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Article Abstracts

K. E. BRASHIER analyzes the symbolic discourse surrounding a prominent image in many Chinese ancestral stone memorials, namely an ornate tree beside a pavilion where a figure is receiving homage. He traces the arboreal image back to the ancient poem “Birchleaf Pear,” which exhorts future generations to safeguard the tree because the Duke of Shao had rested there. He then shows that, in Han literary texts that justify building ancestral memorials, the tree stands for long-lived physical things that survive into the present. Symbols can conflate allusions. The central figure within the pavilion is the tomb dedicatee *as* a Duke of Shao, and the shrine is to be preserved just as the Duke’s tree was never to be felled. . Past hero and present shrine dedicatee merge into a single icon.

MICHAEL A FULLER argues that one must broaden one’s understanding of aesthetic experience in order to appreciate the significance of Southern Song debates about poetry. Accordingly, to link our usual view of the aesthetic as “artistic” to a series of problems in the epistemology of phenomenal experience, Fuller introduces Immanuel Kant's concept of judgment. He suggests that Kant's approach to judgment and the role of genius in artistic creation bears similarities to and illuminates Su Shi's discussions of the problems of writing and of knowing. Tracing continuities through the Southern Song, Fuller further demonstrates that Zhu Xi rejected Su Shi's epistemology and the aesthetic

commitments bound to that epistemology, offering in their place new interpretations of poetic categories, and especially those of the *Classic of Poetry*.

Revisiting the question why such romantic operas as *Western Chamber* and *Peony Pavilion* seem condemned in *Story of the Stone*, LING HON LAM argues against explanations framed in terms of censorship or repression. He shows that throughout the novel performance of such operas is always permitted, while reading playbooks is considered problematic; the crucial issue is not the romantic content of these operas, but the medium through which they are received. The novel conceives of sentimental interiority not as a natural given to be expressed or repressed, but as a construct due to silent, private reading rather than intoning and listening. Paradoxically, Lam further argues, even listening is “privatized” and textualized by the experience of reading in silence, and interiority is less censored than produced through the act of “private listening.”

Debates concerning the original composition and transmission of the *Laozi* have been stimulated by the recent discovery at Guodian of late fourth-century-B.C. bamboo-strip manuscripts composed entirely of textual material found in the received text of the *Laozi*. EDWARD L. SHAUGHNESSY shows that, although the archaeological finds are new, the issues they raise were first debated in China in the 1920s. Tracing discussions of the *Laozi* over the course of the twentieth century, Shaughnessy suggests that now, as in the past, political, institutional, and intellectual agendas shape the debates. He cautions against premature conclusions based on the new finds. Although the Guodian *Laozi*

manuscripts do not resolve issues about transmission, some evidence suggests that the *Guodian* manuscripts drew from an already existing text with more or less the same sequence of chapters as the received //Laozi//.