



Emperor Yu Tames the Flood

By Zhao Xueru / Su Guanqun



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Personages Who Appear in *Emperor Yu Tames the Flood*

I. The main characters

Nü Wa: according to ancient Chinese mythology, the goddess who gave birth to the first humans. Well-known legends about her include Nü Wa Creates Human Beings and Nü Wa Patches the Sky.

Pan Gu: the mythical creator of the sky and the earth

Fu Xi: the mythical creator of the Chinese civilization, credited with the invention of the ancient system of divination known as the Eight Trigrams, and regarded as one of the originators of traditional Chinese medicine

Lady Yunhua: 23rd daughter of the Queen Mother of the Western Heaven, helped Yu the Great tame the flood

Emperor Yao: one of the Five August Emperors in Chinese mythology, regarded as the epitome of the sage ruler and whose reign was considered a Golden Age

Emperor Shun: successor to Emperor Yao and one of the Five August Emperors (possibly the leader of a tribal alliance in late clan society), considered the founder of ancient Chinese ethics and culture

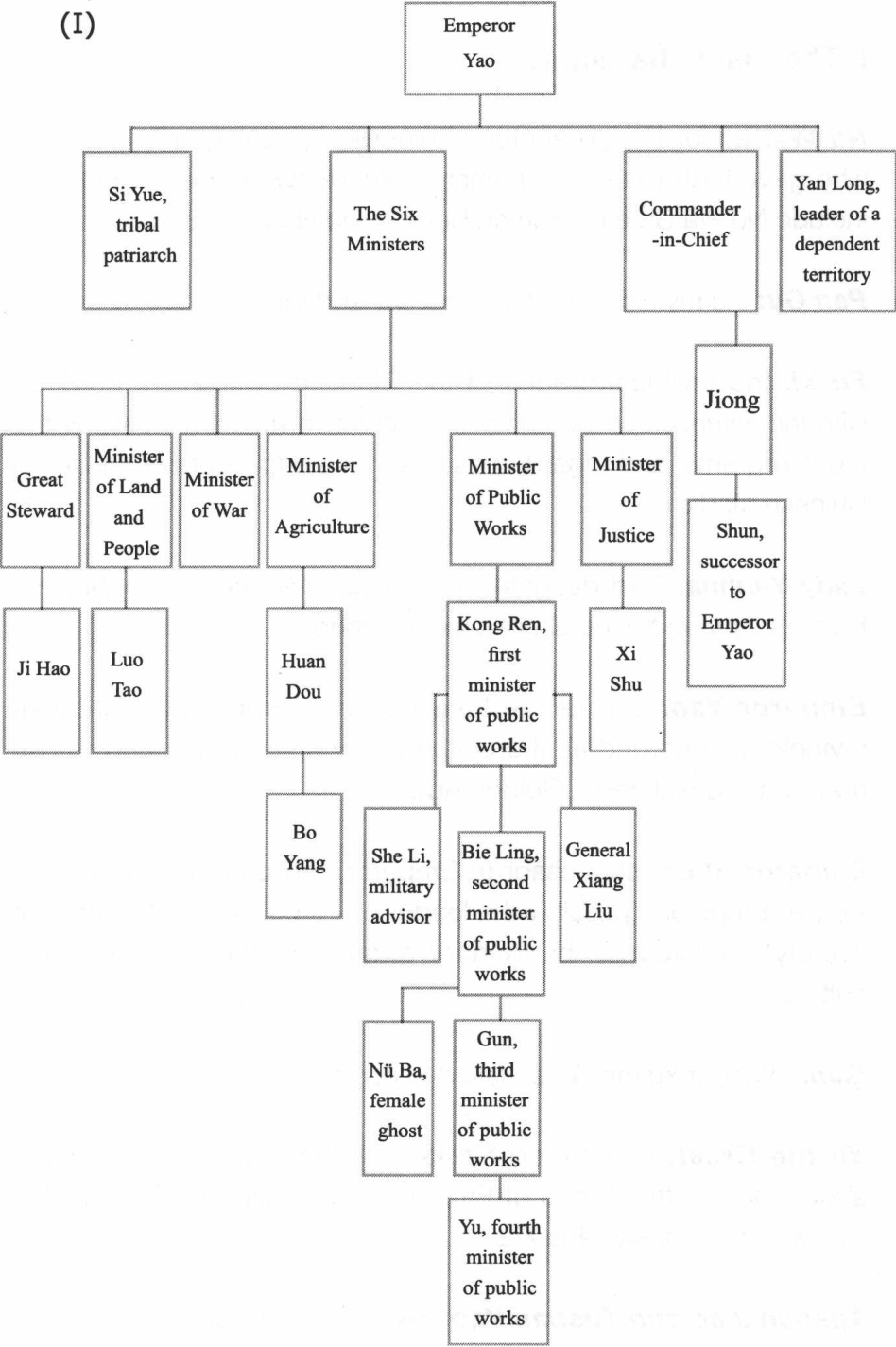
Gun: father of Yu the Great, failed to control the flood

Yu the Great: completed his father's flood-control work, and succeeded to the throne of Emperor Shun. His son, Qi, founded China's first dynasty—the Xia.

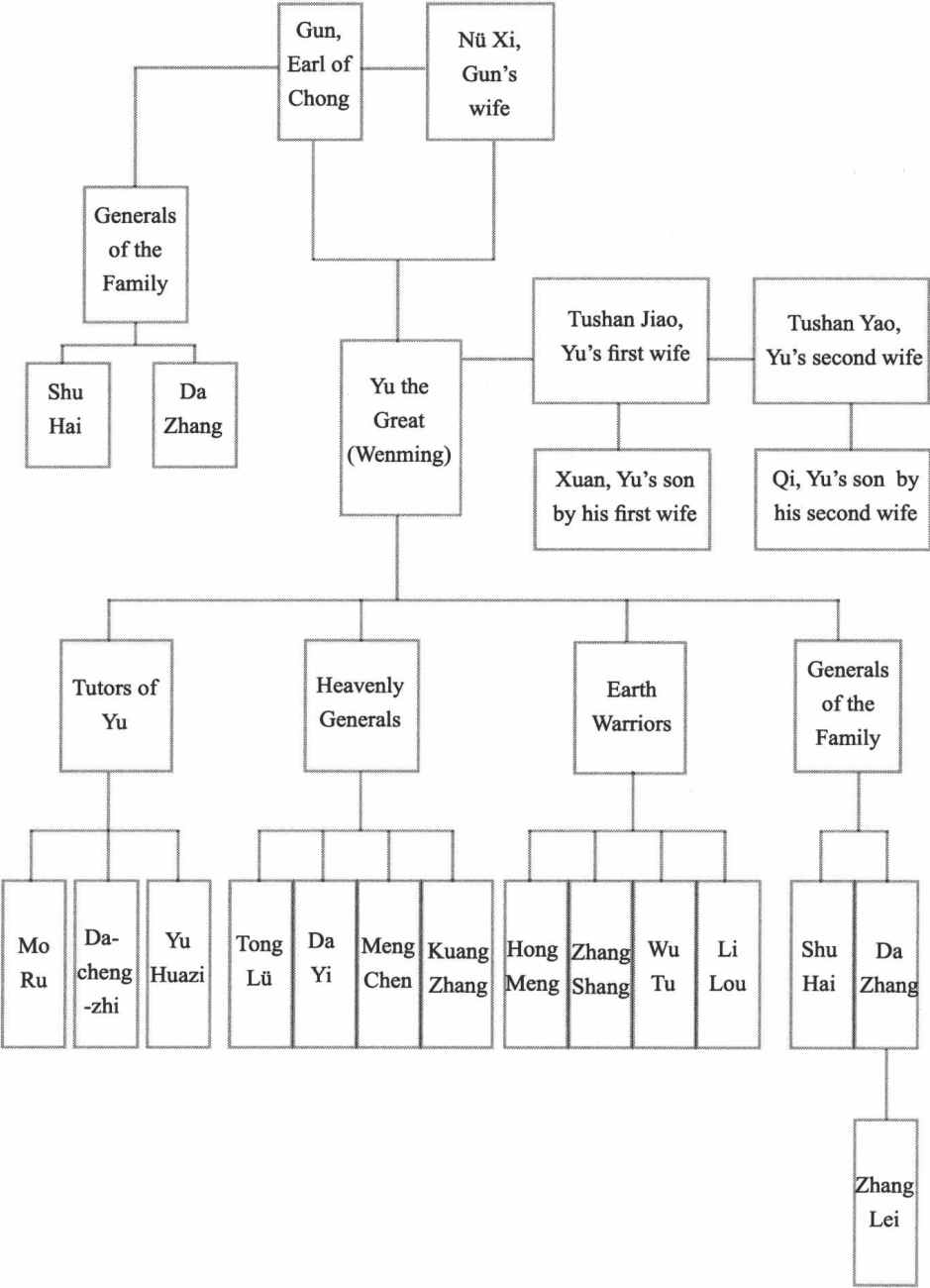
Tushan Jiao and Tushan Yao: wives of Yu the Great

II. Diagrams Showing the Relations Between the Characters in the Story

(I)



(II)



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Prologue

**Pan Gu Separates Sky and Earth,
and thus the Vast Universe
Nü Wa Creates Mankind,
and thus the Teeming Terrestrial World**

1

Two hearts beating, one stronger than the other, in distinct and regular rhythm, like the ticking of alarm clocks in the midst of perfect silence.

It was the world before men—not actually pitch-black, but nothing could be seen. A state of Chaos. To be exact, that world was without any definite color or definite taste, even almost without presence.

Two spirits, having germinated for quite some time, started to emerge. They twinkled like stars, shimmering in pace with their heartbeats. From them, a strong smell of birth-giving was spread out, permeating like sudden whirlwinds. Simultaneously, they detected the presence of each other.

“Who is there?” asked a soft voice.

“Who is there?” replied a resonant one.

This first conversation between them broke the silence of the chaotic world. Loneliness was the scariest thing, and also the suffocator of life; but the warm company of another could be the beginning of something fantastic. The two started to draw closer, with roaring sounds like thunder, and flashing lights like lightning.

Curiously looking at the other's great stature and robust build, she was immediately attracted to him, and asked, “What are you called?”

"I don't know." He looked up, and his eyes met hers, from which two beautiful beams of light or sparks abashed him. He lowered his head, shying away from her gaze.

"You look good sitting with crossed legs, why don't you take the name 'Pan Gu'?" she suggested, admiring his physique.

"Would you name me?" she added.

"Well, I am not a good namer." Pan Gu seemed a bit perplexed. Lifting his head, he evaded her eager eyes, and admired her figure. To him, no name seemed good enough for the soft, buxom shape before him.

"Any name, as long as it is given by you, will be the best." Her bright, captivating eyes, closely following his all the time, captured his heart like two golden hooks. His sacred organ which was unique to men, was quietly heating, throbbing and growing.

So enchanting was her figure. The pearly cheeks gave out a fine glow from their yellow hue; the glistening black eyes were ravishing yet serene; between the eyebrows was an exquisite beauty spot; the hair so straight and smooth, like a black waterfall running down and along the round shoulders and partially hiding the fully-grown bosom; the long legs were bent, with the shapely calves hidden behind the beautifully curved derriere; and the thighs tightly pressed together, like two stems supporting a blooming lotus in a pleasant breeze.

Rapt with admiration, Pan Gu was suddenly inspired by the graceful S-shape curve before him, "What about Nü Wa?"

"Wonderful!" Nü Wa was so happy that she couldn't help jumping for joy. "What a beautiful name! That is what I am going to be called from now on. Pan Gu, would you please call me by my name?"

"Nü Wa." Pan Gu intoned.

"Yes." Nü Wa answered with a tender voice, and then said, "Pan Gu."

"Yes." replied Pan Gu.

2

Since ancient times, idiomatic expressions such as “a match made in Heaven” and “a pair ordained by Earth” have been used to describe a perfectly matched couple. Actually, these expressions can be dated back to the love between Pan Gu and Nü Wa when the sky and the earth were first separated.

At that time, Pan Gu and Nü Wa, both naked, were the only beings in the whole universe. All substances were magnetic; some were of positive polarity while others were negative. Those with the same polarity repelled each other, while those with different polarity attracted each other. Pan Gu and Nü Wa were drawing closer and closer, and like two magnets with different polarity, they stuck to each other solidly. Yet after all, they were not magnets, and when their positive and negative polarities clung together, precise and perfect, they were not still, but in repeated, rapid movement. The two even emitted thrilling cries, shaking the entire universe.

In the void of the chaotic world, it was like an eternal wedding night for the two spirits. Their naked bodies, rubbing the yellow earth and the water oozing from the places that they rolled over, were covered with clay.

“Pan Gu, let’s have lots and lots of babies, and create a world vibrant with life.” With this, Nü Wa seemed to have guessed Pan Gu’s inner thoughts.

“Absolutely. We have both given and received. This kind of giving and receiving, receiving and giving, over and over, is so exhilarating,” Pan Gu agreed, stretching his tall torso and limbs. Extending his strong, muscular arms, he envisaged the prospect: “Your idea is a brilliant one. Our own happiness is not enough; we should also bring happiness to our children. We shall create a luxuriant and colorful world.”

“A luxuriant and colorful world?” Nü Wa was a bit confused.

“Right.” Pointing to the surrounding chaos, Pan Gu explained, “For you, for us, and for our future, I am going to break up the chaos, separate the sky from the earth, and create a harmonious world.”

“Well, can you?” asked Nü Wa, with doubt apparent on her face.

Pan Gu shrugged his sturdy shoulders, and answered with determination: “I must have been born for some cause. Yes, I can do it.”

Pan Gu’s determined gaze heartened Nü Wa, who declared, “I am with you.”

Having gained Nü Wa’s support, Pan Gu was filled with energy. Bracing himself and taking a deep breath, he called out, “Grow!” Instantly he became much larger, like a gigantic pillar wedged between the top and bottom of the chaotic world.

The chaotic world became like a colossal balloon, expanding as Pan Gu grew taller. A duel between hardness and softness raged.

3

Softness always contains immense energy. The chaos, like an invisible contracting “balloon,” exhibited great elasticity in resisting the thrust of Pan Gu, who, with his feet pressing against the ground and his hands pushing against the sky, exerted all his strength to struggle with it.

Time passed, energy was consumed. The chaotic world was rocking and shaking in the midst of the duel of strength.

Pan Gu’s veins bulged, sweat gushed out and his limbs trembled.

Nü Wa rushed forward, to support Pan Gu. Standing steadily, she pressed her face into Pan Gu’s chest in an effort to shore him up. Their bodies formed a monumental structure of “人,” which towered amid the chaos.

Nü Wa's warmth converged into a current, which fed vigor into the heart of Pan Gu, whose blood, with newly-poured-in energy, recharged his exhausted muscles. Filled with redoubled energy, Pan Gu exerted every bit of his strength, and bellowed, "Break!"

Before the sound had died away, the chaotic balloon, which could no longer withstand Pan Gu's enormous force, broke into two pieces—one up and the other down—with a deafening explosion. Light and clear substances slowly ascended, to form the sky; while heavy and turbid substances gradually descended, to form the earth. Afraid that they would again merge into one, Pan Gu stayed where he was, his feet still braced against the ground and his hands still holding up the sky. His body became taller and stiffer as the sky became higher and the earth thicker.

Everything had happened so fast. Exhausted, Nü Wa collapsed on the ground. Witnessing her dear beloved turning into a sky-supporting pillar, she was overwhelmed with tears.

Nü Wa's tears and Pan Gu's sweat converged to become rivers, and their breath became winds and clouds. The crumbs left of the chaos from the explosion scattered on the earth and became undulating mountains and hills. Exerting his utmost, Pan Gu exhausted the last trace of strength, and his eyes burst out. One became the sun and the other the moon, immediately brightening all the surroundings.

The world had become bright, yet Nü Wa's heart was clouded with sorrow. She had lost her beloved Pan Gu. She had lost everything. For a long time, she sat motionless and still in front of the pillar that had been Pan Gu.

After an indefinite period, Nü Wa seemed to hear Pan Gu's call, "My love, be strong! For you, for me, for the future, don't let go of the promise between us."

4

The promise between us? Right, the one with which she and Pan Gu had separated the sky and the earth, and created a harmonious world. With this thought, she immediately wiped away her tears and stood up, asking, "My love, what should I do?"

Yet the pillar just quietly stood between sky and earth, giving no answer.

Nü Wa went to the riverside. As she saw her reflection in the water, an idea came into her mind.

She blended clay with river water, and with the mud she molded a person in her own image. The instant she put the clay figure on the ground, it became alive. Nü Wa was so happy that she molded another one in the form of Pan Gu. By sunset, she had molded hundreds of figures, all different in their looks, and with varied heights and sizes. They surrounded Nü Wa, lively and joyful, as if to thank her for bringing them into the world.

Rapt in watching these little beings created by her, Nü Wa forgot the fatigue of the whole day. She walked towards the pillar, putting her palms together and slowly kneeling down.

"My love, do you see them? I am not lonely any more," she said.

The clay figures followed her lead, and knelt down in rows behind her. Nü Wa wiped away her tears of joy, and continued, "You have given me the most beautiful name, would you name them too?"

No sooner had the words fallen from her lips than auspicious clouds scudded by and veiled the pillar transformed from Pan Gu. A familiar voice was heard amid the wind.

Nü Wa sensed Pan Gu's presence, and understood his answer—the shape formed by them when they had been together standing on the earth and pushing against the sky. She stood up, and said to the clay

figures behind her, "You shall from now on be called '人' (humans)." They surrounded her and jumped for joy, cheering as they did so. Then, after bowing several times to their creator, they scattered, some alone and others in company.

The next day Nü Wa worked even harder to create new lives with her hands. However, so immense was the world that she despaired of ever filling it with people. Cudgeling her brains, Nü Wa finally came up with a way for people to reproduce themselves.

5

The answer was the marriage system, letting men and women couple and breed their own children. Every year in early spring, when all plants came to life, men and women would gather together in places with beautiful scenery. They would play around, having fun and frolic, free and unrestrained. A man and woman could pair, with the land as bed and the sky as cover, with no ceremony or approval from others needed and nobody else able to interfere.

In addition to human beings, Nü Wa also created the various animals. Men and animals lived in harmony, and did not hurt each other. People would put their newborns into birds' nests, which swung in the breeze and made natural cradles. People were free to play with animals, and they wouldn't get hurt at all even if they pulled a tiger's tail or rode a boa constrictor.

Seasons came, seasons went. People enjoyed beautiful scenery and favorable weather. Food was plentiful and easy to acquire. Residing at the feet of mountains and by riversides, they lived in perfect harmony. There was no deceit, oppression or humiliation; only honesty and mutual assistance. People had no worries.

The people's free, happy and peaceful life was a source of great satisfaction to Nü Wa, who invented a musical instrument called *sheng*