For Shao Tuo, it may have been his diviners and the keepers of his calendar, rather than the tomb designers, who were most steeped in the early symbolism of Five Phases. Shao Tuo’s tomb, like the Chu Silk Manuscript, was oriented according to the symbols of a traditional cosmological scheme,¹ but the texts reveal, as scholars have shown for the Chu Silk Manuscript, a notion of fluid cosmic movements and an emphasis on temporal correlation inherent in the Five Phases system.²

The directional aspect of either the Four Regions or Five Phases is mostly missing from the Baoshan divination text. The Tomb Inventory text, on the other hand, does provide some hints of directional correlation with Yin and Yang influences. For the “Dining Room,” the eastern compartment that would correlate to spring and the element wood, the text lists metal sacrificial food vessels and implements as well as a variety of baskets filled with dried, steamed, and roasted birds, fish, fowl, and pig meats, along with honey, sweet grains, and various onions and fruits.³ The strips describing the clothing and furniture for “Traveling” (found in the western and northern compartments) were actually placed in the southern compartment, associated with summer and fire. The metal and wooden sacrificial vessels, implements, tables, and stools for the “Great Sacred Plot” (the tomb itself) are described on strips placed in the eastern section of the southern compartment but actually seem to relate to items placed in the eastern compartment. Military items—chariot and horse décor and weapons—are described on strips placed in the southwestern section of the southern compartment. Most of the military equipment was placed in the southern compartment, which accords with the concept of the south as linked to fire. Only one strip with writing, perhaps a stray, and two blanks were placed in the western compartment (it is interesting

¹ According to Allan 1991, Shang tombs reflected the Four Regions; see also A. Wang 2000, 39-46, and Keightley 2000, 82-84.
² A. Wang 2000, 112.
³ For a summary of fruits and vegetables found in Chu tombs, see Lin Qi 1988.
that the early Wangshan tomb of Shao Gu had no western compartment at all. This compartment, filled with food and furniture, seems not to have had any special correlation to metal or Yin. In some sense, it is just an extension of the more personal northern compartment. The administrative and divination texts were placed in the northern compartment, as was a bamboo plaque summarizing the strips that described the military items. Clearly, the eastern and southern compartments, both Yang compartments, were considered the most auspicious directions for the Tomb Inventory Text. The texts found in the northern compartment, the most Yin and associated with winter and water, appear to have been for Shao Tuo’s personal testimony to the spirits of his identity, the merit accumulated during his lifetime, as well as the powers invoked to protect him. Overall, Five Phases correlations do not seem to have informed the tomb construction.

In his survey of Chu tombs, Guo Dewei notes that elite tombs in the Jiangling area tended to face east. Divination and tomb inventory texts have been found in the highest-ranking tombs in the family burial grounds of Baoshan, Wangshan, and Tianxingguan in the Jiangling region and in Xincail, in southeastern Henan. The Baoshan tomb complex in Jingmen consisted of five tombs roughly aligned north to south. The earliest and the most southerly but the highest ranking, that of Shao Tuo, was located farthest east. Wang Shan tombs, including two large tombs, had ramps facing east. The complex of five large mounded tombs at Tianxingguan (referred to locally as the “Five Mountains”) arches east to west along the northern rim of Chang Lake. The tomb farthest east, belonging to Fansheng, Lord of Diyang (d. circa 361-340) is the largest. Although the ramp of his tomb faces south towards the lake, the emphasis on the east is still clear. The Xincail tomb belonging to Cheng, Lord of Pingye (d. circa 340), also faced east. There seems to have been a strong Chu belief in the east as the most auspicious direction in which to begin the move into the afterlife, a concept that fits neatly with later Yin-Yang Five Phases associations.

The fourth-century BCE Jiangling area tombs and texts associated with Shao Gu and Shao Tuo reveal a world in transition—moving from the certainty of a clear Four Regions scheme to a world of Yin-Yang natural agents, one not yet settled into a clear Five Phases scheme. In addition to the concept of these dark and light (positive and negative) forces, we

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