

The Master of the Golden Tower (Jinlouzi 金樓子)

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Entry tags: Yellow and Yangzi Rivers Region, Cosmology, Text, Chinese Religion, Chinese State Religion, Imperial Confucian Traditions, Chinese Folk Religions, Religious Group

The Master of the Golden Tower (Jinlouzi 金樓子) is a work of political, cultural, and literary thought written by Xiao Yi 蕭繹 (508-555), known posthumously as Emperor Yuan 元帝 (r. 502-555) of the Liang dynasty (502-557). Written over the course of its author's life and likely intended to be continued beyond his untimely death, Jinlouzi consists of a series of chapters on topics ranging from the conduct of kings and their consorts, admonition for the author's sons, and funerary arrangements, to clever witticisms, book collecting, and tales of the marvelous. It is within these tales, part of Xiao Yi's chapter on "Anomaly Accounts" (zhiguai 志怪), that we get a glimpse of the author's interest in the supernatural, in those uncanny creatures and events whose veracity was often too epistemologically ambiguous to be included in standard histories. Writing these down in less formal contexts became something of a pastime for educated elites, as were the oral storytelling sessions whence those tales often came, giving rise to a milieu of tale writing that intersected with the miracle stories and hagiographies of the Buddhist and Daoist traditions, and which would have profound effects on the development of the literary genre of fictional narrative in subsequent centuries. Each of the chapters in Jinlouzi—fourteen in total in the extant text—proceeds in roughly the same manner, via citations from works past and present (including some of Xiao Yi's own previous writings) interspersed with the author's comments and reflections. In its form and scope, Jinlouzi belongs to the tradition of Masters Works (zishu 子書), a literary genre of long-form philosophical treatises with chapters on social, ethical, and political issues, often titled with the name or epithet of the author followed by zi 子 ("master"). Other books in this tradition include Liu An's 劉安 (179-122 BC) Huainanzi 淮南子 (The Master of Huainan) and Ge Hong's 葛洪 (282-343) Baopuzi 抱朴子 (The Master Who Embraces Simplicity). Xiao Yi's work stands out in this tradition, as much for its relatively late date—the genre had lost some of its popularity beginning in the fifth century—as for its striking intimacy. In addition to the autobiographical preface (zixu 自序) that was a standard part of the genre, Jinlouzi contains many personal references to its author and his life, including lengthy biographies of both his father and mother, an entire chapter devoted to instructions and advice for his sons, an account of his personal book collection of 80,000 scrolls, and a discourse on the proper behavior of royal princes. Indeed, Xiao Yi seems to have written Jinlouzi with his position as one of the royal princes very much in mind, centering the majority of his work's content on the concerns germane to life in that most exclusive echelon of elite society in the imperial palace. Xiao Yi was seventh son of the founder of the Liang dynasty, Emperor Wu 武帝 (given name Xiao Yan 蕭衍 [464-549, r. 502-549]), and his older half-brothers were Xiao Gang 蕭綱 (503-551), who would later rule as Emperor Jianwen 簡文帝 (r. 549-551), and Xiao Tong 蕭統 (501-531), who is perhaps best known for his compilation of the literary anthology Wenxuan 文選. Xiao Yi finally took the throne after his brother Xiao Gang's demise late in 552, but his was a short reign that lasted just over two years. His seat of power in Jiangling fell to armies from the Western Wei in 554, and he was captured and executed shortly thereafter. Before his death, he ordered that his massive book collection be burned, and thus Jinlouzi stands as a work that reflects much of the learning and thought of the sixth century elite, written by a prolific book collector who perpetrated what was perhaps the greatest bibliocaust since that of the Qin dynasty several centuries earlier.



Date Range: 502 CE - 557 CE

Region: Liang Dynasty China

Region tags: China, Jiankang, Yangzi River Valley

The territorial boundaries of the Liang dynasty.

Status of Readership:

✓ Elite

Sources and Corpora

Print Sources

Print sources used for understanding this subject:

- Source 1: Xu Deping 許德平, ed. and comm., Jinlouzi jiaozhu 金樓子校注 (Taipei: Jiaxin shuini gongsi wenhua jijinhui congshu, 1969)
- Source 2: Xu Yimin 許逸民, ed. and comm., Jinlouzi jiaojian 金樓子校箋 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2011)
- Source 3: Kōzen Hiroshi 興膳宏, "Kinrōshi yakuchū" 金樓子譯注, Chūgoku bungaku hō 79 (2010): 73-112; 80 (2011): 73-112; 81 (2011): 130-70
- Source 1: Xiaofei Tian, "The Twilight of the Masters: Masters Literature (zishu) in Early Medieval China," Journal of American Oriental Society 126, no. 4 (2006): 1-22
- Source 2: Xiaofei Tian, "Book Collecting and Cataloging in the Age of Manuscript Culture: Xiao Yi's Master of the Golden Tower and Ruan Xiaoxu's Preface to Seven Records," in Wendy Swartz, et al., eds., Early Medieval China: A Sourcebook (New York: Columbia Univ. Press, 2014), 307-323.
- Source 3: Liu Yuejin 劉躍進, "Guanyu Jinlouzi yanjiu de jige wenti" 關於金樓子研究的幾個問題, in Disanjie Wei Jin nanbeichao wenxue guoji xueshu yantaohui lunwenji 第三屆魏晉南北朝文學國際研討會論文集 (Taipei: Wenshizhe chu- banshe, 1998)
- Source 1: Zhong Shilun 鍾仕倫, Jinlouzi yanjiu 金樓子研究 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2004)

Online Sources

Online sources used for understanding this subject:

- Source 1 URL: <https://ctext.org/library.pl?if=gb&file=87074&page=1>
- Source 1 Description: A high-resolution scan of a twentieth-century printing of the Bao Tingbo edition of Jinlouzi

Online Corpora

Relevant online Primary Textual Corpora (original languages and/or translations)

- Source 1 URL: <https://ctext.org>
- Source 1 Description: An open-access digital library of premodern Chinese texts.
- Source 2 URL: <http://hanchi.ihp.sinica.edu.tw/ihp/hanji.htm>
- Source 2 Description: Scripta Sinica, a database of premodern Chinese texts with robust search tools, maintained by Academia Sinica in Taiwan. Some portions of the database and its functionality require

institutional access.

General Variables

Materiality

Methods of Composition

– Written

Notes: The status of Jinlouzi as a handwritten text is as true for the original non-extant sixth-century manuscript as it is for the massive fifteenth-century encyclopedic compendium from which the vast majority of the extant fragments are culled, the Yongle dadian. Though Yongle dadian was completed in 1408, a time when printing technology was already available, all 29,000+ scrolls of its first edition were handwritten.



Inked

– with Ink

Medium upon which the text is written/incised

– Paper



Specify type of paper

– **Specify:** Though most paper during the pre-Tang period was made from hemp, it is possible that Jinlouzi could have been written on more valuable paper made from mulberry or sandalwood bark.

Was the material modified before the writing or incising process?

– Other [specify]: Unknown

Was the text modified before the writing or incising process?

– Other [specify]: Unknown

Location

Is the text stored in a specific location?

[Note at which point in time, for reference, if known; select all that apply]

– Yes



Tomb

– No

- ↳ Cemetery
 - No
- ↳ Temple
 - No
- ↳ Shrine
 - No
- ↳ Altar
 - No
- ↳ Devotional marker
 - No
- ↳ Cenotaph
 - No
- ↳ Church
 - No
- ↳ Mosque
 - No
- ↳ Synagogue
 - No
- ↳ Triumphal Arch
 - No
- ↳ Monument
 - No
- ↳ Mass Gathering Point
 - No

↳ Cave(s)

– No

↳ Hilltops

– No

↳ Other natural sanctuaries

– No

↳ Boundary markers or lines

– No

↳ Domestic contexts

– No

↳ Library/archive

– Yes

Notes: The period of the text's composition was one of considerable political turmoil, and in the ensuing chaos of the sacking of Xiao Yi's power base in Jiangling, many books were lost, including in a large-scale book burning perpetrated by the author of Jinlouzi himself. However, bibliographic records beginning in the Sui dynasty (589-618) indicate that copies of Jinlouzi were held in the imperial libraries until some point in the Mongol rule of the Yuan dynasty (1271-1368), at which point both public and private book lists suggest there were only fragmentary manuscript copies in circulation. One of these was an edition copied down by one Ye Sen 葉森, a figure mentioned only in passing in the historical record and to whom the preface appended to the beginning of the received text is attributed. It is apparently from Ye's edition and other fragments in circulation that the Yongle dadian compilers constructed their version. However, it would not be until later in the Qing dynasty that a more comprehensive reconstruction of Jinlouzi would be undertaken, primarily by the editors of the Siku quanshu 四庫全書 project. See Zhong Shilun 鍾仕倫, *Jinlouzi yanjiu* 金樓子研究 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2004), 33-37.

↳ Specify

– Specify: n/a

Is the location where the text stored accompanied by iconography or images?

– No

Is the area where the text is stored accompanied by an-iconic images?

– No

Production & Intended Audience

Production

Is the production of the text funded by the polity?

— No

Notes: Jinlouzi was a private work of personal philosophy, written by the lone figure of Xiao Yi, though this was not necessarily the norm for texts in the tradition known as Masters Works (zishu). Indeed, in the autobiographical preface to Jinlouzi, Xiao Yi chides the authors of previous such works, including the aforementioned Liu An, author of the Western Han text Huainanzi, for having written their books with the help of retainers. Xiao Yi presents himself as standing in opposition to such corporate authorship, as the singular voice of his book.

Is the text considered official religious scripture?

— No

Written in distinctly religious/sacred language?

— No

Intended Audience

What is the estimated number of people considered to be the audience of the text

This should be the total number of people who would serve as the intended audience for the text.

— Field doesn't know

Notes: In general, it can be difficult to determine the intended audience for Masters Works like Jinlouzi, which were typically positioned by their writers as intended both for the edification of some broad notion of posterity as well as for contemporary elite consumption. Xiao Yi's own chosen topics, ranging from wide-ranging political thought to local accounts of anomalous happenings (zhiguai), seem to reflect his desire to interest others in his own narrow elite social milieu.

Does the Religious group actively proselytize and recruit new members?

— No

Are there clear reformist movements?

(Reformism, as in not proselytizing to potential new conservative, but "conversion" - or rather, reform - to the "correct interpretation"?)

— No

Is the text in question employed in ritual practice?

— No

Is there material significance to the text?

— No

Context and Content of the Text (Beliefs and Practices)

Context

Is the text itself accompanied by art?

— No

Are there multiple versions of the text?

— Yes

Notes: There are two major textual recensions of Jinlouzi, both of which date to the late eighteenth century: 1) a woodblock printed edition included in the Siku quanshu compendium, completed in 1782, and 2) a separate woodblock edition, printed in the studio of Bao Tingbo 鮑廷博 based on a manuscript copy of the Siku quanshu version sent to him by a friend who had worked on the project; likely completed in 1781. Both editions consist of six scrolls, and were in all likelihood both drawing separately from the same pool of extant Jinlouzi citations in contemporary editions of the Yongle dadian. See Zhong Shilun 鍾仕倫, Jinlouzi yanjiu 金樓子研究 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2004), 35-37 and Xu Deping 許德平, ed. and comm., Jinlouzi jiaozhu 金樓子校注 (Taipei: Jiaxin shuini gongsi wenhua jijinhui congshu, 1969), 1-3.



Are multiple versions viewed as proper?

— No



Is there debate about which version is proper?

— No

Notes: As a non-scriptural text, there is no debate regarding the propriety per se of the various recensions of Jinlouzi, but given the fragmentary nature of the text, there is debate as to which of those recensions is earliest and thus most authoritative. The portions of the text included in the Ming encyclopedia Yongle dadian are generally thought to be reflective of the earliest version of Xiao Yi's work, since it is suggested that the Yongle dadian editors had access to the full Yuan-era manuscript of the aforementioned Ye Sen. However, given that the textual transmission of Yongle dadian is itself not without problems, arguments insisting on early provenance based on the relatively early composition date of that encyclopedia are somewhat tenuous, and must remain in the realm of speculation. See Zhong Shilun 鍾仕倫, Jinlouzi yanjiu 金樓子研究 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2004), 35-37.

Is the text part of a collection of texts?

— No

If the text is not explicitly scripture, is it part of another important literary tradition?

— Yes

Notes: As mentioned in the entry description, Jinlouzi belongs to the tradition of Masters Works (zishu), a literary genre that began in antiquity and continued to be written during the early medieval period, before losing some of its popularity from the fifth century onward. Books in this tradition include Liu An's *Huainanzi*, Ge Hong's *Baopuzi*, Wang Chong's 王充 (27-ca. 100) *Lunheng* 論衡 (Balanced Discourse), and Liu Xie's 劉勰 (fl. 5th c.) *Wenxin diaolong* 文心雕龍 (The Literary Mind and Carving of Dragons). The fact that Xiao Yi's *zishu* belongs to this tradition is emphasized by the fact that it is referred to in early sources as *Xiangdong honglie* 湘東鴻烈, using Xiao Yi's princely feif of Xiangdong as an epithet and mimicking an alternative moniker for the much earlier *Huainanzi*, which had also been known as *Huainan honglie* 淮南鴻烈. See Wiebke Denecke, "Mastering Chinese Philosophy: A History of the Genre of 'Masters Literature' (諸子百家 zhuzi baijia) from the Analects to the Han Feizi" (Ph.D. diss., Harvard Univ., 2004), and Xiaofei Tian, "The Twilight of the Masters: Masters Literature (zishu) in Early Medieval China," *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 126.4 (2006).

↳ Cultural with religious implications?

— Yes

Notes: The religious implications of *Jinlouzi* can be found primarily in its reflecting the heterogenous philosophical, political, and spiritual thought operative in the highest echelon of sixth-century Chinese society. By choosing to hold forth on topics such as funerary rites, the strange tales and mysterious happenings that tend to fall outside standard historiography, as well as the ethical behavior of rulers, their consorts, and their offspring, Xiao Yi gives readers an implicit look at the beliefs of an admittedly ultra-narrow segment of elite society.

↳ Behavioral literature?

— Yes

Notes: Several chapters of *Jinlouzi* could be understood to be in the tradition of behavioral literature, understood broadly as offering examples of worthwhile behavior. His first three chapters, "Rise of Kings" (xingwang 興王), "Counsel and Admonition" (zhenjie 箴戒), and "Empresses and Consorts" (houfei 后妃), primarily recount examples of excellent and despicable behavior on the part of rulers and their consorts. However, the chapter that cleaves closest to behavioral literature in a stricter sense, that of prescribing particular norms of proper conduct, would be his chapter "Admonishing My Sons" (jiezi 戒子). Again using the form of citations and references to accounts from the past, Xiao Yi gives his sons advice and admonition on a variety of topics, from criticizing the wrongdoing of others, to their need to see each other as equals even though born of different mothers, to the dangers of profligate carousing and lavish lifestyles. He refers to his sons somewhat affectionately as "you lot" (rucao 汝曹); in this, and in many other details of the text, Xiao Yi shows an obvious stylistic and thematic debt to the famous letter written by the fourth-century poet Tao Yuanming 陶淵明 (365-427) to his own sons.

↳ Other

—Other [specify]: n/a

Content

Is the text - or does the text include - a ritual list, manual, bibliography, index, or vocabulary?

(Select all that apply)

— Other [specify]: n/a

Are there lineages or a single lineage established by the text?

— No

Does the text express a formal legal code?

— No

Formulating a specifically religious calendar?

— No

Beliefs

Is a spirit-body distinction present in the text?

— Yes

Notes: While the text of Jinlouzi does indeed indicate a belief on the part of its author in the distinction between the corporeal body and a spirit or soul that survives death, this is largely reflective of the broader commonplace beliefs of the Liang dynasty elite and is not discussed in any argumentative, theoretical, or conceptual manner. The belief plays its most prominent role in the short chapter on funerary practices, discussed below.



Spirit-Mind is conceived of as having qualitatively different powers or properties than other parts?

— No



Spirit-mind is conceived of as non-material, ontologically distinct from body?

— No



Other spirit-body relationship?

— No



Within conceptions of the mind: are there distinct notions of psychological states or aggregates?

— No



Do practitioners engage in debates about mind-body dualism?

— No

↳ Are debates framed in other ways?

– No

↳ Do practitioners distinguish between a corporeal body and an incorporeal soul or spirit?

– No

↳ Are there other sides or features of the debate?

– No

↳ What are historical mainstream and minority positions?

– Field doesn't know

Is belief in an afterlife indicated in the text?

– Yes

Notes: The afterlife is not treated in any systematic way in the text of Jinlouzi, but in several instances Xiao Yi's general belief in an afterlife animates the discussions; for example, in the chapter of "Anomaly Accounts" (zhiguai), we read of living things (both human and animal) being brought back to life through various means. Yet the most prominent thematic thread in Jinlouzi regarding death is rather its author's concern with the brevity of earthly life and the need for the living to act with full knowledge of that brevity. Xiao Yi includes a chapter dedicated to admonishments for his young sons, framing part of the discussion by citing from the famous letter written by the fourth-century poet Tao Yuanming to his own sons (mentioned above): "Heaven and Earth bestow life upon us, but those living must come to their end; from antiquity on, which of the sagely and worthy have been able to avoid it?" 天地賦命，有生必終。自古聖賢，誰能獨免。 And perhaps most tellingly, Xiao Yi opens his autobiographical self-account (zixu 自序) with a similar lament: "A generation among men flits by in no time at all, like the spark seen when boring into stone, or the flash of lightning observed when peering through a wall crevice. The firefly describes the dawn and its light goes out, the dew sees the sun and disappears, so how can one not write an account of one's own life?" 人間之世飄忽幾何，如鑿石見火，窺隙觀電。螢睹朝而滅，露見日而消，豈可不自序也。

↳ Is the spatial location of the afterlife specified or described by the religious group?

– No

↳ Is the temporality of the afterlife specified or described by the religious group?

– No

↳ Is there debate in the interpretation of the language of the afterlife?

– No

Is belief in reincarnation in this world specified in the text?

– No

Are there special treatments for adherents' corpses dicated in the text?

– Yes

Notes: In the short chapter on "Funerary Arrangements" (zhongzhi 終制), which consists of a denunciation of lavish burial practices via citations of funerary restraint and moderation in several historical figures, and concludes with Xiao Yi's brief wishes for his own burial, the author suggests by his chosen examples that the body of the deceased ought to be adorned very modestly indeed. He offers examples of powerful figures requesting they be buried in simple single-layered cloth to show their restraint, or in their minister's robes, here not sumptuous finery but official vestments meant to signify their subordinate status to that of the ruler. Xiao Yi also refers to several figures who left instructions that they be buried nude.

↳ Cremation?

– No

↳ Mummification?

– No

↳ Interment?

– Yes

Notes: Xiao Yi's discussion of funerary arrangements revolve almost entirely around confining and interment. In particular, Xiao Yi decries the choosing of well-known locations with political or cultural significance for burial sites, claiming to prefer a nondescript location on a hilltop for his own burial.

↳ Cannibalism?

– No

↳ Exposure to elements (e.g. air drying)?

– No

↳ Feeding to animals?

– No

↳ Secondary burial?

– No

↳ Re-treatment of corpse?

– No

↳ Are there specific designations for parts of corpses?

– No

↳ Could parts of corpses become transformed into partial bodily relics?

– No

↳ Other intensive (in terms of time or resources expended) treatment of corpse?

– No

Does the text indicate if co-sacrifices should be present in burials?

– Yes

↳ Human sacrifices present?

– No

Notes: Xiao Yi looks with great contempt on the ancient practice of rulers ordering members of their retinue (ministerial or military) to join their liege-lord in death, though such a stance in opposition to that practice was a common component of the contemporary elite Confucian worldview. Such co-sacrifices were likely not practiced widely anywhere in the realm during the Liang period.

↳ Animal co-sacrifices present?

– No

Notes: Xiao Yi makes explicit mention in the closing of his chapter on "Funerary Arrangements" (zhongzhi) that upon his death, his mourners ought "to take great care not to offer any blood, skin, or flesh as sacrifices" 慎無以血臚腥為祭也, which most likely would have been seen as a practice of vulgar "folk religion" and not suitable for the imperial cult.

Does the text specify grave goods for burial?

– No

Notes: The chapter on "Funerary Arrangements" (zhongzhi) generally speaks with disfavor on the inclusion of grave goods, and in his instructions for his own burial, Xiao Yi orders that no accoutrement be interred with him. He writes, "Golden silkworms have no value for producing silk, and terracotta roosters lack any use for heralding the dawn" 金蠶無吐絲之實，瓦雞乏司晨之用, referring to the kinds of statuary and figurines made of precious metals and jewels often buried with the deceased.

Are formal burials present in the text?

– Yes

Notes: Though no scenes of burial are narrated in Jinlouzi, Xiao Yi's chapter on funerary arrangements

recounts the wishes of various elite figures (including himself) regarding their own burials.

↳ As cenotaphs?

— No

↳ In cemetery?

— No

↳ Family tomb-crypt?

— Yes

Notes: Each of the figures cited by Xiao Yi in his chapter on funerary arrangements asks to be buried in a tomb or barrow, and all have in common the particular request for a modest burial without elaborate markings. Several merely request some variant of being "interred in a dirt hole" 葬於土穴, though this is most likely a rhetorical gesture meant to indicate the extent to which the person eschewed the lavish funerals popular among elites in their day.

↳ Domestic (individuals interred beneath house, or in areas used for normal domestic activities)?

— No

↳ Other formal burial type?

— No

↳ Other intensive funerary ritual

— Specify: n/a

Are there practices that have funerary associations presented in the text?

— No

Are supernatural beings present in the text?

— Yes

Notes: In his chapter on "Anomaly Accounts" (zhiguai), Xiao Yi describes examples of beings with supernatural powers, whose appearance and abilities are described as "things not of the human realm" 非人間物. These abilities range from the astounding--e.g. the sorcerers of antiquity who "could enter both water and fire, pass through metal and stone, cause mountain and river to change places, and move city walls" 能入水火, 貫金石, 反山川, 移城郭--to the somewhat humorous--e.g. the practitioner of mantic arts named Sir Cultivated Goat (Xiuyang gong 修羊公) who indeed ends up transforming into a white goat (baiyang 白羊). However, as is common in tales of this kind from the period, the actual ontological status of the beings is left somewhat ambiguous, and are not best understood as gods, demons, or even immortals (xian 仙).

↳ A supreme high-god is present

– No

Previously human spirits are present

– No

Non-human supernatural beings are present

– Yes

Notes: In his chapter on "Anomaly Accounts" (zhiguai), Xiao Yi records the existence of various fantastical creatures, mostly animal-like in form. Some of these are references to animals of giant proportions, though otherwise similar to their typically-sized counterparts: for example, the giant crab of the eastern sea whose pincers can hold a mountain, or the giant fish of the same sea whose spawning leaves the water blood-red for three hundred leagues (li 里) in all directions. Others are creatures who appear somewhat normal, save for a single extraordinary feature: the so-called "bull fish" (niuyu 牛魚) who grows hair that stands up at high-tide and lies down at low-tide, or the egret-like bird who is born with a bronze ring around its knee. However, Xiao Yi also records a few instances of non-animal supernatural beings, usually elementals (jing 精). These include the mountain elemental, childlike with short legs that bend backward, a trickster who enjoys playing pranks on humans; the water elemental called Qingji 慶忌 (also mentioned in other early texts, such as the Guanzi 管子), human in appearance, who wears a yellow cap and rides a small horse, and who can in the span of a single day arrive at any spot to which he is called from a distance of a thousand leagues (li) away; or the marsh elemental, snakelike in appearance with one head and two bodies, who will catch fish and turtles for a person who calls it by name.

↳ Supernatural beings can be seen

– Yes

↳ Supernatural beings can be physically felt

– Yes

↳ Non-human supernatural beings have knowledge of this world

– Yes

Notes: Though the extent of their knowledge cannot be known with any surety, Xiao Yi's descriptions of certain elementals (jing) indicate their knowledge of the human realm, in which they exist at least part time. For example, the mountain elemental enjoys playing tricks on humans, and changes his physical form depending on the person viewing him.

↳ Knowledge is restricted to a particular domain of human affairs

– Field doesn't know

↳ Knowledge is restricted to (a) specific area(s) within the sample region

– Field doesn't know

- ↳ Knowledge is unrestricted within the sample region
 - Field doesn't know
- ↳ Knowledge is unrestricted outside of sample region
 - Field doesn't know
- ↳ Can see you everywhere normally visible (in public)
 - Field doesn't know
- ↳ Can see you everywhere (in the dark, at home)
 - Field doesn't know
- ↳ Can see inside heart/mind (hidden motives)
 - Field doesn't know
- ↳ Know basic character (personal essence)
 - Field doesn't know
- ↳ Know what will happen to you, what you will do (future sight)
 - Field doesn't know
- ↳ Have other knowledge of this world
 - Field doesn't know
- ↳ Non-human supernatural beings have deliberate causal efficacy in the world
 - Yes

Notes: Although the supernatural beings mentioned in the text do have casual efficacy in the world, this is generally unrelated to notions of reward and punishment, and tends to be based solely on the individual interests of the being in question.
 - ↳ Supernatural beings can reward
 - No
 - ↳ Supernatural beings can punish
 - No
- ↳ Non-human supernatural beings communicate with the living according to the text?

– Yes

↳ In waking, everyday life?

– Yes

↳ In dreams?

– Yes

Notes: In his chapter on the "Rise of Kings" (xingwang), Xiao Yi relates a dream had by one of his father's top ministers, in which a crimson-clad, god-like being comes to him with three horses. The minister himself, one of the princes, and the emperor each fly off on one of the horses, which is interpreted as the minister having received foreknowledge from the gods.

↳ In trance possession?

– No

↳ Through divination practices?

– No

↳ Only through religious specialists?

– No

↳ Only through monarch?

– No

↳ Other?

–Specify: n/a

↳ These supernatural beings have indirect causal efficacy in the world

– Yes

Notes: We can infer from Xiao Yi's chapter on "Anomaly Accounts" (zhiguai) that certain of the non-human supernatural beings to whom he refers do have indirect, non-deliberate causal efficacy. For example, he describes a giant turtle-like creature who sat motionless in a certain lake for so long that trees and brush grew on its back. When a traveling merchant cut some of these down for kindling and began making a fire for his camp, the creature felt the burning heat and dove into the water, apparently causing the deaths of dozens of nearby people. Xiao Yi also records an account of the great whales of the sea, who he claims live in grand caves at the bottom of the ocean, and cause the tides to go in and out as they enter and exit these dwellings.

- ↳ These supernatural beings exhibit positive emotion
 - Yes
- ↳ These supernatural beings exhibit negative emotion
 - Yes
- ↳ These supernatural beings possess hunger
 - No
- ↳ These supernatural beings possess/exhibit some other feature
 - Specify: n/a

Does the text attest to a pantheon of supernatural beings?

– No

Are mixed human-divine beings present according to the text?

– No

Is there a supernatural being that is physically present in the/as a result of the text?

– No

Are other categories of beings present?

– Mysterious?

Notes: Indeed, it should be noted that from Xiao Yi's short preface to his chapter on "Anomaly Accounts" (zhiguai), and more generally from what is known about the broader tradition of tale-writing in this period, we can surmise that the author's interest in these beings and creatures has less to do with a belief in their ontological status as being somehow "outside" the natural world, and more to do with the mysterious and fantastic nature of the circumstances surrounding their existence and incursions into the human realm. As mentioned below, insofar as these tales and accounts are entertaining, that entertainment stems from an epistemological vagueness, the rhetorical space in which gossip, rumor, and fact intermingle to produce interesting narratives.

Does the text guide divination practices?

– Yes

Notes: Though not properly a guide to divination, Jinlouzi includes in the author's autobiographical preface an extended section detailing his previous experiences divining with the Book of Changes (Yijing 易經), in particular via the explanations and practices attributed to the Western Han mathematician Jing Fang 京房 (78-37 BC). Xiao Yi describes himself as a skilled prognosticator, and recounts several instances of his having won games of chance and guessing games by tossing the milfoil stalks used in Yijing divination, and then using the sections of the Yijing text belonging to the

resulting hexagrams to make his choices. In a similar way, he is able on one occasion to correctly predict the end of a long drought, while on another occasion, he countermands the prediction of a skilled augur who had foretold a downpour, predicting correctly beautifully clear skies on the night in question. This section is of inestimable, though often overlooked, value, since its detailed description of Yijing divination using the Jing Fang methods offers a window onto how such divination occurred on less rarified occasions, whereas much existing material in the historical record refers mainly to state-sponsored instances of prognostication.

↳ Divination by examination of the extra (animal remains)
– No

↳ Divination through human communication?
– No

↳ Divination through animal-behavior?
– No

↳ Divination through non-living material?
– Other [specify]: Milfoil stalks
Notes: Specifically, those used in the divination practices of the Book of Changes (Yijing).
– Bones
Notes: Specifically, the turtle plastrons used in the divination practices of the Book of Changes (Yijing).

↳ Other form of divination:
– Specify: n/a

Supernatural Monitoring

Is supernatural monitoring present in the text?
– No

Do supernatural beings mete out punishment in the text?
– No

Notes: As noted above, although the supernatural beings mentioned in the text do have causal efficacy in the world, this is generally unrelated to notions of reward and punishment, and tends to be based solely on the individual interests of the being in question.

Do supernatural beings bestow rewards in the text?

— No

Notes: As noted above, although the supernatural beings mentioned in the text do have causal efficacy in the world, this is generally unrelated to notions of reward and punishment, and tends to be based solely on the individual interests of the being in question.

Messianism/Eschatology

Are messianic beliefs present in the text?

— No

Is an eschatology present in the text?

— No

Norms & Moral Realism

Are general social norms prescribed by the text?

— Yes

Notes: Norms for rulers and their consorts are alluded to in the first three chapters of Jinlouzi, though it is Xiao Yi's chapter "Admonishing My Sons" (jiezi) that offers the most direct consideration of more general social norms. In general, Xiao Yi's moral prescriptions revolve around the constellation of norms we might most readily call "Confucian," and include filiality, honesty, modesty, and these carry the weight of tradition as they are presented mainly through citations of wise sayings and deeds from historical figures.

Is there a conventional vs. moral distinction in the religious text?

— No

Are there centrally important virtues advocated by the text?

— Yes

↳ Honesty/trustworthiness/integrity

— Yes

↳ Courage (in battle)

— No

↳ Courage (generic)

— No

|

- ↳ Compassion/empathy/kindness/benevolence
 - Yes
- ↳ Mercy/forgiveness/tolerance
 - Yes
- ↳ Generosity/charity
 - Yes
- ↳ Selflessness/selfless giving
 - No
- ↳ Righteousness/moral rectitude
 - Yes
- ↳ Ritual purity/ritual adherence/abstention from sources of impurity
 - No
- ↳ Respectfulness/courtesy
 - Yes
- ↳ Familial obedience/filial piety
 - Yes
- ↳ Fidelity/loyalty
 - Yes
- ↳ Cooperation
 - Yes
- ↳ Independence/creativity/freedom
 - Yes
- ↳ Moderation/frugality
 - Yes

- ↳ Forbearance/fortitude/patience
 - No
- ↳ Diligence/self-discipline/excellence
 - Yes
- ↳ Assertiveness/decisiveness/confidence/initiative
 - Yes
- ↳ Strength (physical)
 - No
- ↳ Power/status/nobility
 - Yes
- ↳ Humility/modesty
 - Yes
- ↳ Contentment/serenity/equanimity
 - No
- ↳ Joyfulness/enthusiasm/cheerfulness
 - No
- ↳ Optimism/hope
 - No
- ↳ Gratitude/thankfulness
 - Yes
- ↳ Reverence/awe/wonder
 - No
- ↳ Faith/belief/trust/devotion
 - No

- ↳ Wisdom/understanding
 - Yes
- ↳ Discernment/intelligence
 - Yes
- ↳ Beauty/attractiveness
 - Yes
- ↳ Cleanliness (physical)/orderliness
 - No
- ↳ Other important virtues
 - No

Advocacy of Practices

Does the text require celibacy (full sexual abstinence)?

– No

Does the text require constraints on sexual activity (partial sexual abstinence)?

– No

Does the text require castration?

– No

Does the text require fasting?

– No

Does the text require forgone food opportunities (taboos on desired foods)?

– No

Does the text require permanent scarring or painful bodily alterations?

– No

Does the text require painful physical positions or transitory painful wounds?

– No

Does the text require sacrifice of adults?

– No

Notes: On the contrary, the practice of certain ancient rulers requiring members of their retinue to commit suicide and join their liege-lord in death comes in for direct denunciation from Xiao Yi in his chapter on "Funerary Arrangements" (zhongzhi).

Does the text require sacrifice of children?

– No

Does the text require self-sacrifice (suicide)?

– No

Does the text require sacrifice of property/valuable items?

– No

Notes: In the lone instance in which sacrifice is mentioned, in the context of burial rites, Xiao Yi denounces the practice of lavish sacrifice of valuable items, or the inclusion in the tomb of expensive figurines or accoutrement.

Does the text require sacrifice of time (e.g. attendance at meetings or services, regular prayer, etc.)?

– No

Does the text require physical risk taking?

– No

Does the text require accepting ethical precepts?

– Yes

Notes: The ethical precepts required by the text are directed at the very small subset of elite society that Xiao Yi himself inhabited, that of rulers, their consorts, and especially the sons born of those relationships.

Does the text require marginalization by out-group members?

– No

Does the text require participation in small-scale rituals (private, household)?

– No

Does the text require participation in large-scale rituals?

– No

Notes: While not requiring participation in state rituals, Xiao Yi does refer in his first chapter to the proper performance of sacrifices such as the feng 封 and shan 禪 as indicators of good rulership.

Are extra-ritual in-group markers present as indicated in the text?

– No

Does the text employ fictive kinship terminology?

– No

Does the text include elements that are intended to be entertaining?

– Yes

Notes: Xiao Yi's chapter of "Anomaly Accounts" (zhiguai) is part of a tradition of tale-writing that has been shown to have originated in the practice of private oral storytelling and gossip, often undertaken by elite men as a means to pass the time. Thus, while the practice of writing down such tales can also be understood as an effort of informal historiography, such writings were often a product of these oral tale-telling sessions, whose purpose was as much to entertain as it was to inform. Perhaps because of this, the tales are often presented as plain fact, and derive much of their readerly pleasure from their status as epistemologically ambiguous, a kind of "believe it or not" discourse. See Robert Ford Campany, *Strange Writing: Anomaly Accounts in Early Medieval China* (Albany: State Univ. of New York Press, 1995), and Stephen Owen, "Postface: 'Believe It or Not,'" in *Idle Talk: Gossip and Anecdote in Traditional China*, eds. Jack W. Chen and David Schaberg (Berkeley: UC Berkeley, 2013).

↳ Drama?

– Yes

↳ Comedy?

– Yes

↳ Tragedy?

– Yes

↳ Epic entertainment?

– No

Does the text specify sacrifices, offerings, and maintenance of a sacred space?

– No

Institutions & Production Environment of Text

Society & Institutions

Society of religious group that produced the text is best characterized as:

— An empire

Notes: Though Jinlouzi was authored by a single person, that person was Xiao Yi, the future Emperor Yuan of the Liang dynasty. Though not yet emperor when he began the text, Xiao Yi was a scion of the realm's top elite family, and it was in his person that the authority of the entire southern empire was vested.

Are there specific elements of society that have controlled the reproduction of the text?

— An empire

Notes: The two large projects that are responsible for preserving the bulk of the extant fragments of Jinlouzi--the Yongle dadian and the Siku quanshu--are both large encyclopedic projects commissioned by the imperial throne, during the Ming and Qing dynasties respectively.

— Other

Notes: Though imperially-sponsored projects did much to preserve and reproduce the text of Jinlouzi, individual private printers also played an important role, especially the figure Bao Tingbo, whose printed version of the text represents one of the two major recensions of the extant Jinlouzi.

Are there specific elements of society involved with the destruction of the text?

— Other

Notes: The author of Jinlouzi, Xiao Yi, was himself responsible for burning his own large book collection after the fall of his capital, though it cannot be known whether a copy of Jinlouzi was among those texts destroyed.

Welfare

Does the text specify institutionalized famine relief?

— No

Does the text specify institutionalized poverty relief?

— No

Does the text specify institutionalized care for elderly & infirm?

— No

Other forms of welfare?

— No

Education

Are there formal educational institutions available for teaching the text?

— No

Are there formal educational institutions specified according to the text?

— No

Notes: Though no educational institutions are specified by the text, Xiao Yi does include several mentions of the value and proper place of education. See below.

Does the text make provisions for non-religious education?

— Yes

Notes: Xiao Yi admonishes his sons to undertake traditional education in the Confucian tradition, with "the enlightened teacher taking his place before you, and you assiduously reciting behind him" 明師居前，勸誦在後. He tells them that "all study must have the Five Classics [of Confucian learning] at its root, which is to say study nothing but the books of the Sages. Read them a hundred times and their meaning will appear as a matter of course. As for the plethora of other books, naturally these may simply be perused here and there" 凡讀書必以五經為本，所謂非聖人之書勿讀。讀之百遍，其義自見。此外眾書，自可泛觀耳. Of his own education, Xiao Yi gives a rather intimate account in his autobiographical preface (zixu), in which he relates the trouble he had in his studies, due not only to a somewhat introverted nature, but also (and perhaps relatedly) to an eye malady that caused him to lose sight in one eye at the age of thirteen. He says as his sight dimmed, "I was never again able to read books on my own, and for the past thirty-six years, I have always had my attendants recite them out loud to me" 不復能自讀書，三十六年來，恒令左右唱之. However, he is quick to point out that in so doing, he was able to commune with the ancients. He also mentions the important role his mother played in his early education (see discussion below).

Does the text restrict education to religious professionals?

— No

Does the text restrict education among religious professionals?

— No

Is education gendered according to the text?

— Yes

Notes: Education during the period in which Jinlouzi was written was indeed gendered, with the bulk of traditional Confucian learning typically reserved for men and boys, and education in song, dance, painting, etc. reserved for women and girls, though one does well to remember the differences present in the elite context of Xiao Yi's work, i.e. the much narrower slice of royal society to which Xiao Yi belonged. In this context, women were quite often very well educated indeed. For example, in the conclusion to his account of his mother's life (in the chapter on "Empresses and Consorts" [houfei]), Xiao Yi recounts how his mother was from a very young age able to recite lengthy poetic and prose texts, such as Zuo Si's 左思 (ca. 250-ca. 305) "Rhapsody on the Three Capitals" (sandu fu 三都賦) and selections from the Five Classics of Confucian tradition, able to understand what she had read after

only a brief perusal. After showing considerable wisdom in her rise to prominence in the imperial harem, she took a personal role in her son's education, taking care to point out the important principles of ministerial duty and imperial rulership on offer in the books Xiao Yi was studying. Indeed, Xiao Yi claims that much of what he knew about the principles of governance "was all garnered from the tender-hearted instruction of my mother" 皆荷慈訓.

Is education gendered with respect to this text and larger textual tradition?

— No

Does the text specify teaching relationships or ratios? (i.e.: 1:20; 1:1)

— No

Are there specific relationships to teachers that are advocated by the text?

— Yes

Notes: Mentions of teachers in Jinlouzi are not many, but in his chapter on "Admonishing My Sons" (jiezi), Xiao Yi makes sure to remind his sons, using a citation from the Hanshu 漢書, that the proper arrangement for education is with "the enlightened teacher taking his place before you, and you assiduously reciting behind him" 明師居前，勸誦在後.

Are there worldly rewards/benefits to education according to the text specified by the text itself?

— No

Notes: Xiao Yi's mentions of education tend not to emphasize worldly reward or benefit, but rather treat learning as an end in itself, which is largely in line with traditional Confucian educational discourse. For example, he urges his sons to apply themselves to study of the Standard Histories (zhengshi 正史), not so they may learn a particular set of strategies conducive to gaining political power, but rather because those histories "are the means by which you can distinguish the noble from the low, and tell right from wrong; to these you ought to give special heed" 所以別貴賤，明是非，尤宜留意.

Bureaucracy

Is bureaucracy regulated by this text?

— No

Public Works

Does the text detail interaction with public works?

— No

Taxation

Does the text specify forms of taxation?

— No

Notes: Xiao Yi does not deal directly with taxation in Jinlouzi, mentioning it only in passing in a few places. However, his references to taxes seem to focus on the need for authorities levy them with care, and not to appropriate them for personal use. For example, in his chapter "Discourse on Princedoms" (shuofan 說蕃), he recounts the conniving and paranoid behavior of the Prince of Zhao 趙王 Liu Pengzu 劉彭祖 (167-92 BC), the eighth son of Emperor Jing of Han 漢景帝 (r. 157-141 BC), particularly his underhanded dealings with merchants, the profits of which he took into his own coffers as state taxes. Xiao Yi's inclusion of this account in Jinlouzi suggests that he was at least nominally dismayed at the amassing of private wealth in the name of public taxation.

Warfare

Does the text mention warfare?

— Yes

Notes: Warfare is mentioned in passing in the context of Xiao Yi's citations of both good and bad behavior of past rulers, though neither the prosecution of war nor its moral conundrums come in for systematic discussion.



Does the text dictate how to control an institutionalized military?

— No



Does the text restrict/advocate for participation in exogenous military organizations?

— No



Does the text celebrate/bemoan protection/subjugation by an exogenous military force?

— No

Food Production

Does the text mentioned food production/disbursement?

— No

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