamboo manuscript preservation team) is a 61-strip manual that could roll out somewhat like a placemat. It consisted of 30 different sections of texts and diagrams that basically provided examples of four-position trigram interpretation for different daily issues in the life of an elite man (travel, marriage, illness, military and government matters, visits, etc.) on the right half of the text, and charts, diagrams, and lists on the left half that could be used to correlate with the trigram patterns for interpretation. It also included a few general rules which could be followed if other priorities (such as the appearance of “extraordinary numbers” or other factors prevailed).¹⁰ One basic rule that explains why each trigram set in the Baoshan record could be “auspicious” is attached to a chart listing potential sources of curses for each trigram: “According to the way of Heaven, male trumps female and a majority trumps a minority” (*Fu tian zhi dao, nan sheng nü, zhong sheng gua* 夫天之道，男勝女，眾勝寡). The writers of the *Shifa* understood that eight trigrams were divided by gender (not Yin and Yang) and that male trigrams always superseded female trigrams. However, if there were a majority of one type of trigram, even female ones, then the results were positive for the question being addressed (if the question was negative, a positive result might be: yes, his wife will die soon). The Baoshan examples all follow this simple “majority rules” standard to derive uniformly auspicious responses.

The trigram sets or *gua* 卦 were written in number series. Number series had been around since the Shang period, including numbers 1, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, but by the fourth century BC these sets started to simplify privileging binomial pairings of 1s and 6s, or 1s and 8s. These generally match the later coding for Yang (unbroken lines) and Yin (broken lines). However, occasionally other numbers still appeared in fourth-century bamboo texts from the Chu area. The Baoshan *gua* sometimes included a 5 or 8 and the *Shifa gua* included 4, 5, 8, and 9. The later Yin and Yang values of these numbers can be determined by later Han commentaries linked to the *Zhouyi* tradition,

¹⁰ For an explanation of the *Shifa* methodology and a complete translation of the text, see C. A. Cook and Zhao Lu, *Stalk Divination: A Newly Discovered Alternative to the I-Ching*, New York and Oxford: Oxford University, 2017.

such as the *Shuogua* 說卦 (Explicating the Gua), which, as Tsinghua scholars note, retains several aspects defining the values of *gua* that are somewhat reminiscent of the *Shifa*.¹¹ These include the interpretation of odd numbers as Yang and even numbers as Yin, the idea that the trigrams are male and female and in ranked orders of strength. These are descending from the most powerful to the least, i.e. Male: Qian 乾, Zhen 震, Kan 坎, Gen 艮; Female: Kun 坤, Xun 巽, Li 離, Dui 兌.¹² The *Shuogua* also connects the trigrams to sets of images and body parts, which we also find in the *Shifa*, but in slightly different arrangements. In the *Shifa*, the trigram-body relationships are:

乾 Qian (head)
 坎 Kan (ears)
 艮 Gen (lower arms and hands)
 震 Zhen (legs below the knee and feet)
 兌 Dui (mouth, eyes, or face)
 坤 Kun (chest or heart)
 離 Li (abdomen)
 巽 Xun (inner thighs and crotch)

In the *Shifa*, paired male and female sets of the same rank are called husband-and-wife combinations (Qian-Kun, Gen-Dui, Kan-Li, Zhen-Xun), but when the pure Yang and pure Yin *gua*, such as Qian and Kun, appeared next to each other in the four positions, they are called the “shining-and-the somber” (*zhaomu* 昭穆). Paired trigrams could neutralize each other’s power.

In the *Shifa*, “images” (*xiang*) are linked to the extraordinary numbers: 4, 5, 8, 9.¹³ A rule for interpreting the value of these numbers when they appear in the trigrams is found on *Shifa* strip 61, tacked onto the end of Section 29 (which outlines the sets of images associated with each of the four extraordinary numbers): “In all cases of line numbers no matter whether big or small, when arising in the upper register, there is something baleful on the outside; if they arise in the lower register, there is something baleful on the inside; if

¹¹ See Li Xueqin, ed., *Qinghua daxue cang Zhanguo zhujian* 2013; Liao Mingchun 廖名春, “Qinghua jian *Shifa* pian yu *Shuogua zhuan*” 清華簡《筮法》篇與《說卦傳》 (The Tsinghua Bamboo Text *Stalk Method* and the *Explicating the Gua Commentary*), *Wenwu* 文物 (Historical Texts and Relics) 2013.8: 70-72.

¹² All the trigram names are familiar to the *Zhouyi*, although a few, like the names of hexagrams in the *Guicang*, are written with variant graphs or words (such as *lao* 勞 for *kan* 坎); Kan is also associated with the South and Fire opposite to Li 離 and the reverse of *Zhouyi* tradition. This may be symbolic of Chu privileging a male trigram for its symbol in the system of *wuxing* (five processes or five agents).

¹³ In Section 29, the numbers are listed with Yin numbers outside and Yang numbers inside. This is curiously opposite the correlation of female trigrams linked to inner body parts and male trigrams to outer body parts on the diagram in Section 24.

they arise in both upper and lower registers, then the country will experience military commands, a *zhixie* monster, wind and rain, or eclipses of the sun and moon" (*fan yao, ru da, ru xiao; zuo yu shang, wai you lin; zuo yu xia, nei you lin; shangxia jie zuo, bang you bingming, zhixie, fengyu, riyue you zai* 凡爻, 如大、如小; 作於上、外有吝; 作於下, 內有吝; 上下皆作, 邦有兵命、麇獬、風雨, 日月有裁).¹⁴ The interpretations of inner and outer aspects of the Baoshan client's "concerns" (vacillating from "self" in the lower right quadrant of the four positioned trigrams to "outside" in the upper left) correlate pretty well with the upper registers and lower registers on the *Siwei biao* 四位表 (Chart of the Four Positions) (Section 20), translated below.

In order to apply the *Shifa* method to the Baoshan divination events with *gua*, we supply a few of the relevant charts of information. First and foremost is the *Shifa* 'Chart of the Four Positions' with includes four arenas of concern to the elite man: military maneuvers, family, career at court, and the physical residence facility. Each of the areas could suffer from curses that divination would diagnose. Shao Tuo's diviners were concerned with every aspect named except that of military maneuvers.

¹⁴ The original Tsinghua transcriptions of this section did not transcribe *zhixie* monster or *zai* for "cutting > eclipse." *Zhixie* was written in a large variety of phonetically related ways, sometimes reversing the two syllables. The Tsinghua text has 麇 followed by a graph that can be transcribed as 基. The first graph is directly used in variations of the monster's name (also written 豸) and the latter graph is a phonetic loan for the word sometimes written as 解 or 獬. This monster, often misread as a "unicorn," was, in fact, according to the *Shuowen*, a "spirit goat" that appeared to decide court cases, because it always knew who was telling the truth or not. The *Mozi* 31 "Ming gui" 明鬼 preserves a scene in which a goat sacrificed before a trial came alive to butt and kill the guilty party (see Sun Yirang 孫詒讓, *Mozi jiangou* 墨子間詁 (The Annotated Mozi), Beijing: Zhonghua, 2001, 232-233). The appearance of a *zhixie* monster represented the advent of divine punishment. As to what animal it might have really corresponded to, note the existence of the saola in Southeast Asia which from the side appeared to have one long horn. The Tsinghua editors read the original graph they transcribe as 此 as "eclipse" *shi* 食. There is no phonetic relation between these two words. Closer in sound and even to the original graphic form is *zai* 戕 phonetically related to *zai* 裁 or 災 "calamity."

Section 20 'The Chart of the Four Positions' (*Siwei biao* 四位表) (strips 32-35).

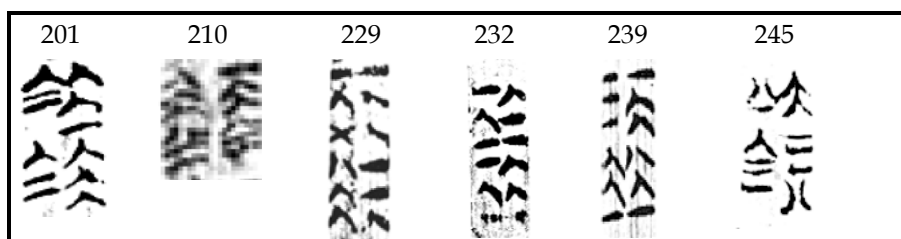
下軍之位 the position of the lower army	上軍之位 the position of the upper army
次軍之位 the position of the auxiliary army	中軍之位 the position of the middle army

臣妾之位 the position of the servants	子姓之位 the position of the lineage
妻之位也 the position of the wife	躬身之位 the position of oneself

臣之位也 the position of the retainer	君之位也 the position of the lord
大夫之位 the position of the grandee	身之位也 the position of oneself

外之位也 the position of outside [the gate]	門之位也 the position of the gate
宮廷之位 the position of the inside court	室之位也 the position of the chamber

Basically, each "concern" expressed by the Baoshan diviners can relate to one of these areas with each of the four positions in the area occupied by one *gua*. Before we begin to analyze the application of these rules to the Baoshan examples, it is important to understand the direction that the number series *gua* were read. We can understand from the punctuation marks applied to both the series of trigrams and the interpretative sentences that follow them, that the diviner read from right to left top to bottom and that he first read the trigram series and then the instructions on how to interpret them (see *Shifa* Sections 1-13). We will thus read the Baoshan *gua* in this way as well. In the Baoshan divination record, *gua* presented in two parallel series of six numbers appear on strips 201, 210, 232, 239, and 245. In the chart below of the original Baoshan *gua* representations (listed by Strip number), it is obvious that some were written as trigrams (201, 210, 239), and others, such as 245 (which shows a pattern of 2 and 4 lines), less so. It is unclear from the original illustration if in the case of 245, the lines had to avoid a string that originally bound the text together or if another organizing principle was at work.



If we translate each parallel set of numerical *gua* into the familiar Yin-Yang forms of the male or female trigrams in the four positions, we see the following:

Strip 201	Strip 210	Strip 229
Dui (F) Zhen (M) 	Kun (F) Gen (M) 	Li (F) Gen (M)
Dui (F) Kun (F) 	Dui (F) Dui (F) 	Kun (F) Xun (F)
Strip 232	Strip 239	Strip 245
Li (F) Dui (F) 	Qian (M) Gen (M) 	Kan (M) Zhen (M)
Li (F) Zhen (M) 	Zhen (M) Zhen (M) 	Qian (M) Xun (F)

Note that in each case one gender or another predominates. This follows the “majority rules” prerequisite for a positive result. The first four examples have three female trigrams and only one male, and the last two examples are predominately male. Strip 239 features four male trigrams, and strip 245 just three males and one female. Discussion of further interpretation of these patterns to determine the nature of the specified concerns for each set requires an understanding of how the four trigrams relate to each other as well as the significance of the appearance of the extraordinary numbers, 5 and 8. This discussion will require more information drawn from the *Shifa* manual.

External factors calculated by the diviners could be drawn from the lists of sources of curses indicated by trigram in Section 26 (‘Sui’ 祟), the lists of “images” linked to specific extraordinary numbers in Section 29 (‘Yao xiang’ 爻象), a chart of seasonal levels of auspiciousness for each from Section 21

(‘Siji jixiong’ 四季吉凶), and finally the trigram correlations for the “stem” and “branch” signs according to Sections 25 and 27 (‘Tiangan yu gua’ 天干與卦 and ‘Dizhi yu gua’ 地支與卦).¹⁵ In the charts, below, we include only those parts relevant to the Baoshan divination events.

Since all eight trigrams appear in the Baoshan results, the entire list of potential curses is included in the following chart based on strips 43-50. Note that they are listed in Male-Female order but after the Pure Yang and Pure Yin examples of Qian and Kun, the list begins with those pairs lowest in rank. This reflects the importance of Gen in the role of young “heir” and as symbolized in the movement of the father Qian and mother Kun during the period of darkness to Xun (symbol of adult female fertility in Spring and last on the list of curses) to conceive the new moon and then to Gen (symbol of the newly born moon) in Section 22 of the *Shifa*.

<p>乾崇：純五、滅宗；九、乃山；濬、乃父之不葬死；暮純、乃室中、乃父。</p> <p>Qian curses: if the trigram is composed of pure fives, it is a destroyed ancestral shrine; if there appears a nine, then it is a mountain; if it is a mixture of various numbers, then it is a father who died without being buried; if it is in the evening and all of one kind of number, then the source is in the middle of the room or the father.</p> <p>坤崇：門、行。純，乃母。八，乃奴以死，乃西祭。四，乃縊者。</p> <p>Kun curses: it is the gate or passageway; if it is all of one kind of number, then it is the mother; if there is an eight, then it is a slave who died or the western sacrifice; if there is a four, then it is one who was hanged.</p> <p>艮崇：殮；九、乃虞；五、乃櫻魘。</p> <p>Gen curses: it is a burial; if there is a nine, then it is a boar; if there is a five then it is a <i>siba</i> demon.</p> <p>兌崇：女子大面端嚇死；長女為妾而死。</p> <p>Dui curses: it is a girl who died of fright from [a demon with] a big face and head; it is an elder sister who became a concubine and died.</p> <p>坎崇：風、長殤；五、伏劍者；九、牡虞；四、縊者；一四一五、乃辜。</p> <p>Kan curses: it is wind or an elder sibling who died prematurely; if there is a five, it is one who fell to the sword; if there is a nine, it is a male boar; if there is a four, it is one who was hung; if there is one four and one five, then it is one who was quartered.</p>

¹⁵ Note that the division and titling of each division in the *Shifa* was done by the Tsinghua University team in charge of this manuscript.

離崇: 熱、溺者；四、縊者；一四一五、長女殤；二五夾四、辜者。
 Li curses: one who was burned or drowned; if there is a four, it is one who was hung; if there is one four and one five, then it is an elder daughter who died prematurely; if there are two five's on each side of a four, it is one who was quartered.

震崇: 日出、東方；食日、監（炎？）天；昃日、[顛?]天；暮日、雨師；五、乃狂者；九、乃戶。
 Zhen curses: it is dawn or east; if it is mealtime, then it is the Blazing Sky, if the sun is slanting [westward], then it is the White [?] Sky; if it is dusk, it is the Rain Master; if there is a five, then it is an insane person; if there is a nine, then it is the door.

巽崇: 字殤；五、八乃巫；九、粒（魯生）、孿；四、非狂乃縊者。
 Xun curses: it is one who died prematurely in childbirth; if there is five or eight, then it is a shaman; if there is a nine, then it is one who split open [when birthing] or delivered twins; if there is a four, if it is not an insane person, then it is one who was hung.

Since the Baoshan cases include only the extraordinary numbers 8 and 5, only these are listed below (from strips 52-55):

凡爻象八為風、為水、為言、為飛鳥、為腫脹、為魚、為罐筩；在上為醪、下為汰。
 With regard to line number images for 8, they are wind, water, words, flying birds, swellings, fish, measuring cylinders; [when 8 appears] in the upper [trigram], it is alcohol [with sediment], and in the lower [one] it is used wash water [for cleaning grain].

五象為天、為日、為貴人、為兵、為血、為車、為方、為憂、為懼、為飢。
 The [line] images for 5 are sky, sun, noble men, soldiers, blood, chariots, squares, anxiety, fear, and hunger.

Before providing the temporal correlates for the Baoshan divination events, we provide a list of those events (numbered as in C. A. Cook, *Death in Ancient China*, 2006), including the strip number on which the trigram set appears, the event number (there were often many types of divination used on a single day), the year, season, and day of the event, the diviner's name, and the method used to produce the *gua*.

Gua Number	Event Number	BC Date Season	Day	Diviner's Name	Stated Stalk Method
201	I.3	318 early Summer	Yiwei 乙未	Ying Hui 應會	Yangshi 央筮
210	IV.1	317 mid Summer	Yichou 乙丑	Wu Sheng 五生	Chengde 承德
229	VII.2	316 early Summer	Jimao 己卯	Chen Yi 陳乙	Gongming 共命
232	VII.4	“	“	Wu Sheng	Chengde
239	VII.7	“	“	Chen Yi	Gongming
245	VII.9	“	“	Wu Sheng	Chengde

The Baoshan diviners regularly divined in the Summer. It is noteworthy that the *Shifa* also privileges Summer and the South in Section 24 which displays the correlations and the cycle of the eight trigrams in relation to the human body (*guawei tu* 卦位圖, *renshen tu* 人身圖) (not shown here).¹⁶ Indeed, the traditional correlations of Kan and Li as Water and Fire are reversed in the *Shifa* so that Kan represents South and Fire and Li represents North and Water. As in ancient maps, the *Shifa* manual had South at the top. The correlations of the relative auspiciousness for the trigrams during the Summer in the *Shifa* are as follows (strip 37):

Greatly Auspicious 大吉	Slightly Auspicious 小吉	Slightly Inauspicious 小凶	Greatly Inauspicious 大凶
Kan 坎	Zhen Xun 震巽	Gen Li 艮離	Dui 兌

The following chart shows how the *Shifa* trigram (strips 44, 48, 53, 55) correlates for the three dates given in the Baoshan examples. It is noteworthy that *two different days* actually correlated to the *same trigram combination* and that all the trigrams in these combinations are *female*. How this affects the interpretation of the relations between the four trigrams in the sets with regard to the specific concerns will be discussed below.

¹⁶ For the full text, see Cook and Zhao, *Stalk Divination*, 2017.

Day and Astral Period of Baoshan Events	Trigram correlates from <i>Shifa</i> Sections 25 & 27
Yiwei 乙未	Kun Xun 坤巽
Yichou 乙丑	Kun Xun 坤巽
Jimao 己卯	Li Li 離離

The following chart lists the topics of the “concerns” outlined by each Baoshan diviner for each example where a *gua* was involved. Note that the concerns over time move from possible curses from outside affairs, to worries about the residence, and finally to the body of the client himself. The chart also notes the spirits who the diviners suspected of delivering the curses that affected the specific areas of the client’s life and body causing “concern.” Typically, the diviners recorded the *gua* in response to the question “Shall it not be that [our client] harbors spiritual blame?” (*shang wu you jiu* 尚毋有咎) and then was followed with a judgment such as “divining it determines auspiciousness in the long term but with remaining concerns with regard to [his person, career, or residence]” (*zhan zhi heng zhen ji shao you you yu...* 占之恆貞吉少有憂於...). This formula was then followed by a series of proposed ritual actions directed towards different spiritual agencies “in order to find the source of his curse(s)” (*yi qi gu sui zhi* 以其故崇之). Some of these were presumably carried out, although only a few sacrifices and exorcisms are actually recorded as completed. Those were usually followed with verifying prognostications that the client would be fine.

Generally, prayers and sacrifices were used to persuade the spirits to release the client from “blame,” but as discussed below some spirits required aggressive exorcism techniques.

Gua Number Concern	Ritual Proposed	Receiving Spirit¹⁷
201 body career advancement	1. Prayer, sac. 2. Meal 3. Meal 4. Meal	1. Residence Earth Lord 宮地主 (Yin version?) 2. Father's spirit 3. Mother's spirit 4. Father-in-law (?)
210 body chambers external affairs	1. Prayer, sac 2. Prayer, sac. 3. Prayer, sac.	1. Occluded Tai 蝕太 (Yin version of Taiyi?) 2. Earth Alter 社 3. Residence walkway 宮 行
229 chambers	Prayer, sac.	Residence walkway
232 chambers (private rooms)	1. Prayer, sac. 2. Prayer, sac., meal 3. Dismembering, sac.	1. Residence Earth Lord 宮侯土 (Yang version?) 2. Walkway 行 3. Grand Gateway 大門
239 body	1. Prayer, sac. 2. Prayer, sac., meal 3. Prayer, sac., meal	1. Five Mountains 五山 2. King Zhao 昭王 3. Four generations of male ancestors (including father)
245 body	Prayers, major animal sac.	Five distant Chu founder kings

The Baoshan divination and sacrifice records buried in the northern chamber of the client's eastward facing tomb were likely the last section of a much longer record which involved three year cycles of rituals, some routine and others dealing with more acute issues. Proposed or initiated rituals begun at one time were confirmed as performed with good results in later records. Usually the verification involved a different diviner employing a different method of shell or stalk divination. The need for the performance of ongoing exorcism rituals (such as "removal," *tuo* 脫) seemed to be part of the daily life of an elite male. It is not clear if every member of the elite had regular access to a team of diviners. Shao Tuo was an official of the Zuoyin 左尹 administrative level and a distant descendant of a Chu king, King Zhao. Essentially he was concerned with managing local affairs, including many

¹⁷ For research into the various spirits found in Chu bamboo texts, see Yan Changgui, *Wugui yu yinsi*, 2010.

legal cases and trade issues. His work required travel and the punishment of criminals, which in the ancient mind exposed him to dangerous spirits outside the protection of the city and his home and possibly to vengeful ghosts of people who had died.

Generally, the rituals proposed and initiated involved prayer and different types of animal sacrifice depending on the rank and gender of the ancestral or environmental spirits. The diviners considered the client's recently deceased father and mother as among the most likely and potent sources of harm or "blame" (*jiu*). However, they did not rule out influence from distant ancestors, sky and earth spirits, and anonymous ghosts suggesting that "blame" passed across the boundaries of time and space. Appeasing the spirits with material gifts of food, clothing, and jade was the first step in mitigating harm, but in some cases forceful punishing exorcism methods had to be employed. These were especially useful against the unnamed ghosts and some environmental deities. For example, in the example on Strip 210, 'Numinous Ancestral [Ghosts]' (Mingzu 明祖) were "released" (*jie* 解) from the client's body through a process of "intended attack" (*sigong* 思攻). This involved either a mental technique, curses against the ghost, or the actual pointing of an object at the affected area of the body. Judging from *Rishu* 日書 (Day Book) records, one potential object may have been a thorn-tipped arrow with a peach-wood shaft.¹⁸ Baleful influences were also "removed" (*chu* 除) from the residence chamber(s) (*gongshi* 宮室), but how this was done—chanting, incense, special concoctions and/or certain performative ritual actions—remains a mystery. The need to clean out the residence chamber was repeated in the example on Strip 229.¹⁹

Case by Case Analysis









In the six cases examined below (and referred to by their strip number), the "four positions" of the Baoshan sets are matched with the relevant squares from the "Four Position Chart" (shown above) that match the areas of "concern" specified by the Baoshan diviners. Then the information from the other charts is brought in to help interpret the significance of the pattern and better understand the diviner's ritual response. This process allows speculation regarding the nature of Shao Tuo's illness, not in modern medical terms but according to the illness definitions of the time period.

¹⁸ For a variety of items including peach wood arrows favored by the Chu, see Liu Lexian 劉樂賢, *Shuihudi Qin jian Rishu yanjiu* 睡虎地秦簡日書研究 (A Study of the Qin Bamboo Day Books from Shuihudi), Dalu diqu boshi lunwen congkan, Taipei: Wenjian, 1993, 257-260.

¹⁹ See Yan Changgui, *Wugui yu yinsi*, 2010, 290-299.

Case One (Strip 201):

In Baoshan case 201, the diviner Ying Hui used the stalk divination method called Yangshi on a Kun-Xun trigram day to divine about his client's (Shao Tuo's) person and his career. The concern for his person can be matched with the realm for "family" relationships (second box from the top in the "Four Position Chart") and the "career" concern can be matched to the realm on governmental positions (third box from the top). In each realm the position of "self" is located in the lower right square. The square immediately above "self", either "ruler" or "lineage" in these two examples, presents an outer and higher relationship to "self," but the upper left square represents the most distant or outer relationship to "self." The square in the lower left (adjacent to "self") is an inner subordinate relationship (such as "wife"). It is noteworthy that the most potent or "purely Yin" female trigram, Kun, occupies the "self" position (in both cases) and that it was a Kun day. In terms of physical symptoms, it might indicate a problem in the chest.

Family		Career	
臣妾之位 servants  兌 (F)	子姓之位 lineage  震 (M)	臣之位也 retainer  兌 (F)	君之位也 ruler  震 (M)
妻之位也 wife  兌 (F)	躬身之位 self  坤 (F)	大夫之位 grandee  兌 (F)	身之位也 self  坤 (F)

Despite the general auspiciousness of "majority rules," the appearance of two Dui, the lowest ranked female trigram in the hierarchy of relative trigram power, in both the upper and lower registers may have had dire implications. Dui was the most inauspicious trigram during the Summer. It occupied the subordinate positions of "retainer" and "servants" in the outside positions and the "wife" and "grandee" on the inside positions (a *Zuo-yin* 左尹 level official was presumably higher than a "grandee" but the "self" position was dominated by a Pure Yin symbol). Dui curses were associated with servants and girls who had died and Kun curses could come from the spirits of Gates, Walkways or Mothers. Ying Hui decided to send prayers and sacrifices to the Earth Lord of the Residence (Gong Di Zhu 宮地主), the spirits of both Shao Tuo's parents (and not just the patrilineage focused on in other divination events), and to an official who may have been a high ranked member of his mother's family, perhaps her father.

The consideration of female spirits as sources may extend to the Earth Lord, which was referred to by two different titles in the Baoshan records,

one as Gong Tu Zhu as above, and the other in Strip 232 as “Earth Protector-Lord of the Residence” (Gong Hou Tu 宫侯土), perhaps the male identity of the Earth Lord. While the role of a *hou* 侯—traditionally associated with those lords who “protected” the Zhou court and its hegemony—can be clearly defined as male, that of a *zhu* is not gender-specific. On the other hand, many men played roles defined as a *zhu* of this or that in ancient times; however, a royal daughter was also a *gongzhu* 公主. A *zhu* could also refer to the spirit that occupied a field, a tree, or an altar. In the *Shuowen*, the *dizhu* was another term for the Altar of Soil, the *she* 社, typically located outside the city walls. But the Baoshan records include a separate ritual to *she* so the Gong Di Zhu must represent an Earth God inside of the city walls, perhaps inside his own residence (although the level of sacrifice and prayer applied to both were similar). By Han times the Earth was clearly understood as Yin to Heaven’s Yang, but in the fourth century BC texts such oppositions are less obvious. In some cases, it seems there are both male and female identities given to deities (much as the trigrams themselves were paired). For example, in the Baoshan records, Tai Yi 太乙, the high sky god, is also referred to as Occluded Tai (Shi Tai 蝕太), understood as a hidden Yin version of the high god. The female aspect of Tai Yi is reflected in the Guodian text *Taiyi shengshui* 太一生水 (“Tai Yi brought forth water”) where “he” is also described as “mother” (*mu* 母).²⁰ It seems then that some natural deities had Yin and Yang identities.









The single male trigram in the set of four in Case One is Zhen (slightly auspicious in the Summer), the highest ranked male trigram under Qian. Zhen is also Xun’s opposite. It occupied the “lineage” and “ruler” positions, both outside superior ranks, hence perhaps providing some indication of good fortune to diviner Ying Hui but also indicting powerful male influence. The long-term “removal” (*tuo*) exorcisms directed at the five patrilineal generations of ancestors (from King Zhao to Shao Tuo’s father) were completed during this time. Ying Hui claimed that the spirits of Shao’s parents were satisfied with their sacrifices so all should be well. He did not mention whether the proposed prayer and sacrifice sessions to the environmental spirits of the sky and earth were in fact performed.

Case Two (Strip 210):

In the Baoshan record on Strip 210, the Diviner Wu Sheng on another Kun Xun day, a year later than Case One (Strip 201), divined using stalk-method Cheng De regarding three types of concerns: Shao Tuo’s health (person), his residence, and “outside” matters. For these concerns, the *Shifa* realms for

²⁰ For a study and translation of this text (and its possible connection to the *Laozi*), see S. Cook, *The Bamboo Texts of Guodian: A Study and Complete Translation*, Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University East Asia Program, 2012, Vol. 1, 323-354.

“family” (for his person, as above) and “residence,” the fourth realm in the “Four Position Chart” are employed. We note that the Pure-Yin Kun trigram moved from the lower right position of “self” displayed in Case One (Strip 201) above to that of the upper left, the position of subordinates and outside. In the residence realm, this quadrant is literally marked as representing the “outside.” The two Dui trigrams are still present but have slipped to the lower “inside” register and now also exhibit extraordinary number 8s, an increasingly ominous sign with regard to the positions of “wife,” “self,” “residence court” and the client’s personal “chambers.” In terms of physical symptoms, Dui would indicate a problem with the mouth.

Family		Residence	
臣妾之位 servants  坤 Kun (F)	子姓之位 lineage  艮 Gen (M)	外之位也 outside  坤 Kun (F)	門之位也 gate  艮 Gen (M)
妻之位也 wife  兌 Dui (F)	躬身之位 self  兌 Dui (F)	宮廷之位 residence court  兌 Dui (F)	室之位也 chambers  兌 Dui (F)

While the overall influence of having a majority of female trigrams is auspicious, once again the specific placement of these trigrams and the fact that it is a day dominated by powerful female trigrams (Kun and Xun) may have further implications. In this case, the diviner proposed prayers and sacrifices to the Yin version of a high sky god, the earth altar *she*, traditionally located outside the gates, and to the spirit of the residence Walkway. The Walkway is not listed as one of the positions in the residence realm. However, it was the object of one of the traditional “Five Annual Sacrificial Rituals (*wusi* 五祀)²¹ and was likely physically located between the upper and lower registers, connecting inside to outside: from the “residence court” to “outside” or from the “chambers” to the “gate.” Kun is located in the “outside” position in the residence realm. Kun could indicate curses coming from either Walkway or Gate. The “gate” position in the residence realm is occupied by the sole male trigram Gen. This was the lowest ranked male trigram, and unlike Dui was only slightly inauspicious in the Summer. Gen could indicate a curse coming from a burial of some type (burials were outside the city). The fact that Kun occupies the position “servant” in the family realm might be of

²¹ These are traditionally Middle of the Room, Gate, Door, Walkway, and Stove, with the Impluvium taking the role of Middle of the Room in some cases. See Yan Changgui, *Wugui yu yinsi*, 2010, 133-138.

consequence, particularly if it had also appeared with a number 8, which according to the *Shifa*, would indicate a curse coming from the ghost of a dead slave. The fact that it was a Kun day may have alerted the diviner to pay extra attention to its potential influence.

Most informative indicators, however, are once again the appearance of two extremely inauspicious Dui, this time with number 8s. Dui indicates curses coming from dead girls, which is suggestive when coordinated with Kun's position in the "servants" quadrangle with the sign of a potential curse coming from a dead slave. Even more damning evidence comes from indicators associated with "images" of the extraordinary numbers. According to the rule about the positions in which extraordinary numbers appear (described above), the situation is baleful if one appears in any register. In this case, two appeared, both in the lower or "inside" register indicating misfortune associated with "wife" and "self" and "residence court" and personal "chambers."

The specific image associated with an 8 in the lower register is dirty water, or more specifically, water that had been used to wash rice (*dai* 汰). This term is found in the *Zuozhuan* and elsewhere to suggest "lewd" (*yin* 淫) or "extravagant" (*chi* 侈) behavior that can lead to toxic *gu* poisoning.²² Although the Baoshan record at no point explicitly states that Shao Tuo might be suffering from *gu* poisoning, there is an implicit suggestion of this concern by a narrowing focus on curses associated with his "chambers" (*gongshi* 宮室), even specifying in Case Four (Strip 232) a concern with his private chambers (*qin* 寢).

A famous case is explained in "Zhao 1" of the *Zuozhuan* regarding a chronic illness of the Lord of Jin 晉侯. When his diviners began to look for which spirit was responsible for the curse (*sui*) (*wen ci he shen ye* 問此何神也), a visiting doctor from Qin clarified that it wasn't a spirit that caused it, nor was it from something he ate. In fact, the illness was *gu* poison, also known as "getting near a woman's chamber" (*jin nü shi* 近女室), and that symptoms included delusions, loss of will, and possibly even death. Lewd behavior, he explained generated an inner heat and the symptoms of confusion and *gu* poisoning. The Qin doctor then explains the Gu hexagram in the *Zhouyi*, which has a Gen trigram over a Xun trigram represented a female (Xun) deluding a male (Gen), just as wind (the "image" for Xun) blows down a mountain (the "image" for Gen). He notes that in fact the ruler of Jin's illness directly stemmed from his having four Ji-lineage consorts. We do not know Shao Tuo's personal circumstances; did he have consorts or perhaps sexual relations with servant girls and did one of them die tragically? We do note that in the next case, Case Three (Strip 229), the Gu hexagram coincidentally


²² For example, *Chunqiu Zuozhuan zhengyi* 春秋左傳正義 (The Corrected Spring and Autumn Annals and Zuo's Commentary) 40.2012, 43.2041 (*Shisanjing zhushu* Vol. 2).

appears on the right side, with the Xun trigram occupying his private chamber.²³

In Case Two, after Shao Tuo's diviner Wu Sheng initiated prayers and sacrifices to his mother and other Yin deities, he performed two special exorcisms to get rid of baleful influences. First, he performed the "mentally-focused attack" (*gong*) to release Shao Tuo's body from anonymous ancestral spirits, and, secondly, a "removal" (*chu*) of demonic influence from his chambers (*si gong jie yu mingzu, qie chu yu gongshi* 思攻解于明祖，且除於宮室).²⁴

Case Three (Strip 229):

The next four cases all take place on the same day, a Li Li trigram day, a year later than Case Two (Strip 210) above. Clearly Shao Tuo's health had taken a turn for the worse as he had "heart and abdomen" (*xinfu*) problems (controlled by female trigrams Kun and Li in Section 24 of the *Shifa*). His *qi* was circulating upward instead of downward as proper, and he had lost his appetite. His team of diviners was desperately trying to figure out the source of the curse. In Case Three, the diviner Chen Yi used the Gong Ming stalk method focusing on concerns regarding Shao Tuo's chambers, therefore once again the residence realm is applicable. A Li trigram appeared in the upper left position of "outside" with an extraordinary 5, and the Kun had moved down below it to the "residence court" position, appearing with an 8. Gen remained at the "gate" position but Xun replaced Dui below it in the "chamber" position (creating with Gen on top the Gu hexagram). Chen Yi chose to sacrifice to Walkway again and perform a *gong* attack exorcism against unhappy spiritual influences in the chambers.

外之位也 outside  離 $\frac{1}{5}$ Li (F)	門之位也 gate  艮 $\frac{1}{6}$ Gen (M)
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²³ *Chunqiu Zuozhuan zhengyi* 春秋左傳正義 41.2024-2025; see also M. Kalinowski, "Diviners and Astrologers," 359.

²⁴ For a study of this specialized vocabulary and the use of commands and oaths against ghosts, see Yan Changgui, *Wugui yu yinsi*, 290-300. It is possible that *si* 思 was a loan for *shi* 使, referring to an "attack" being sent by means of voice command or directed with particular implements.

宮廷之位 residence court  坤 Kun (F)	室之位也 chambers  巽 Xun (F)
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The appearance of extraordinary numbers in both upper and lower registers of the trigram set suggested a perilous situation, particularly since Li and Kun were female trigrams and controlled the heart and abdomen. Also it was a Li day. Li indicated curses that could come from those who were burnt or drowned, and Kun, as mentioned above, could indicate curses from Gate and Walkway. The Baoshan diviners sacrificed to Walkway.





In the case of Li curses in the *Shifa*, a 5 had to appear with a 4 in order to specifically indicate an elder daughter who died prematurely; the Baoshan texts do not use 4s. However, an 8 in a Kun trigram clearly confirmed that it was a slave who had died. Another possibility of a Kun with an 8 could be “Western Sacrifice” (*xiji* 西祭). It is unclear what is meant by “Western Sacrifice” and how an act rather than a place represented a source of curses. Perhaps the direction rather than the act was most important. According to the “Jiyi” 祭義 in the *Liji*, the moon was sacrificed to in the west.²⁵ In the *Shifa* Section 24 which diagrams the trigrams and their *yinyang wuxing* correlates around the figure of the human body, the West is linked to the female trigram Dui, the element Metal, the color White, and the spirit “Controller of Receiving” (Si Shou 司收), a spirit linked to bringing in the harvest and to Autumn. Dui curses came from dead women. Dui, West, and the Moon were all likely inauspicious correlations during a Summer divination event.

Images linked to a 5 included blood, direction, fear and anxiety; images linked to an 8 included wind and water. Li (with a 5) and Gen, both in the upper register, were slightly inauspicious in the Summer. Xun, the highest ranking female trigram after Kun, was slightly auspicious then but her appearance in the “chamber” position, with her indication of a curse coming from a woman who died in childbirth, was probably not interpreted as a good sign. If the concern was *gu* poison, then the constant appearance of female trigrams, the indications of curses from dead women, and the formation of two trigrams into the hexagram for Gu may have alarmed the diviners. This is the only Baoshan case where the hexagram reading, as a combination of two trigrams, has obvious relevance to the situation.

²⁵ *Liji zhengyi* 禮記正義 (The Corrected Ritual Record) 47.1595 (*Shisanjing zhushu*, Vol. 2).

Case Four (Strip 232):

In Baoshan Case Three, the diviner Wu Sheng again used the Cheng De method, this time asking specifically about Shao Tuo's "private chamber" (*qin* 寢), thus reinforcing the suggestion that *gu* poisoning was being considered, although we could also understand that since he was mortally ill and likely confined to his bedroom, his diviners simply wanted to make sure the room was safe. The Li trigram appeared twice: once again in the upper left position, "outside" in the residence realm, but it also replacing Kun below it in the lower left position, "residence court." This double Li matched the Li Li trigram equivalents for the stem-and-branch day sign. Dui, the female equivalent in rank of Gen, replaced him at the "gate." Zhen, the male equivalent in rank to Xun, replaced her in the "chambers."





外之位也 outside  離 Li (F)	門之位也 gate  兌 Dui (F)
宮廷之位 residence court  離 Li (F)	室之位也 chambers  震 Zhen (M)

Wu Sheng chose to send prayers and sacrifices to the male version of the Residence Earth Lord as well as to Walkway again. He performed a dismembering sacrifice at the Large Gate, suggesting either the city gate or at least a larger gate located outside his residence. If the sites of these sacrifices can be understood in sequential order and beginning in the inner chambers, going down the walkway, and out through the main gate, perhaps the entire sequence represented an exorcism performance. The movement also matches the path created by the positions of the double Li trigrams from inside the residence to outside, the desired direction for escorting ghosts out of the house (and perhaps out of his abdomen, governed by Li). Zhen (in the most inner and personal position) too would have been seen as more powerful than Dui above, also suggesting an outward motion. So this set of four trigrams seemed to contain some hopeful news for the diviners.

Case Five (Strip 239):

In Baoshan strips 239 and 245, the last two cases involving *gua*, a shift occurs. First of all, the majority of the trigrams are male instead of female, and, secondly, the focus of "concern" moves from his residence to his body, therefore we use the "family" realm. In Case Five (Strip 239), the diviner

Chen Yi used the Gong Ming method and derived for the first time all male trigrams. The two Li trigrams do not appear, but two stronger male Zhen show up twice, once with an 8. The two Zhen occupy the lower “inside” positions with the 8 appearing in the “self, body” quadrante. Qian (the most powerful male and “father” trigram) occupied the upper left position of “servants” and Gen (youngest ranked male) reappeared in the upper right, which in the case of the “family” realm marks the “lineage” (instead of the “gate,” as above). In terms of physical symptoms, Zhen would indicate a problem with the lower legs or feet.

臣妾之位 servants  乾 Qian (M)	子姓之位 lineage  艮 Gen (M)
妻之位也 wife  震 Zhen (M)	躬身之位 self  震 Zhen (M)

The diviner is mostly concerned about the client’s worsening illness and physical dysfunction and surely the 8 in the “self” quadrant was a baleful indication. Instead of focusing on the residence as a source of the illness, the diviner shifted the focus to the outside. He sacrificed to five sacred mountains and the entire patriarchal lineage going back five generations to the King Zhao. The number 5 was a Yang number; the Yang focus of the sacrifices may reflect the appearance of all male trigrams, including three strong ones (Qian, Zhen and Zhen) and a weak one (Gen, slightly inauspicious in the Summer but still an “heir”) in the “lineage” position. Mountains, as upward reaching configurations on Earth might be considered Yin with a Yang trajectory, were included in the list of curses under Qian (in the case of the appearance of a 9 by *Shifa* rules). The Five Mountains may have been ritual sites around Jiangling. In the Chu origin myth, the *Chu ju* 楚居 (another Tsinghua manuscript), the first ancestor descended to a mountain. Similar tales are seen for many of the five god-kings mentioned in the *Shanhai jing* 山海經. Mountains then may have had some association with male fertility and power despite being attached to the earth.²⁶

Qian (representing the father) dallying in the servants quarters may not have been considered favorable given the suspicion of *gu* poisoning. At least

²⁶ Discussed in C. Cook and Luo Xinhui, *Birth in Ancient China: A Study of Metaphor and Cultural Identity in Ancient China*, Albany: State University of New York, 2017.

Qian did not appear with three 5s, which would indicate a curse from a destroyed ancestral shrine. But then, ancestral shrines tended to be destroyed in the process of war and Shao Tuo was more of a lawyer than a warrior. On the other hand, if the Qian in the servants' quarters was a matter of concern, possible sources of curse in the evening for Qian included Father and the Center of the Room (*shizhong* 室中). The Center of the Room required sacrifices and also was the site of the game "tossing arrows into the wine pot" (*touhu* 投壺), possibly a type of exorcism. One of the "Five Annual Sacrificial Rituals" included the Impluvium (Zhongliu 中霤), presumably a site in the middle of a courtyard open to the sky that caught rain.²⁷





The only extraordinary number in this Baoshan set appeared in the lower right trigram, a baleful indication. Zhen in Section 24 was linked to the patient's lower legs and feet, and the client was having trouble walking. The self position indicated the client's body (or private chambers in the "residence" realm). The list of possible sources of curses listed under Zhen include the East (a Yang direction). In diagram of arrayed trigrams around the human figure in *Shifa* Section 24, Zhen is linked with East, Wood, Green, and the Controller of Thunder (Si Lei 司雷) (a weather deity later known as Lei Gong 雷公 that also was associated with the spirit controllers of wind and rain). East and Spring were also associated with fertility and rebirth. The diviner's decision to focus on the patrilineal ancestors going all the way back to King Zhao as well as the Five Mountains may have been a response to the strong male showing of the trigrams.

Case Six (Strip 245):

Baoshan Case Six is the last record documenting trigrams. Overall there were 10 different divination events performed over the course of this Li Li trigram day, and this is the second to the last. Trigrams were produced in the second, fourth, seventh, and ninth stages of the ten stage process (over the course of the three years). If we look at the Yin and Yang nature of these numbering of the stages, we note that even numbers, 2 and 4 would be Yin, and 7 and 9 being odd numbers would be Yang; this correlation coincidentally matches the gender domination of each set (Cases Three-Six, Strips 229, 232, 239, 245). Li does not appear in either of the last two cases (Strips 239, 245). In Case Six, the last example of a *gua* set, the diviner Wu Sheng used the Cheng De method again and focused on Shao Tuo's body. Kan, the middle ranked male trigram, appeared for the first time in place of Qian in the upper left "servants" position. It carried a baleful 8. Zhen moved up to the "lineage" position, and Qian (the husband) moved down to the "wife" position. Xun, the female pair to Zhen, took the place of Zhen in the "self" (formerly, the

²⁷ *Liji zhengyi* 58.1666; see Yan Changgui, *Wugui yu yinsi*, 2010, 133-138.

“chamber” in the residence realm) position, this time with an 8. The appearance of extraordinary numbers in both registers, especially given the situation “inside” in “self” and “outside” in “servants,” represented an extremely baleful indication. In terms of physical symptoms, Xun would indicate a problem in the pelvis or upper thigh area.

臣妾之位 servants  坎 Kan (M)	子姓之位 lineage  震 Zhen (M)
妻之位也 wife  乾 Qian (M)	躬身之位 self  巽 Xun (F)

Wu Sheng exclaimed: “Can nothing be done?!” (*wu you nai* 毋有奈). Again perhaps responding to the domination of strong male trigrams (and a stronger male in the lineage position), he sent prayers and sacrifices to five distant legendary Chu founder kings in a desperate attempt to find the source of his client’s illness. Afterwards, the diviner focused on exorcising water ghosts. Water ghosts were indicated among the images for the number 8 and were among the potential sources of curses indicated by the Li trigram (the day sign). Li in Section 24 of the *Shifa* was linked to the North, Black, Water, the Controller of Storage (Si Cang 司藏), and Winter, basically a powerful Yin spirit.

The *Shifa* list of sources of curses under Kan, which appeared with an 8 in the servant quarters (replacing the husband, Qian, who more properly went to the wife’s position), include Wind and an elder sibling who died young, but no specific directions regarding the appearance of an 8. The images linked to 8 include wind and water. This and the fact that it was a Li day (and Li governed the abdomen) may have reinforced the diviner’s decision to exorcise water ghosts.

The list of curses under Xun clearly points to a shaman as the source of a curse in the case of an 8. Shamans were also considered possible sources of *gu* poisoning in Han texts. The idea that sex resulting in death of a lover, perhaps in childbirth (as listed under Xun), is slightly reinforced by consulting Section 24 of the *Shifa* which shows a drawing of a human body with Xun marking the crotch and upper thigh area (*gu* 股), reinforcing the association of Xun with sex (note that the lower legs and feet represented by Zhen were upside down in relation to the crotch). The sacrifice to water ghosts (unless a shaman had been sacrificed to the River at one point) may

relate to the perceived influence of the Li trigram on the day and his abdominal problems. Notably, any potential power represented by an unhappy “wife” (symbolized by Kun) may have been cancelled out by the “husband” (Qian) occupying her quadrant. On the other hand, the contrary nature of the male Qian in the “wife” position and female Xun in the male client’s “self” position would seem opposite of ideal.

Conclusions

Although the stalk divinations in every case recorded in the Baoshan record had showed an overall auspicious prognosis, the client’s illness suddenly changed for the worse in 316 BC. After the diviner had sacrificed to the kings and performed an “attack” exorcism on water ghosts for Case Six (Strip 245), he once again proclaimed that all was then “auspicious.” We know however that the diviners continued on this day to test the situation further with other divination methods that did not result in trigrams. They continued to focus on water spirits and proceeded to sacrifice to the Great River (Da Shui 大水) itself and returned attention once more to the client’s patrilineal ancestors; then they performed attack exorcisms against the influence of the powerful temporal signs of Yang and Yin, the Sun and Moon, as well as against the spirits of those who had died but were not guilty (perhaps babies, or people who Shao Tuo had condemned as part of his legal work).

And then on the final and eighth divination event of the entire Baoshan record, on a *jihai* 己亥 day (influenced by female trigrams Li and Dui), in the same Summer season, a diviner who specialized in scapulimancy claimed to have seen a sign that the curse came from ghosts of people without descendants and something called “Advancing on Wood Position” (Jian Mu Wei 漸木位).²⁸ Wood in *Shifa* Section 24 was linked to Spring, East, the trigram Zhen. “Advancing” could represent astrological or temporal movement from the previous phase and directional trigram: that would be moving out of Winter, North, the trigram Li, through the Northeast position occupied by Gen. This movement would represent a return to the beginning of the clockwise cycle from trigram to trigram around the body, which usually began with East, going upward to the South down on the other side to West and finally pitching downward to North at the bottom (Zhen, Xun, Kan, Kun, Dui, Qian, Li, Gen). Such clockwise arrangement of trigrams in the *Shifa* would indicate an auspicious sign for travel or movement outside the home (of the Baoshan

²⁸ Yan Changgui, *Wugui yu yinsi*, 2010, 122-125, understands this as an earth spirit associated with a tree or trees set up as in an altar. Lai Guolong recently suggested that it stood for the spirit stand placed in tombs. See his *Excavating the Afterlife: The Archaeology of Early Chinese Religion*, Seattle: The University of Washington Press, 2015, 119-129.

gua examples, if we read top to bottom right to left, only the sets in Cases One, Five, and Six, Strips 201, 239, and 245 respectively, can be said to move clockwise).

In this final divination event, the diviner sent prayers and sacrifices to the spirits without descendants and performed a *gong* attack exorcism against Jian Mu Wei to “release” Shao Tuo’s body from its influence (either representing the completion of a cycle, the fleeing of his soul, or perhaps some sort of altar). The *gong* attack exorcism was earlier used against spatial concepts, such as “chambers,” or an astral-temporal concepts, such as the “sun and moon,” suggesting that Jian Mu Wei was associated with a natural or environmental cosmic power. Unfortunately, Li, or whatever unknown watery power cursed Shao Tuo, did not release her grip on Shao Tuo and he died of spiritual blame (and possible *gu* poisoning). It is fortunate for us that the divination record was buried with him.

We cannot claim that the diviners of Baoshan used an exact copy of the *Shifa*. There are many indications in the Tsinghua *Shifa* manuscript that it is was originally collated and copied, perhaps in abbreviated form, from other available texts, charts, and diagrams. Evidence does suggest that the team of diviners responsible for diagnosing and healing Shao Tuo had access to many of these same tools.