

Qin Huitian and His *General Study on the Five Rites*

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Abstract: In Qing Dynasty, studies on Rites were synthesized from the previous dynasties and brought to a new development. Along with the emerging revival from the early year of Qing dynasty and the Government's support of the studies on Rites, study of ritual was paid attention by from emperor to Confucian officials in Qinlong dynasty. Successions of Confucian officials responded positively by dedicating themselves to these studies. Among them, Qin Huitian and his book of *General Study on the Five Rites* charged as the best versed in synthesizing and compiling the Five Rites into volumes. This splendid accom-

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In Qing Dynasty, studies on Rites were synthesized from the previous dynasties and brought to a new development. The books of this time, such as Hu Peihui's *Rectified Interpretation of Ceremonies and Rites* (*Yili*), Huang Yizhou's *General Survey on Books of Rites*, Sun Xidan's *Collective Commentaries on "the Book of Rites,"* Zhu Bin's *Exegetical Studies on "the Book of Rites,"* and Sun Yirang's *Rectified Interpretation of "Rites of Zhou,"* brought in a sense the study on Rites to culmination. The reason for this exuberance lied in the rejuvenation of the Rite studies in early-Qing Dynasty, and in the Qing Government's attaching importance to Rites, especially exemplified by the compilation of *The Exegesis of the Three Rites* and *The General Rites of the Great Qing* in early Qianlong's regime. Along with the emerging revival and the Government's support of the studies on Rites, successions of Confucian officials responded positively by dedicating themselves to these studies. For example, the sponsorship made by Xu Qianxue, Li Guangdi, Fang Bao was followed by Qin Huitian, who outstood as the best versed in synthesizing and compiling the Five Rites into volumes. Following Zhu Xi's *General Commentaries on Ceremonial and Ritual Classics* and Xu Qianxue's *General Study in Reading Rites*, Qin Huitian's *General Study on the Five Rites* "collected thoroughly both the governmental judgment and Confucians' commentaries, and grouped them in clear order to facilitate readers' understanding"¹ it had been 38 years and three to four times of revision before the volume was completed by the sixty-year-old

Confucian. This splendid accomplishment was achieved, but by no means easily, from years of diligence and devotion; it also entails now a detailed carding, with an aim for benefiting further probation into the development of Qing's studies on Rites.

Life and Career

Qin Huitian (1702-1764), styled Shufeng, with also a literary name Weijing, inhabited ancestrally in Wuxi, Jiangsu Province. In early Emperor Yongzheng's regime, he moved to Jinkui County. His grandfather Qin Songling, a successful candidate in the highest imperial examination in Shunzhi's regime, the year of Yiwei (1655), was summoned to take the Imperial Eudite Examination and then conferred the official rank of Left Moral Counselor. His birth father, named Daoran, also succeeded in the Imperial Examination in Kangxi's regime, the year of Jichou (1685), and therefore was promoted from Imperial Compiler to Director of Ritual Affairs. Huitian was adopted young by Qin Yiran, his birth father's younger brother and a court pupil. Under these circumstances, Huitian's devotion to learning and ambition for official rank was logical and understandable. In the initial year of Qianlong's regime (1736), he ranked third in the Top Candidates (in the Imperial Examination) and was conferred the Imperial Compiler. After his service in the South Study, his official promotion was smooth and sound. In the 6th year of Qianlong's regime (1741), he served as the Vice-Examiner of provincial examination in Shuntian; in the 7th year (1742), he was promoted to preside the Supreme Study; the 8th year saw him with four consecutive promotions: Attendant Interpreter, Right *Shuzi*, Right political Consoler, and up to Cabinet Scholar; the 10th year (1745), the Right Vice-President of the Board of Rites. In the 12th year

1. Lu Jianzeng, "Preface to *General Study on the Five Rites*," in *the Posthumous Selected Readings of Yayutang Study*, Vol. 1.

(1747), his birth father died; the 13th year (1748), according to the imperial edict: "Qin Huitian will remain in the service as the Vice-President of the Board of Rites, when impending termination of his observation of the period of mourning is due." The next year witnessed his service the Vice-President of the Board of Punishment, the Academic Supervisor of the Imperial College, and the Interpreter of Classics. In the 22nd year (1757), he held the Presidency of the Board of Works, was also in charge of the Board of Music. In the 23rd year (1758), besides supervision of the affairs of the Board of Works, he became the president of the Board of Punishment; and soon later, was assigned in addition the Instructor for the Crown Prince (*Taizi Taibao*). In the 25th year (1760), 28th year (1763), he was the Prime Examiner of Metropolitan Examination for two tenures. The next year, Huitian asked twice for home leave of illness, and when Emperor Gao Zong, who urged Huitian for several times to stay at post, finally permitted his leave, he died on his way home. Deeply sorrow at his death, Gao Zong issue an edict that read: "Qin Huitian has enjoyed a good fame of devotion and diligence. When I permitted his application for illness leave and for cure at home, I still expected his recovery. And how grieved I am at the sad news of his decease! To my relief, strict orders have been issued to urge the Boards to prepare pension for the deceased and to present memorial back to me. An additional favor shall be bestowed to arrange the funeral and to express the first grace." The emperor's favor implied Qin Huitian's performance at office.² His favorable official experience, however, did not mean he was a sheer bureaucrat. On the contrary, his dedication to learning intensified as his official rank rocketed. "Thirty years at office," said Qian Daxin, "the Revered Mr. Qin Wengong (i.e. Qin Huitian) was diligent in performance, respectful for the superior, upright and honest in behavior, and never surren-

2. Li Yuandu, "Brief Chronicles of Revered Mr. Qin Wengong," in *Brief Chronicles of the Previous sages of Our Dynasty*, Vol. 17; "The Biography of Qin Huitian," in *The Biography of Chinese Distinguished Officials*, Vol. 21.

dered principle to favoritism. After retiring, he locked himself out of friends and relatives, and delved in to writing books, as he had done when he was an court pupil." In the beginning of the Regim, the Revered Mr. Yang Wending in Jiangyin who presided then the Imperial College, recommended Qin Huitian for supervising classics and Academic affairs, and for presiding Imperial College, then at his office in the Imperial City, as the interpreter for princes, he attached more importance to classics as the model of learning. ... Qin Huitian has always been proficient in the learning of the Three Rites, and when he assisted in the reestablishment of order, he examined the historic evolvement of ritual systems...,"³ it was based on the advantage of his learning experience, Qin Huitian brought the previous relevant studies to a new development, marked by the writing of *General Study on the Five Rites*.

Preference of Learning

It was mainly due to Qin Huitian's dedication to learning that led to the achievement of *General Study on the Five Rites*. He once stated, "in my childhood, I was too dull to challenge those well-versed and erudite classics. When the family-school tutor taught him of classics, he was so strenuous that he even followed the passage on a character basis." Later on, his devotion to classics learning with the aim to probe into truth of life was largely attributed to his everyday listening to the lectures given by Gu and Gao (namely, Gu Xiancheng and Gao Panlong), scholars of the Donlin School, and the friends of his birth father. And when Huitian and Cai Chenxi, Wu Da'nian, and Zunyi, his childhood friend established the "Society for Reading Classics," his learning accomplishment was greatly

3. Qian Daxin, "Epitaph for Revered Mr. Qin Wengong, the Guanglu Minister, Interpreter of Classics, Guard of the Crown Prince, and the President of the Board of Punishment," in *The Collected Works of The Study of Qianyan*, Vol. 42.

accumulated. The establishment of the society resulted from their realization that the interpretation of the *Three Rites* had been mingled with mysticism and conflicts by the conservative Confucians since Qin and Han Dynasties, and that Zhu Xi's *General Commentaries on Ceremonial and Ritual Classics*, although renewed by Huang Gan and Yang Fu, remain unfinished and leave the *Three Rites* infested with ambiguities and doubtful points. The ambition to change the situation came after the recognition of it. As for the text of *Classics of Rites* (such as sacrificial oration), they first deployed sufficient proofs cited from classical texts, then managed to settle the disputes among those Confucians, and then made the reference to the celebrities' textual criticism and discoveries since Tang and Song Dynasties... Doing these over and over again with the aim to convince both others and themselves alike, they ended the process by inking out their own paraphrases, still leaving rooms for future criticism.⁴ They had gathered every half-month for over ten years, before their work began to emerge as the *On Classics* of more than a hundred volumes. "In my youth," Qin Huitian said of his experience later, "Cai Chenxi, Wu Da'nian, Zunyi, Gong Shengzhong, and I established a classics-reading society. Every individual for one version of classics, we first collected the precedent Confucians' interpretations, from thousands of volumes for each kind of classics. When facing difficulties, we made nearly exhaustive reference to different explanations, analyzed subtle differences, day in and day out with little rest, until everything became clear and decision made. We also criticized textual errors, discerned the divergences, interpreted the under-deliberated argumentation, and left open those undetermined questions. Every ten days at the meeting, we criticized and corrected one another's errors, leaving no room for doubtful points. We also took notes of one another's work for memorandum. Loyal citations of previous arguments deserved to be made when they are closer to

4. Qin Huitian, "Author's Preface to *General Study on the Five Rites*," in *General Study on the Five Rites*, Vol. 1.

the truth, and one's own rendering is unnecessarily here. Consistent and concise argument should be aimed by detailed and sufficient interpretation."⁵ As for the same experience, Qian Daxin related in this way: "The Revered Mr. Qin was young, brilliant. And when he grew up he followed Revered Mr. Jijian in his villa in the capital city. He Jizhan, Wang Ruolin, Xu Tanchang, etc., all descended their rank to associate with him. As he grew, he returned to his hometown, together with Cai Chenxi, Wu Da'nian, Zunyi, Gong Shengzhong, he established a society for classics reading. They often deplored the Confucians' divergent, irreconcilable interpretations on terms and institutions in the Six Rites, and they also were of special concern about the land sacrifice, ancestral temples, places, and garments."⁶ "Weijing Nestle was the name of the study where Mr. Qin had been reading classics. Under such an atmosphere where Xishan was lofty and proud of his own learning, Mr. Gu (et. al.) maintained the previous style in lecturing at Donglin, and Revered Mr. Jijian immersed himself into the exploration of truth and revealed even more profound learning. Wanting no claim for the honor of giving lectures, he and three or four of his peers established a society for classics reading, meeting for several days every ten days at Weijing Nestle to present their individual learning for panel discussion. They once said, "the essence of our previous Sages lies in the *Six Classics*, can there still be any other genuine learning besides these ones?" Mr. Qin's work was presented with clarity and grandness ... and when I had the chance to read it, I found it universal in various styles: poetry, memorials (to the emperor), prefaces and postscripts, and argumentations, etc., with more than half the volume being the interpretation

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5. Qin Huitian, "Selected Works in Weijing Nestle: Author's Preface to *The Daily Notes in Weijing Nestle*," in Xu Shichang *The Learning Compendium of Qing Confucians*, Vol. 67, *The Learning Compendium of Weijing Nestle*.
 6. Qian Daxin, "Epitaph for Revered Mr. Qin Wengong, the Guanglu Minister, Interpreter of Classics, Guard of the Crown Prince, and the President of the Board of Punishment," in *The Collected Works of The Study of Qianyan*, Vol. 42

of classics. In accordance with Han Changli' claim of *Six Classics* as the textual model for Confucians, Mr. Qin Voiced no word without Six Classics' style, settled no disputes beyond the doubtful in Six Classics. He synthesized a wide and variety of schools of thoughts and thus his contributions are more than precious, and only he deserved the honor to write classics and to match those ancient scholars who had achieved glory by writing.⁷ Qin Huitian's preference to classics learning laid a sound basis for his exploration of the theories of Rites. Because he was well versed in interpreting classics, he was recommended to teach the National Scholars for his proficiency in classics and his integrity in behavior. Since then, he was even more dedicated to classics. "The truth," he said, "discussed by Confucians beyond classics is not truth at all, and the learning obtained without reference classics is not learning."⁸ Qian Daxin praised in this regard: "Since Qin and Han Dynasty, we often regretted the separation of classics from truth and of writing from classics, and deplore the historians' division of Confucianism, academic circles, and scholars of letters. However, the truth is presented in the form of writing, and the *Six Classics*, works of various schools of thoughts, and historic works are of superior writing. And those who selected writings for post-generations either preferred only those exhibiting verbal beauty and subtlety, or indiscriminately despised all writing as trivial tricks, worthless for a true scholar to try. This is as absurd as ignoring the benefit of clothing for the world just because of the contempt at embroider, and as overlooking the grain's wearing feeding human race for the reason of focusing only

7. Qian Daxin, "Preface to Classified Scripts in Weijing Nestle," in *The Collected Works of The Study of Qianyan*, Vol. 26. Huang Zhijun, "On Weijing Nestle," in *Selected Works of Wutang*, Vol. 16, he praise Qin for his devotion to Classics learning: "Mr. Qin indulge in no other hobby and taste but confining himself in Weijing Nestle to quench his thirsty for knowledge. How could I possibly measure his depth?"

8. Li Yuandu, "Brief Chronicles of Revered Mr. Qin Wengong," in *Brief Chronicles of the Previous sages of Our Dynasty*, Vol. 17

on chaffs. Qin tracked his learning as the search for truth from classics, led his writing in the very style of classics, and thus generally acknowledged as an all-round Confucian with the 'true learning.' We may not view him as a great figure of letters, but his writing appears splendid and profound enough to pass to generations to come. Such is to deserve the honor of achieving glory for writing."⁹ The trace can be felt here of Qin Huitian's learning preference.

The Writing of *General Study on the Five Rites*

Qin Huitian's focusing on *Rites* can be traced back to the days of the "society for Classics Reading"; and when promoted to the official service as the Vice-President of the Board of Rites, and undertake the task of proofreading of books on rites, he was able to delve into the exploration of the source, development, and evolution of rites. Then, in the prescribed period of his birth father's death, he confined himself to reading books of rites, including Xu Qianxue's *General Study in Reading Rites* that he regretted for the absence on the four rites of auspices, celebrations, guests, and army. Considering this, Qin Huitian resumed his study on rites and, together with Wu Zunyi, started the writing "based on the Xu's script, and drew the previously determined argument for further classification, rearrangement, and complementation of those under-discussed,"¹⁰ for the sake of finishing the book. Having resumed the former office at the Board of Rites, he made universal reference to the wider varieties of documents of institutions. At this time, Fang Chengguan saw Qin's work and loved it, so he not only urge passionately Qin to finish the work as early as possible, but also provided his uncompleted script *Compendium of the Five Rites* for reference. Meanwhile,

9. Qian Daxin, "Preface to Classified Scripts in Weijing Nestle," in *The Collected Works of The Study of Qianyan*, Vol. 26.

10. Qin Huitian, "Author's Preface to General Study on the Five Rites," in *General Study on the Five Rites*, Vol. 1.

Lu Baocun and Song Zongyuan also echoed with their support. Later, when Qin Huitian presided the Board of Punishment, he worked even harder on writing, which resulted in the six-volume *Daily Notes in Weijing Nestle*. Finally, in 26th year of Qianlong Regime (1761), inquiring by Qian Daxin and others, and of continually discussing with his contemporaries, the great tome the General Study of the Five Rites come into being.

Qin Huitian's the General Study of the Five Rites "is finished after Xu's style and layout and on the basis of the collection of various comments. It cover in all 75 aspects, with the melody attached to the institution of ancestral temple as in Rites of Auspices; it applies astronomy and trigonometry to set paces and circles, under the general title Deciding times by Observing Celestial Phenomena; it also cover the names of states, kingdoms, cities in history and of places like mountains and rivers, etc., under the title 'Surveys on the Whole Nation' and then was recorded into Rites of Celebration"¹¹: Wang Mingsheng pointed out that: "(Qin Huitian) often thought highly of Xu's *General Study in Reading Rites* as a thorough work, and followed its style to complete the book according to the division of Rites into five: the rite of auspices, celebrations, guests, army, and omen. Qin rectified Xu's over-detailed rendering in dealing with history and his insufficiency in discussing classics. He also made complementation to the absence in Xu's work by dividing further the Rite of Omen into five sub-categories, and by adding Rite of Wilderness, Rites of Condolences, Rites of *Hui*, Rites of Pacification."¹² Lu Jianzeng also said that: "Qin enriched Xu's work with Rites of Auspices, Army, Guests, and celebrations, and complemented the Rites of Funeral. He critically absorbed a wide variety of arguments, for example, he governed the structure of immense citations from the 22 Histories in the style of Rites of Zhou and Rituals. His work collected thoroughly

11. Entry *General Study on the Five Rites*, "Category of Rites, IV" in *Classics, General Catalogue for the Complete Collection in Four Treasuries*, Vol. 22.

12. Wang Mingsheng, "Preface to *General Study on the Five Rites*," in *The Remaining Works of Xizhuang*, Vol. 55.

both the governmental judgment and Confucians' commentaries, and grouped them in a clear order to facilitate readers' instant understanding. Until the advent of Qin's work, scholars who were interested in studying about Rites faced with lack of reference materials. It also deserves mentioning that among all the Four Rites that he added, Mr. Qin did especially a detailed work in the Rites of Auspices."¹³ Considering the above, we can have some idea of the essence of Qin Huitian's *General Study on the Five Rites*.

Despite their criticism of Qin's *General Study on the Five Rites* for "failure to free from parading its comprehensiveness," the compiling scholars of the Four Treasuries also sang in praise: "His (Qin's) textual criticism of classics and history reveals crystal clear order and defies all plagiarized and incomplete works. His work even surpasses that of Chen Xiangdao and others."¹⁴ Jiang Fengong assessed that: "I would rather attribute the greatness of Qin's work to his persistence in his research than to, according to other, his mere proficiency in compilation." He eumerated a huge amount of resources he collected from tens of years of immense reading, reconciled those at odd, and provided objective argument. His work freed those later generations of scholars who study Rites from groping in the dark."¹⁵ Fang Chengguan said: "The grandness, comprehensiveness, and consistency of Qin's work resulted from his collecting and contrasting from decades."¹⁶ Lu Wenzhao also pointed out "the book covers a wide range of detailed analysis of various phenomena, profound exploration of original principle, and keen search for those behind

13. Lu Jianzeng, "Preface to *General Study on the Five Rites*," in *the Posthumous Selected Readings of Yayutang Study*, Vol. 1.

14. Entry *General Study on the Five Rites*, "Category of Rites, IV" in *Classics, General Catalogue for the Complete Collection in Four Treasuries*, Vol. 22.

15. Jiang Fengong, "Preface to *General Study on the Five Rites*," in *General Study on the Five Rites*, Vol. 1.

16. Fang Chengguan "Preface to *General Study on the Five Rites*," in *Xu Shichang The Learning Compendium of Qing Confucians*, Vol. 67, *The Learning Compendium of Weijing Nestle*.

historical vicissitudes." He never surrendered principle of correctness to great reputation carried over by the previous scholars, nor spared a single piece of truth even when it was of very minor importance." Therefore he spared no effort to praise that: "With Qin's book at hand, classics learners could easily settle huge amount of disputes by the standard he had set. What an excellent tome it must be! It is an exhaustive collection of the, previous and present. His masterpiece will live forever."¹⁷ Zeng Guofan commented that: "President (of the Boards of Punishment and of Works) Qin's *General Study on the Five Rites* displaces great amount of past and present events in the world, weaves them together by applying Rites, and reveals extensiveness in scope and brilliance in conception."¹⁸ And then, he also said: "Qin's *General Study on the Five Rites* covers astronomy, geography, military affairs and politics, civil service system, even without overlooking those heterodox schools of thoughts. For this reason, I model myself after the masterpiece."¹⁹ From the above comments by Jiang, Fang, Lu, Zeng one can roughly guess the significance and influence of *General Study on the Five Rites*.

The Characteristics of General Study on the Five Rites

Compared with all the previous books on Rites, Qin's detailed reading and analysis of *General Study on the Five Rites* can be characterized as follows:

1) Equal importance to classics and to history, and exactly in this order in dealing with the two. The above citations of Qian Daxin's discovery pertaining to Qin Huitian's critical acceptance and rejec-

17. Lu Wenzhao, "Postscript to *General Study on the Five Rites*," in *Selected Works in Baojing Study*, Vol. 8.

18. Zeng Guofan, "Portrait of Sages," in *Selected Works by Revered Mr. Zeng Wenzheng*, Vol. 2.

19. Zeng Guofan, "Preface to *Tentative Suggestions on Assistant Interpretation by Sun Zhifang*," in *Selected Works by Revered Mr. Zeng Wenzheng*, Vol. 1.

tion of the unjustified separation between classics, truth, and writing, and Neo-Confucianism, academic circles, and scholars of letters, and of Wang Mingsheng's revelation that Qin had rectified Xu's 'over-detailed rendering in dealing with history and his insufficiency in discussing classics,' mean that Qin attach certain importance to classics and history. Besides it also reveals Qin's dedication to historical classics as the preference of learning, it also implies the then mainstream tendency of academic learning. Regarding this, Qin Huitian advocated, "the verification of institutions should be traced from the very sources, and that learning from the ancient knowledge entails understanding." Therefore, for the sake of settling the previous Confucians' disputes, he not only "enumerated differing arguments, attached the predecessors' comments to each entry for reference, or presented oversights and doubtful points," but also "extensively referred to biographies, chronicles, and rearranged them chronologically before detailed investigation. It is necessary to provide differing and agreed, correct and erroneous opinions" to "facilitate those successors' for thorough investigation."²⁰

2) The aim for exploring reasons, with also the complementary textual research. The thought and learning methodology conveyed in *General Study on the Five Rites* are expressed by Qin Huitian's great caution in pursuing reasons and doing textual criticism, which also accounts for Qin's rectification of Xu's omissions and his modeling himself after Zhu Xi as one of his learning principles. Wang Mingsheng said in this regard: "How hard must it be to obtain both profundity and extensiveness in learning! Priority, however, should be given to collect those previous materials for later reference. With the aim at exploring reasons, Zhu Xi never failed to cover various subjects as institutions, phenomena, numerology and names or description of things in textual criticism. The too vast coverage of entries occasionally sacrificed its profundity; furthermore, it also surpassed

20. Qin Huitian, "Guide to the Use of *General Study on the Five Rites*," in *General Study on the Five Rites*, Vol. 1.

the availability of his time and energy and thus resulted in the failure to finish the book and in some targets for later complementation. The General Commentaries on Ceremonial and Ritual Classics structured itself by classics longitudinally and by chronicles latitudinally. The successive complementary (by others) of the Rites of funeral and sacrifice added to the original the splendid grandeur. Xiong Wuxuan, however, argued in his Preface that: 'The Revered Mr. Wen harbored the original intention that *Comprehensive Survey of Classics*, *Biographies* of various history books, and *Compendium of Main Points* would be taken with the sensible complementation or deletion of the Rites in the years of Kaiyuan, Kaibao, and Zhenghe, to set the unalterable, permanent grand styles and patterns. Had it become true, the existing version could hardly be regarded as comprehensive.' When the Revered Mr. Qin (styled Mr. Weijing), the President of the Board of Punishment dealt with classics, he made explorations of reasons with the complementation of textual criticism to conform to Zhu Xi's hereditary tradition...When finished, Qin's book was deemed as a complementary work to Xu's volume; in this regard, however, Qin once said to me that 'I accomplished this to carry on the wish bequeathed by the Revered Mr. Zhu, and by no means to rank myself as only the contributor to Xu's work!'"²¹ According to Mr. Wang, Qin Huitian compiled his General Study on the Five Rites not merely to make up for the omissions in Xu Qianxue's General Study in Reading Rites, but also to make reality the intention to "carry on the wish bequeathed by the Revered Mr. Zhu."

3) The Five Rites that Qin dealt with, in accordance with the categories of *The Civil Service of Zhou: Major Zongbo*, fell into the Rites of auspices, omens, army, guests, and of celebrations. The book absorbed the merits achieved by the previous scholars with the intention of threading together those discrete. "A general study," once Qin Huitian himself said of this, "should be aimed to

21. Wang Mingsheng, "Preface to *General Study on the Five Rites*," in *The Remaining Works of Xizhuang*, Vol. 55.

investigate all the classic works since the Three Dynasties (Xia, Shang, and Zhou) to reestablish the real source, and to investigate the events since the Three Dynasties for weighing duly those merits and flaws. The source forms the criterion for measuring merits and flaws, which in turn, becomes the very stream embarked out of the source. Without identifying the source, the classics learning would degenerate by those far-fetched paraphrases issued from scholars of various schools; therefore, the obstructions resulted from accumulated doubtful points should be eliminated by exhaustively searching and wisely examining. And without weighing duly merits and flaws, the order would be ruined by the successive learners' willful concoction; therefore, the mistakes should be fully reported and addressed."²² Based on this recognition, Qin Huitian absorbed the merits existing in these previous works and brought them to new development, as well as uncovered those shortcomings. "The names of the Five Rites," he once said, "have their origins in *The Book of Yu*, and the catalogue system, in *Civil Service of Zhou: Major Zongbo*, falling into the Rites of auspices, omens, army, guests, and of celebrations. And *Minor Zongbo* stipulated the prohibitions and applications of the Five Rites...Since ancient times the books on Rites had been randomly scattered and the Confucians in Han Dynasty collected them among the scrapes left from burning ashes...the divergence in dealing with Rites was more spectacular in the period of Wei & Jin for the scholars then only voiced out their own opinions. Since Tang and Song Dynasties, only Du You's *Comprehensive Survey of Classics*, Chen Xiangdao's *Books on Rites*, Zhu Xi's *The General Commentaries on Ceremonial and Ritual Classics*, and Ma Duanlin's *The General Investigation on Documents* are rather detailed in dealing with Rites. According to today's examination, the Rites in different dynasties, kingdoms, meticulously recorded in

22. Qin Huitian, "Selected Works of Weijing Nestle: Answers to Gu Fuchu the Siye *On General Study on the Five Rites*," in Xu Shichang *The Learning Compendium of Qing Confucians*, Vol. 67, *The Learning Compendium of Weijing Nestle*.

The General Investigation on Documents, are the products out of synthesizing various classics and biographies in *The Three Rites* and out of complementing. However, it solely recorded the commentary and sub-commentary without trace of historic documents; furthermore, it was not finished. *Books on Rites* is detailed in the names and descriptions of things but too sketchy in biographical annotation. Although *the Comprehensive Survey of Classics* and *The General Investigation on Documents* did enlist immense documents with also the institutions and regulations, the Fifth Rites, only one of the two categories of books, failed to reach the completeness in addressing causes and the clarity achieved through detailed discussion. As recorded in *The History of Song: Rites* reported that once the Revered Mr. Zhu had intended to categorize out of *The Ceremonies and Rites*, *The Civil Service of Zhou*, and *Chronicles of Rites* by two Misters of Dai, the Rites into Governmental, ministerial, official, and civil, to obtain exhaustively the Confucians' commentaries since Han, Jin, and Tang and to examine them, aiming being identified as classic for the contemporaries but it was never fulfilled. Xu Qianxue, born in Kunshan, wrote *The General Study in Reading Rites* of 120 volumes, in which in dealing with ancient rites he modeled himself after *the Comprehensive Survey of Classics*, with absorbing various schools of thoughts on a compromise basis; in dealing with the rites of all previous dynasties and periods, he applied one 'orthodox history,' with also the reference to *The Comprehensive Survey of Classics* and *The General Investigation*. He seemingly was to bequeath the Revered Mr. Zhu's wish and his contribution of containing virtuous customs for healthily regulating the state deserved memory. The only pity is that the Rites of Auspices, Celebrations, Guests, and Army were unfinished in draft." Considering this, Huitian followed the Xu's style, and "in the very order of the Five Rites as arranged in *The Comprehensive Survey of Classics*, he wrote several volumes of the Rites of Auspices, Rites of Celebrations, several volumes of the Rites of Guest, and Rites of Army, and Rites of Omens (incomplete). In contrast, in *The General Commentaries the Rites of*

Imperial Court was treated as an independent entry appended to the Rites of Celebrations. In Xu's book, the Five Rites in *The Major Zongbo* was thoroughly examined of the source and stream, evolution, agreements and divergences, merits and mistakes."

4) Evolutionism regarding ancient rites and respect for the rites that kept pace with times. Since Qin Huitian was determined to make general investigations, he not only provided the sources and streams of *Classics on Rites*, but also paid attention to the evolution of ritual systems along with the changes of dynasties. As for Rites, he loved and modeled himself after the reasoning applied by Song Confucians, and he said in this regard: "Arguments on Rites had never been finally settled until the emergence of the great Confucians in Song and Yuan Dynasties, who affirmed the source, arranged knowledge systematically, and conveyed refined meaning in simple language." Meanwhile, he never overlooked the merits achieved by those scholars of Rites before Song Dynasty. "The Descriptive Accounts of Books in Han Dynasty," he said, "listed thirteen different schools of thoughts on Rites. Up to Wei Period, Rites had only been imparted from tutors to pupils at a shabby level, then how great the merits were!" This implies the principle concerning the source of *Classics on Rites*. Surely that along with the development of Rite study, there also emerged various ritual systems in the previous dynasties. Qin Huitian pointed out in this consideration: "In Western Han Dynasty, Jia Yi and Dong Zhongshu Only left their scrapes of arguments, no leisure to form a system; and in Eastern Han, despite the strong ambition and action to establish such a system, the mysticism and divination were applied in ritual systems. Till Wei & Jin, only commentaries and sub-commentaries were handed down. It was not until the year of Tianjian in the Liang Dynasty that completed books on Rites first came into being. The texts of the Five Rites nearly approached perfection at the time of the advent of *Kaiyuan Rites* in Tang Dynasty. Mr. Du modeled himself after it and with the reference of the ancient records he finished *The Comprehensive Survey of Classics*. By complementing it Mr. Ma wrote

The General Investigation. There were *Institutions* in Yuan Dynasty and *The Collection of Rites* and *The Collection of Institutions* in Ming Dynasty, respectively. 'Kingly figures,' said Ban Mengjian 'ought to follow the rites applied by the former sovereigns, with alteration to keep pace with times.' Confucius also said: 'A hundred generations clarify everything.'" Considering this, Qin Huitian had made reference to the evolution of the ritual systems in the period from Qin, Han to Ming Dynasties before he mended and combed them to make known the merits and mistakes. At present, for the Government has had *General Rites of the Great Qing*, and for the infelicity to openly comment on current affairs, Qin Huitian only showered the praise: "The sacredness of our Qing Dynasty deserves inheritance and eternity, our institutions wise, our nation innovative and rich; and the regulations and decrees that have issued are so profound and indescribable that we could only deal with them with respect and loyalty." Then is no detailed comment at all. Nevertheless, Qin's book manifested itself in the rank of the governmentally edited *Exegesis of the Three Rites* and *General Rites of the Great Qing*. "Having set insurmountable morality and wisest decrees," Qin Huitian once said, "His Majesty commanded the ministers of Rites to compile classics on Rites. I, the servant, was indebted to His favor and command to administer the compilation. Therefore, I exhaustively collected those rituals in ancestral temples, sacrificial, hat-wearing, wedding, and funeral ceremonies, and those writings of official ranks, the declaration of promotion and death penalty, to publish them to the world. I, honorably with my clan, was determined to conform to and carry it out."²³ From the above can be seen his loyalty in implementing the Rites. In addition, Lu Jianzeng said: "With respect to Rites, there are some that need to model after the ancient rites, and there are still others that suited the past but not the present. The sanctity of Our Dynasty deserves eternity and the ritual

23. Qin Huitian, "The Original Preface to Mr. Qin (Xishan)'s Genealogy," in *Mr. Qin (Xishan)'s Genealogy*, edited by Qin Ying, Vol. 1.

system then was a brand-new innovation. For instance, the Emperor Kangxi's Geng-Wu Refutation of the argument of futility in Di Rites at the imperial temple and *The Collection of Institutions* does not contain the Rite of Sacrificial Courtyard, both exceeded all the previous monarchs in conception. Since the Revered Mr. Qin had served as the Vice-President of the Board of Rites and therefore had a strong command of relevant knowledge, it would have been appropriate for him to clarify all of these by writing books, and the book finally turned out to be so impeccable! Alas for the Confucians who devote themselves to writing books in poverty and desolation! However, this state of life frees them from those fetters of trivial affairs and enables them to delve into academics. How great was it if Mr. Qin had been younger when he ascended from servant position to the Vice-President and began to rest very late to have dinner, and collected the hundreds of generations of institutions and relics in a more leisurely way!"²⁴ His faith in the concept that "Rites thrive if evolve" can be perceived from the above.

5) The structuring that Qin Huitian attaches more importance and greater length is the analyses of the Rites of Auspices and makes minor alteration to the other four Rites only to complement the other books in this regard. In the 262 volumes of *General Study on the Five Rites*, the first 127 volumes are covered about the Rites of Auspices, and subsequently, 72 volumes of the Rites of Celebrations, 13 volumes of the Rites of Guests, 13 volumes of Army, and 17 volumes of Omens. The Rites of Auspices occupied nearly half of the book because, according to Qin Huitian himself, "the Rites of Auspices rank first among the five. *Chronicles on Rites* said 'none of the five Rites can emulate Sacrifice in importance.' Boyi in the Period of Tangyu took the charge of the Three Rites, and *The Civil Service of Zhou: Major Zongbo*, the Rites of Heavenly and Earthly Deities, of human beings and spirits. The two sets of the Rites of Wilderness

24. Lu Jianzeng, "Preface to *General Study on the Five Rites*," in *the Posthumous Selected Readings of Yayutang Study*, Vol. 1.

and seven sets of the Rites of Temples are coarse and indistinct; the Tesheng and Shaolao recorded in *Ceremonies and Rites* are the sacrifices for senior officials and Shies (a social stratum between senior officials and common people), thus the Emperor despised *The Han Records* for its presentation of the Rites of *Shi*. Moreover, mysticism and divination got momentum with the annotation to classics mingled with Kangcheng, and contradictions aroused. For example, there exist six heavenly kings, two earthly deities, and courtyard has the distinction between five-chambered and nine-chambered, Crops Prayer was divided into Zi-initiated and Yin-initiated; however, just as the Rites of *di* and wilderness, earth and temple were mixed up, they existed without any due distinction. ... And there are still others such as garments and caps, animal sacrifices, music and dances, things and utensils, which bore even more divergences. Considering thousands of years of changes, creations, abolitions, reforms of Rites, the choice of reference has been made difficult among confusing and contradicting items." That is to say, there exist both significance and divergences pertaining to the Rites of Auspices. With respect to this, Qin Huitian, "guided by the aspiration of complementation, searched exhaustively the classics, also the analects of the predecessor Confucians and even memorials presented in all previous dynasties." It is no wonder that the length of the Rites of Auspices is greater than the rest. In accordance with *The Comprehensive Survey of Classics*, Qin Huitian divided the Rites of Army into 19 categories, and included the Rites of Major Archery and of the Countryside Archery into the Rites of Celebrations. Qin Huitian divided the Rites of Guests into four with the consideration that "since the proscription of dukedom and the establishment of prefecture office, the restoration of the past has also been canceled. Mr. Du's *The Comprehensive Survey of Classics* collected materials from past and present and classified them into four categories; *The Comprehensive Records* only preserved *Three Conformations, Two Monarchs, and One Empress*, all of which were omitted in *General Study on the Five Rites*. Instead, the tribute presentation of the foreign countries was appended to the

imperial court rituals." Consequently, Qin "edited the rites of vassals' presentation before monarchs and of the emperors' engagement for the sake of preserving the ancient rituals. He also recorded the rituals pertaining to the tribute presentation of the foreign countries, envoys dispatch, and welcome in order to illuminate the existing institutions; he ended the edition by the rites of the acquaintance between *Shies* and common people."²⁵ Again, he followed the structure of *General Study in Reading Rites* and included the Rites of Funeral to the Rites of Omens. In addition, he complemented Xu's book by adding the Rites of Relief. In conclusion, Qin Huitian's *General Study on the Five Rites*, modeling after the previous works and added complimentary pieces of writing deserves the honor of a grand masterpiece for its orderly structure, brilliant edition, the broadmindedness not to dim the predecessors' merits, and the humbleness not to show off the accomplishment of him. Considering only the achievement, the book can rival the books on Rites edited by the Qing Government.

The Related Issues Concerning General Study on the Five Rites

General Study on the Five Rites was the fruit of Qin Huitian's immense painstaking labor. He was so scrutinous and diligent that in both the "Society for Reading Classics" and of performing his service at office while studying Rites, he invariably made detailed examination. The success of this book, however, can at least partly be attributed to the help offered by Qin's close friends, among whom are, needless to say, the above-mentioned Wu Zunyi, Fang Chengguan, Lu Baosun, Song Zongyuan and Qian Daxin; and Wu Ding, Wu Yujin, Wang Mingsheng, Dai Zhen, Shen Tingfang, Gu

25. All the above are quoted from Qin Huitian, "Guide to the Use of *General Study on the Five Rites*," in *General Study on the Five Rites*, Vol. 1.

Wojun, Wang Chang and others also assisted in reference and proof-reading. Among these friends, Fang Chengguan, Wu Yujin, and Song Zongyuan were the foremost. From his childhood, Fang Chengguan, the clans-nephew of Fang Bao, followed the latter for studying *The Three Rites*. Fang Zhengguan once participated in the discussion of Rites between Fang Bao and Qin Huitian, and he also wrote an unfinished *Compendium of the Five Rites* out of his previous study on rites. Their friendship can be seen from the fact that Fang responded positively when he saw the script of Qin's *The Study on the Five Rites*, and presented his own work. Wu Yujin was the first entrusted by Qin to collate *The Study on the Five Rites*, and he also proofread the whole version. Song Zongyuan assisted in checking at least eight or nine tenths of Qin's book. In terms of different subjects, "the Rites of Auspices were checked by Wu, Lu, and Gu; the Rites of Hun, Xiang, Yan, wine-drinking, and study under the category of the Rites of Celebrations, and the two major categories of state administration and commonalty regulation, and establishment and division of official ranks, were checked by Qian; the Rites of shooting arrows and itinerating hunting by Wang; the category of 'Deciding times by Observing Celestial Phenomena' by Dai; the whole part of the Rites of Guests by Qian, and of Army by Wang, of omens by Qian, Shen, Wu, and Lu; Song assisted in checking eight or nine tenths; the whole proofreading was assumed by Wu Yujin (in Shanyang). Wang Chang (in Qingpu) also assisted in checking."²⁶

Somehow Qin was not able to mention the names of these assistants in the book after it had been finished, which caused clouds of doubts. "Qin Huitian (in Wuxi) the Board President," said Ling Tingkan, "wrote the book of *The Study on the Five Rites*, as has been known. The fact, however, is that Mister (referring here to Dai Zhen) assumed the whole task of the compilation."²⁷ Just as Mr. Liang

26. Xu Shichang *The Learning Compendium of Qing Confucians*, Vol. 67, *The Learning Compendium of Weijing Nestle*.

27. Ling Tingkan, "Brief Chronicles of Mr. Dai Dongyuan," in *Selected Works of Jiaoli Study*, Vol. 35.

Qichao had expressed his doubt that Xu Qianxue's *General Study in Reading Rites* was "ghostwritten by Jiye (here referring to Wan Sitong)," he also quoted Quan Zuwang the declaration that besides writing *General Study in Reading Rites*, Wan Sitong had compiled more than 200 volumes of a book on Rites and then lost it, and doubted that "at least a large part of the 262 volumes of *The Study on the Five Rite* was likely the plagiarized version from Jiye."²⁸ This statement immediately produced a complicated legal case pertaining to academics. Surely that Ling Tingkan had a certain point that Dai Zhen actually took a part in proofreading, but it was against the fact to reckon that it was Dai who "assume the whole task." Liang Qichao's statement was only a postulation without strong, direct evident to prove. According to the preceding part of this article can be known that although the friends and contemporary Confucians had assisted in Qin's compilation of the book, it was by any means groundless and untrue to say that most of Qin's book was plagiarized. Furthermore, suppose that Liang was true, how would it have been possible that the entire assistant Confucians knew nothing about the said plagiarism? And suppose that Wan Sitong was obscure then with his word much less influential than Xu Qianxue, where is the point that the officials so important as Qian Daxin and Wang Chang would have sought the favor from Qin Huitian? With respect to the academic aptitude, as has been argued of his learning preference, Qin Huitian had exhibited his excellent academic grounding; and "Qin's family harbored a large collection of books, outside of which the versions of the exegeses of *The Classics on Rites* were seldom found, but tens of suitcases of them were placed on Qin's shelf."²⁹ Again, he consistently adhered to studying Rites and it would be impossible that he could create such a cohesive structure without certain grounding on ritual theories. Even if a large part of

28. Liang Qichao, "The Establishment of the Study on Rites in Early Qing," in *Learning History of China in Recent Three hundred Years*, No. 8.

29. Jiang Fengong, "Preface to *General Study on the Five Rites*," in *General Study on the Five Rites*, Vol. 1.

Qin's work was taken from Wan Sitong, could not achieve anything if Qin had been ignorant and without caliber. From the perspective of Qin's attitude towards publishing this work, the book was not immediately put to circulation after it had been type-settled. Before the publication, Qin once wrote a letter to Lu Wenzhao for helping proofread. Under the entrustment of his tutor, Lu put forward his own opinions.³⁰ "Every time before he determined the conception of an entry, Qin referred to several books as proof, and then discussed with several peers before he recorded in the book. Therefore, this book was so well documented that it was elegant in discriminating items, displaying causes and effects, and exuberant in writing and reasoning, crystal clear in structure."³¹ Qin Huitian's scrutiny in learning can be perceived, and from the above, we reckon that Qin Huitian was the person who had presided the compilation of *General Study on the Five Rites*.

It can be seen from above that along with the evolution of public interest, ritual study had been more and more valued by both the court and the commonalty, under the circumstances of which Qin Huitian modeled after Xu Qianxue's *General Study in Reading Rites* and through revision produced this great tome. Even leaving aside the question whether Qin had fulfilled Mr. Zhu's wish, only regarding the evolution of ritual study, Qin's book made great contribution not only in carrying on the legacy, but also in imposing great influence upon the generations to come.

The response of Qing Government and its Confucian officials to social tendency of advocating Rites in the early Qing not only helped obtain a certain achievement of the research on Rites, but also had great impact on guiding the trends of academic learning. In a sense, the three brilliant tomes of *The Exegesis of the Three Rites*, *The General Rites of the Great Qing*, and *General Study on the Five Rites*

30. Lu Wenzhao, "Reply to Mr. Qin Weijing on His Checking the Entries of *General Study on the Five Rites*," in *Selected Works of Baojing Study*, Vol. 13.

31. Wang Mingsheng, "Preface to *General Study on the Five Rites*," in *The Remaining Works of Xizhuang*, Vol. 55.

were undoubtedly the milestones of the research on Rites, after Jia Gongyan and Kong Yingda in Tang Dynasty. The three books not only triggered intelligentsias' more intense attention to the research on the Three Rites (for example, the contemporary Confucians as Huang Shulin, Sheng Shizuo, Ren Qiyun, Jiang Yong, Wu Tinghua, Zhu Jin, Shen Tong, Cheng Tingzuo, Wang Fu, Hang Shijun, Hui Shiqi, Hui Dong, Zhe Yinliang, Hu Kuangzhong, Cheng Jinfang, Zhuang Cunyu, Zhu Tong, Wang Zhong, etc., regardless of their learning tradition and preference: whether they inquired into the Three Rites, or only one, or a certain issue concerning one Rite, they all pay heed to Rites), but also catalyzed the academic trend of "substituting Rites for reasoning." It is safe to say the embarkation and gradual improvement of the ritual thoughts in Qing Dynasty bore a close relationship with the compilation of the three books.

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indulge in no other hobby and taste but confining himself in Weijing Nestle to quench his thirsty for knowledge. How could I possibly measure his depth?"

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