

RGC Ref. No.: UGC/FDS14/H05/17 <hr/> (please insert ref. above)

**RESEARCH GRANTS COUNCIL
COMPETITIVE RESEARCH FUNDING SCHEMES FOR
THE LOCAL SELF-FINANCING DEGREE SECTOR**

FACULTY DEVELOPMENT SCHEME (FDS)

Completion Report
(for completed projects only)

<p><u>Submission Deadlines:</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Auditor's report with unspent balance, if any: within six months of the approved project completion date. 2. Completion report: within 12 months of the approved project completion date.
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Part A: The Project and Investigator(s)

1. Project Title

Examining *Chuci* through the Newly Excavated Bamboo Manuscripts and the
Development of Related Electronic Databases

2. Investigator(s) and Academic Department(s) / Unit(s) Involved

Research Team	Name / Post	Unit / Department / Institution
Principal Investigator	Chen Hung To/ Associate Professor	Department of Chinese/The Hang Seng University of Hong Kong
Co-Investigator(s)	Wong Yiu Kwan/ Senior College Tutor/ Adjunct Professor	New Asia College/The Chinese University of Hong Kong Department of Chinese/The Hang Seng University of Hong Kong

3. Project Duration

	Original	Revised	Date of RGC / Institution Approval (must be quoted)
Project Start Date	1 Jan 2018	N.A.	N.A.
Project Completion Date	31 Dec 2020	30 June 2021	16 September 2020
Duration (in month)	36 months	42 months	16 September 2020
Deadline for Submission of Completion Report	31 Dec 2021	30 June 2022	16 September 2020

Part B: The Final Report

5. Project Objectives

5.1 Objectives as per original application

1. *Collate the text of Chuci and recover its original form through comparing the variants of the transmitted texts and juxtaposing it with the related excavated materials.*
2. *Reevaluate previous scholarship and use Chuci to decipher the characters appeared in the excavated texts through the incorporation of evidence derived from philology, phonology and semasiology.*
3. *Assess the cultural contents of Chuci through a juxtaposition of the text with recent archaeological findings, and probe into the relationship between the culture of Chu and the transmitted work.*
4. *Identify the time when certain vocabularies, nomenclatures and institutions appear and use this as a base to re-examine the dates of composition of each Chuci piece.*
5. *Develop two databases, namely “the Excavated Texts and the Revision of Chuci Database” and “the Bibliography for the Study of Chuci and Excavated Texts,” and upload them onto the Internet so as to allow researchers to run searches.*

5.2 Revised objectives

Date of approval from the RGC: 9 Nov 2017

Reasons for the change:

According to the reviewer’s advice and the reduced budget.

1. *Collate the text of Chuci and recover its original form through comparing the variants of the transmitted texts and juxtaposing it with the related excavated materials.*
2. *Reevaluate previous scholarship and use Chuci to decipher the characters appeared in the excavated texts through the incorporation of evidence derived from philology, phonology and semasiology.*
3. *Assess the cultural contents of Chuci through a juxtaposition of the text with recent archaeological findings, and probe into the relationship between the culture of Chu and the transmitted work.*

4. Develop two databases, namely “the Excavated Texts and the Revision of *Chuci* Database” and “the Bibliography for the Study of *Chuci* and Excavated Texts,” and upload them onto the Internet so as to allow researchers to run searches.

5.3 Realisation of the objectives

(Maximum 1 page; please state how and to what extent the project objectives have been achieved; give reasons for under-achievements and outline attempts to overcome problems, if any)

All objectives have been realized with significant research output. The details are as follows:

For objectives 1 and 2, this project aims at combining archaeological findings with the study of the transmitted version of *Chuci*. The recently discovered excavated manuscripts and the findings of previous studies have been collected and sorted out, and these data were successfully uploaded to the project website. The words found in the excavated texts that correspond to the received version of *Chuci* are juxtaposed on the project website which can be used to collate the variants and interpret the meaning of the text. Using the graphs that appeared in excavated materials as reference, this project assessed the meaning of *Chuci* and examined its cultural context. The methods of philology, phonology and semasiology were also applied to explore the meaning of the text. The preliminary findings were presented in several conferences and published as book chapters and journal articles.

For objective 3, this project investigated the relationship between the culture of the Chu and the transmitted work of *Chuci*. By incorporating excavated materials into the study of the text, this project analyzed the divination and sacrificial practices in the history of the Chu and explained why a shaman is often deployed to communicate with the gods and spirits in the text “Lisao”. To acquire a deeper understanding of the culture and customs of the Chu state, this project also explored the ethnic origin of the author of “Lisao” and analyzed the antiquities and objects of *Chuci* through the studies of their rituals, architecture, clothing and utensils.

For objective 4, this project developed a database which consist of two sections: “Interpretation of *Chuci* with the Use of Excavated Texts” and “Bibliography of *Chuci* Studies and Excavated Texts.” The former lists how different scholars interpret the text of *Chuci* with the use of newly excavated bamboo strips and silk manuscripts. It also juxtaposes the words found in the excavated texts that correspond to the received version of *Chuci*. The latter allows researchers to search for secondary scholarship on *Chuci* and the related excavated texts. It covers most scholarly work conducted in China and East Asia published before 2020. The references included in this database are grouped into five categories: monograph, journal paper, book chapter, conference paper, and thesis. The database has been made available for public access since June 2021.

5.4 Summary of objectives addressed to date

Objectives (as per 5.1/5.2 above)	Addressed (please tick)	Percentage Achieved (please estimate)
1. Collate the text of <i>Chuci</i> and recover its original form through comparing the variants of the transmitted texts and juxtaposing it with the related excavated materials.	✓	100%
2. Reevaluate previous scholarship and use <i>Chuci</i> to decipher the characters appeared in the excavated texts through the incorporation of evidence derived from philology, phonology and semasiology.	✓	100%
3. Assess the cultural contents of <i>Chuci</i> through a juxtaposition of the text with recent archaeological	✓	100%

findings, and probe into the relationship between the culture of Chu and the transmitted work.		
4. Develop two databases, namely “the Excavated Texts and the Revision of <i>Chuci</i> Database” and “the Bibliography for the Study of <i>Chuci</i> and Excavated Texts,” and upload them onto the Internet so as to allow researchers to run searches.	✓	100%

6. Research Outcome

6.1 Major findings and research outcome

(Maximum 1 page; please make reference to Part C where necessary)

The research findings of the project have been presented in international conferences and published in journals, book chapters, and released on the project databases as given in Part C. The major findings are summarized as follows.

1. Collation and Interpretation of *Chuci* through Excavated Materials

Chuci has already been transmitted for more than two thousand years. Hence, there are a considerable number of variants and misprints in different versions of the text. This project collated the text of *Chuci* through comparing the variants of the transmitted texts and the related excavated materials and achieved the planned results. It proves that the incorporation of excavated materials is beneficial to the studies of ancient text. For example, in “Lisao” [Encounter Sorrow], the character *mu* 畝 [a unit of land] can be written in various forms 畝, 畝 or 晦 in the different versions of *Chuci*. Using the Chu-style characters that appeared in the excavated materials as reference, the project noticed that *mu* 畝 were often written as 晦. It proves that the character 晦 is used to refer to the unit of land measurement in the Warring States period and infers that this written form 晦 is the character used in the original *Chuci*. This project also presented some newly excavated texts and materials that can lay a solid foundation for interpreting the meaning of *Chuci*.

2. The Formation and Compilation of *Chuci*

A sixteen *juan* version of *Chuci* was first compiled by Liu Xiang (77-6 BCE) in the Western Han. It is normally assumed that Liu’s work served as a base text for the 2nd century scholar Wang Yi’s compilation *Chuci zhangju* [the Annotated Songs of Chu]. However, by examining the *Chuci* text together with the supplementary excavated bamboo-slip manuscripts, this project contends that this assumption is flawed. The findings will shed light on the process of the formation and compilation of *Chuci*.

3. Examination of the Chu Culture by Comparing *Chuci* and the Excavated Materials

Through the excavated Materials, this project enhanced our understanding of the Chu culture and its religion. In terms of cultural origin, the Chu people mainly accepted the primitive mythological culture of the 夏夷 Xiayi clan, rather than the ritualized culture of the Western Zhou Dynasty in the north. Therefore, Qu Yuan’s “Tianwen” preserved the worship of the earth gods of the Xia people. In the “Lisao”, the descent of the divine spirits is not necessarily initiated by the activities of the shaman. Instead, the Chu people believed they have the agency to ascend and descend according to their will. With the help of the excavated materials, this project has probed into the daily lives of the people in Chu, such as clothing, food, housing and transportation, which was reflected in *Chuci*

4. The Development of a Database of *Chuci* Studies and Excavated Texts

Since excavated materials are stored in different places and are printed in various publications, it is difficult for scholars to locate the manuscripts specifically related to *Chuci*. This project developed a database to solve this problem. This database will certainly provide a solid foundation for future

research. The introduction of a digital tool into the study of *Chuci* allows researchers to not only reevaluate the flaws of previous scholarship, but also conduct a more thorough research on specific subfields of *Chuci*.

6.2 Potential for further development of the research and the proposed course of action (Maximum half a page)

The excavated texts recently discovered by the Tsinghua University have just been released at the end of the project and the bamboo strips related to *Chuci* collected by the Anhui University have not been published before the completion date of the project. Further studies on these newly excavated manuscripts will provide a richer understanding of *Chuci* and the culture of Chu. The PI will analyze the relevant data and keep updating the project database once the new materials are released.

7. Layman's Summary

(Describe in layman's language the nature, significance and value of the research project, in no more than 200 words)

Since the 20th century, the excavation of a large number of historical texts has stimulated great enthusiasm in the study of ancient books. *Chuci* is often listed as the first text among all literary works in traditional bibliographies and exerts crucial influence in the Chinese literary traditions. Yet in the study of *Chuci*, scholars are more inclined to study the various editions of the received text. This project seeks to combine archaeological findings with the study of transmitted texts to decipher the characters that appeared in the ancient text and provide an accurate interpretation of *Chuci*. Not only would this research help us to locate the misprints, but it can also serve as evidence for us to provide a solid interpretation of *Chuci*. Hence, with an accurate text, this project shall serve as a foundation for the study of the mythology, aesthetics and folklore of the Chu state. It can also enhance our understanding of the details and development of Chu culture and provides us with significant insights into the formation and development of Chinese literature and culture. This project created the first digital database for *Chuci* with excavated materials that can allow the researchers to conduct a more thorough study on specific fields.

Part C: Research Output**8. Peer-Reviewed Journal Publication(s) Arising Directly From This Research Project**

(Please attach a copy of the publication and/or the letter of acceptance if not yet submitted in the previous progress report(s). All listed publications must acknowledge RGC's funding support by quoting the specific grant reference.)

The Latest Status of Publications				Author(s) (denote the corresponding author with an asterisk*)	Title and Journal / Book (with the volume, pages and other necessary publishing details specified)	Submitted to RGC (indicate the year ending of the relevant progress report)	Attached to this Report (Yes or No)	Acknowledged the Support of RGC (Yes or No)	Accessible from the Institutional Repository (Yes or No)
Year of Publication	Year of Acceptance (For paper accepted but not yet published)	Under Review	Under Preparation (optional)						
2018	/	/	/	Chen Hung To	“A Re-evaluation of the Relationship of Wang Yi’s <i>Chuci zhangju</i> and Liu Xiang’s <i>Chuci</i> ” 〈重論王逸《楚辭章句》與劉向《楚辭》的關係〉 / <i>Dong Hwa Journal of Chinese Studies</i> 27(2018):63–92.	2019	No	Yes	Yes (https://researchdb.hsu.edu.hk/view/publication/201800082)
2018	/	/	/	Chen Hung To	“On the Nature and Dating of the Rhymed Annotations in <i>Chuci zhangju</i> ” 〈論《楚辭章句》韻文注的性質與時代〉 / <i>Tamkang Journal of Chinese Literature</i> 39(2018):1–31.	2019	No	Yes	Yes (https://researchdb.hsu.edu.hk/view/publication/201800266)
2021	/	/	/	Wong Yiu Kwan(CO-I)	“The Ethnic Origin of the Author of ‘Lisao’ (I): A Note on the Line ‘Scion of the High Lord Gao Yang’” 〈「帝高陽之苗裔兮」補說——《離騷》作者族源考之一〉 / <i>Zhongguo chuci xue</i> , 29(2021):340–49.	/	Yes (Annex I)	Yes	Yes (https://drive.google.com/file/d/1kh3FhRJFq6lCr6V6Cv1Z9dOb2knQrmV/view)
2021	/	/	/	Chen Hung To	“On the Relationship between Houdi in ‘Tianwen’ of <i>Chuci</i> and the Worship of Earth Gods” 〈天問〉「后帝」與地神祭祀關係釋證 / <i>A New Interpretation of Wang Yi’s Chuci zhangju</i> , shanghai : Shanghai guji chubanshe ,2021,228–47.	/	Yes (Annex II)	Yes	Yes (https://researchdb.hsu.edu.hk/view/publication/202100225)
/	2022	/	/	Chen Hung To	“A Flight to the Celestial Court: Religious Speeches and Rituals in ‘Lisao’ ” 飛天求索：〈離騷〉中的宗教陳辭與儀式探析 / <i>Bulletin of the Jao Tsung-I Academy of Sinology</i> 9(2022).	/	Yes (Annex III)	Yes	Yes (https://drive.google.com/file/d/1ktVvAZNbz--)

									d3DXJp kj1Ogh Vs_iLF_ e/view)
/	/	/	✓	Chen Hung To	“A Re-evaluation of the Objects in <i>Chuci</i> Through a Study of the Excavated Manuscripts”出土文獻與 《楚辭》名物新證	/	Yes (Annex IV)	Yes	No (Will be available after publicati on)

9. Recognized International Conference(s) In Which Paper(s) Related To This Research Project Was / Were Delivered

(Please attach a copy of each conference abstract)

Month / Year / Place	Title	Conference Name	Submitted to RGC (indicate the year ending of the relevant progress report)	Attached to this Report (Yes or No)	Acknowledged the Support of RGC (Yes or No)	Accessible from the Institutional Repository (Yes or No)
June/2018 /Hong Kong	“A Study of Words Associated with the Field in <i>Chuci</i> ” 〈《楚辭》所見田畝 詞語釋證〉	The Symposium on Business Ethics and Culture 2018	2019	No	Yes	Yes (https://researchdb.hsu.edu.hk/view/publication/201800326)
Nov/2019 /Miluo, China.	“An Interpretation of the ‘Houdi’ in ‘Tianwen’ of <i>Chuci</i> ” 〈《楚辭·天問》「后 帝」釋證〉	The 18th Annual Conference of Zhongguo Quyan xuehui and the International Symposium on the Study of <i>Chuci</i>	/	Yes	Yes (Annex V)	Yes (https://researchdb.hsu.edu.hk/view/publication/201900376)
Nov/2019 /Miluo, China.	“The Ethnic Origin of the Author of ‘Lisao’ (I): A Note on the Line ‘Scion of the High Lord Gao Yang’” 〈「帝高陽之苗裔 兮」補說——《離 騷》作者族源考之 一〉	The 18th Annual Conference of Zhongguo Quyan xuehui and the International Symposium on the Study of <i>Chuci</i>	/	Yes	Yes (Annex VI)	Yes (https://drive.google.com/file/d/115_3gW09AnQsV0wESGGcOUzvsBCrbeaK/view)
Aug/2021 /Leipzig, Germany	“A Flight to the Celestial Court: Religious Speeches and Rituals in ‘Lisao’ ”	The 23rd Biennial Conference of the European Association for Chinese Studies (EACS)	/	Yes	Yes (Annex VII)	Yes (https://researchdb.hsu.edu.hk/view/publication/202100226)

Aug/2022 /Guangzhou, China	“The Ethnic Origin of the Author of ‘Lisao’ (III): A Note on the Term ‘Jing Chu’” 〈「荆楚」補說——《離騷》作者族源考之三〉	Associação de Caracteres Chineses de Macau (Paper accepted; but the conference originally scheduled for May 2022 was postponed to August 2022 due to the pandemic.)	/	Yes	Yes (Annex VIII)	No (Not yet presented)
Dec/2022 /Zigui, China	“The Ethnic Origin of the Author of ‘Lisao’ (II): A Note on the Term ‘chufu’ (Former Raiment)” 〈「初服」補說——《離騷》作者族源考之二〉	The 19th Annual Conference of Zhongguo Quyan xuehui and the International Symposium on the Study of <i>Chuci</i> (Paper accepted; the conference originally scheduled for Nov 2021 was postponed to Dec 2022 due to the pandemic.)	/	Yes	Yes (Annex IX)	No (Not yet presented)

10. Whether Research Experience And New Knowledge Has Been Transferred / Has Contributed To Teaching And Learning

(Please elaborate)

The findings of this project have been applied to teaching. The PI taught courses on *Chuci* and “Introduction to Ancient Books” for undergraduate students. During the research period, the PI shared the research findings of this project with students in the classroom. The students enrolled in the courses are able to access the project database to collect the data for their reports and assignments. The PI also supervised one undergraduate student to finish a thesis on *Chuci* by comparing the received text with excavated manuscripts.

The research findings of this project have also been shared at some seminars in our school. The PI presented the development of *Chuci* studies and the culture of Chu in light of the newly excavated manuscripts and the use of “Database of *Chuci* Studies and Excavated Texts” through the seminars which were attended by the teachers and students. Apart from disseminating the research findings to the students in seminars or in a classroom setting, the project also helped transfer the research experience to other researchers and the general public. Researchers can quickly gain access to the project findings via the online platform. They can draw materials from the project website and use them in their own research. The public can also learn independently from the data collected in the website.

11. Student(s) Trained

(Please attach a copy of the title page of the thesis)

Name	Degree Registered for	Date of Registration	Date of Thesis Submission / Graduation
[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]

12. Other Impact

(e.g. award of patents or prizes, collaboration with other research institutions, technology transfer, teaching enhancement, etc.)

The project database allows researchers to run data searches. It also offers materials for students to understand the state of the field in a more effective way, and facilitate teachers to further promote the research of *Chuci* as well as other ancient Chinese texts.

13. Statistics on Research Outputs

	Peer-reviewed Journal Publications	Conference Papers	Scholarly Books, Monographs and Chapters	Patents Awarded	Other Research Outputs (please specify)	
No. of outputs arising directly from this research project	3	6	2	/	Type	No.
					Database of <i>Chuci</i> Studies and Excavated Texts(http://www.ccdh.com/)	1

14. Public Access Of Completion Report

(Please specify the information, if any, that cannot be provided for public access and give the reasons.)

Information that Cannot Be Provided for Public Access	Reasons
NIL	