

**Meaning and Form:
Essays in Pre-Modern
Chinese Grammar**

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The Future Tense in Classical and Han-period Chinese

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1. Introduction

In this paper the question of whether the concept of future is linguistically realized in Classical and Han-period Chinese will be discussed. Even though there is general agreement on the fact that Ancient Chinese did have morphological alterations of the verb, it is still very difficult to provide evidence for the precise functions those morphological alterations may have had and to provide a coherent picture of the morphological system. As long as the question of whether a systematic morphological marking of tense and/or aspect existed at some point in the history of the Chinese language remains unanswered, a study of the temporal and aspectual system of Classical and Han-period Chinese is basically confined to syntactic evidence, which will be at issue in this article. If we assume that Classical Chinese did not have any overt tense distinctions found in the morphology of the verb, the location of situations in time would mainly be achieved by temporal adverbs¹; adverbs which occur frequently in Classical and Han-period texts and which, according to the lack of any overtly perceptible verbal morphology, are one of the basic grammatical structures relevant for the analysis of the temporal and aspectual structure of the predicate. During this period, temporal concepts can be expressed by either 1) circumstantial adverbials which serve to indicate a particular point on the time axis, often found in sentence initial position and providing the temporal frame for the following proposition (e.g. 'yesterday', 'tomorrow', 'today') or 2) dates or adverbs (often temporal) usually found in preverbal position and serving to modify the verb phrase.

1.1 The concept of future

As far as the future as a concept is concerned, an intensive debate about whether to categorise it as a temporal or a modal category has, as yet, not found a definite solution.² From an objectivist viewpoint, it is assumed that the future cannot be

¹ See Cinque, Guglielmo. 1999. *Adverbs and Functional Heads. A Cross-Linguistic Perspective*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, p.87. "The matching between temporal adverbs and T(Past), T(Future) would appear to be straightforward, especially in view of the recurrent observation that languages lacking overt tense distinctions often resort to temporal adverbs to locate the event in time."

² As a supporter of a mainly temporal interpretation of the concept of future in English, Comrie (2000: 43f) can be mentioned. The opposite view is also well represented; see for instance, Perkins

subsumed under the category of tense at all, since it differs from the other tenses insofar as it does not refer to a point of time in the real world, the truth-value of which can be immediately verified. Under this point of view, future has to be analysed as a particular feature within the category of modality. From a more subjectivist viewpoint, the future can be envisaged as belonging to the category of tense similar to the past: the locutionary agent refers to a future situation by a simple prediction of what he considers to be prospective reality without any modal notions predominantly deictic concept with the implication that it serves to locate a prospective situation on the time axis, modal values cannot be excluded from it. Modality as a semantic concept covers different notions such as possibility, necessity, probability, obligation, permission, ability and volition.³ Within the concept of modality two different categories are usually distinguished: 1) epistemic modality, which involves a speaker oriented qualification or modification of the proposition, values such as probability or certainty and 2) root (deontic) modality which involves 'the will, ability, permission or obligation to perform some action or bring about some state of affairs'.⁴ Root modalities involve human control of the situation while epistemic modalities and prediction as a temporal concept generally do not involve human control of the situation, yet they do involve a particular point of view of the locutionary agent. Regardless of whether future is categorised as a predominantly deictic concept or a predominantly modal concept, it always refers to a predominantly prospective point of time envisaged by the locutionary agent, and therefore the particular point of view of the locutionary agent plays an important role in expressing a future situation.

1.2 The Concept of Future in Classical and Han-period Chinese

It is generally agreed that Modern Mandarin belongs to the so-called tense-less languages which depend on the employment of lexical means such as temporal adverbials to locate situations on the time axis. Since a possible verbal morphology in the earlier stages of the Chinese language is obscured to a large extent by the writing system, the perceptible situation as far as the concept of tense is concerned does not differ much from the situation in Modern Mandarin. In the Preclassical language, it is the modal marker *qi* 其 that can serve to indicate the deictic category

of the future tense of the predicate.⁵ In Classical and Han-period texts, its epistemic value indicating uncertainty, probability and the like dominates over its purely deictic value, and although it is still mainly employed in future contexts, it is not exclusively confined to them. Therefore I will exclude it here. One example for *qi* 其 in a future context may be found in the following:

(1) 今魯城壞即壓齊境君甚圖之。

Shiji: 2515

jin lu cheng huai ji ya qi jing jun qi tu zhi

now Lu wall break then press Qi border ruler Qi plan OBI

'Well, if the walls of Lu break now, they will press against the borders of Qi; will you please take this into consideration, my lord.'

In this example, the predicate is modally marked in a hortative sense⁶ by *qi* 其 in a future context.

In the language of the Classical and Han-periods, the adverbs *jiang* 將 and *qie* 且 are the ones which are most likely to express the concept of future, with *jiang* 將 being more common in Classical texts and *qie* 且 only becoming more common during the Han-period, although *jiang* 將 is still widely employed. In Han-period texts both characters are employed simultaneously with the same grammatical function.

The character *jiang* 將 represents different words in the Classical language: in the *pingsheng* reading it represents a verb with the meanings 'take, bring, undertake, support' and in the *qusheng* reading a verb 'lead (an army)' and a noun 'general'.⁷ Besides this, it appears in different grammatical functions, particularly as an adverb⁸

⁵ See Djamouri, Redouane, 2001. Shang Markers of Predication. In: Chappell, Hilary (ed.), 2001. *Sinitic Grammar. Synchronic and Diachronic Perspectives*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, p.144.

⁶ The occurrence of *qi* 其 in hortative sentences is listed in Wei Peiqian 魏培泉, 1999. *Lun xian-Qin hanyu yunfa de weizhi lun* 先秦漢語運符的位置. In: Alain Peyraube, Sun Chaofen (eds.), 1999. *In Honor of Mei Tzu-Lin, Studies on Chinese Historical Syntax and Morphology*. Paris: EHESS, p.261 as one of the most frequent functions of *qi* 其.

⁷ See Pulleyblank, Edwin G. 1991. *A Lexicon of Reconstructed Pronunciation in Early Middle Chinese, Late Middle Chinese, and Early Mandarin*. Vancouver: UBC Press.

⁸ There are different analyses of the grammatical function of *jiang* 將 in indicating future. Some scholars, for example von der Gabelentz, Georg, 1881 (reprinted 1960) *Chinesische Grammatik*. Halle: Max Niemeyer Verlag, p. 134, § 309, and Yang Shuda 楊樹達, 1978. *CI Quan* 詞詮. Shanghai, 6:41 regard it as an auxiliary verb indicating future. Besides its function as an auxiliary

preposition and as a conjunction but the only examples relevant in this context are those he gives under the label of auxiliary verb. Modern scholars usually regard it as an adverb, and since it syntactically differs considerably from auxiliary verbs, I prefer to adopt their analysis. In the second part of this paper I will give some syntactic arguments for the latter analysis, namely for the status of *jiang* 將 (and *qie* 且) as a proper adverb indicating the future.

(1983: 42) (quoted after Lampert, Günther, Lampert, Martina, 2000. *The Conceptual Structure(s) of Modality: Essences and Ideologies*. Frankfurt a.M.: Peter Lang).

³ See Barbiers, Sief, 2002. An introduction to modality and its interaction with the verbal stem. In:

Barbiers, Sief, Baakema, Fries, van der Wurff, Wim (eds), 2002. *Modality and its Interaction with the Verbal System*. Amsterdam, Philadelphia: John Benjamins, p.1.

⁴ See Barbiers (2002: 1).

indicating that an event will happen at some point in the near or distant future. Most of the authors distinguish this purely deictic function from a second function which implies a volitional attitude on the part of the agent of the marked predicate which accordingly implies root modality.⁹ Although *jiang* 將 functioned among others as a verb expressing a movement in Preclassical Chinese¹⁰, agreeing with the assumption that future markers usually derive from motion verbs¹¹, there are no indications in the literature that the adverbial function is directly derived from the verbal meaning; and it is simultaneously employed in both functions in the history of Chinese. As an adverb indicating the future it is younger than *qi* 其, but it is well attested in Classical texts such as *Lunyu*, *Zuo zhuan*, *Mengzi* etc. *Qie* 且 also has different grammatical functions. In sentence-initial or preverbal position it can serve as a coordinating conjunction, and in preverbal position it can appear in hypothetical concessives, as an adverb referring to a temporary situation¹² or as an adverb indicating that a situation will happen in the future. As an adverb indicating future it appears later than *jiang* 將. An obvious source of derivation of *qie* 且 indicating future is difficult to determine¹³ and requires further studies, but this function may be related to the other adverbial functions in early texts, which all include a modal or temporal aspect. In general, the analysis of *qie* 且 as a marker of the future does not differ substantially in the linguistic literature from that of *jiang* 將. It is usually analysed as referring to the future in general and to an immediate future, but besides this purely deictic function, in contrast to *jiang* 將, a modal function concerning the

⁹ See for example Ao Jinghao 敖鏡浩, He Leshi 何樂士 et al. 1985. *Gudai hanyu xuci tongshi* 古代漢語虛詞通釋. Beijing: Beijing chubanshe, p.280; *Gudai hanyu xuci cidian* 古代漢語虛詞詞典, 1999, 2000. Beijing: Shangwu Yinhunguan, p.294 which gives the most explicit analysis as far as this particular feature of *jiang* 將 is concerned and Yu Xinle 余心樂, Song Yilin 宋易麟 1996. *Gu Hanyu xuci cidian* 古漢語虛詞詞典. Jiangxi: Jiangxi jiaoyu chubanshe, p. 371f, who analyse *jiang* 將 in this function as an auxiliary verb.

¹⁰ In *Eryu* (*Shi san jing zhushu*, 2581 xia), this is glossed by *song* 送 "deliver, give, escort", c.f. also Ruan Yuan 阮元 (1764 - 1849), 1971 (reprinted), *Jing ji zuan gu* 經籍纂詁. Taipei: Shijie shuju, p.312f.

¹¹ Bybee, Joan et al. 1994. *The Evolution of Grammar. Tense, Aspect and Modality in the Languages*

of the World. Chicago, London: The University of Chicago Press, p.243f.

¹² Wang Haiten et al., 1996. *Gu hanyu xuci cidian* 古漢語虛詞詞典. Beijing: Beijing daxue chubanshe.

¹³ See *Gudai Hanyu xuci cidian* 古代漢語虛詞詞典 (2000: 422). In *Shijing*, the character 且 can have different readings and functions: e.g. with the reading *qie*, it can occur as a demonstrative pronoun, as a conjunction, as a temporal adverb indicating a temporary situation and according to Xiang Xi 向熹, 1986. *Shijing cidian* 詩經詞典. Sichuan, it also occurs as an adverb indicating future; with the reading *ji*, it can function as a final particle, and with the reading *cu*, it writes the variant *cu* 徂 'advance, go to'.

agent's attitude is not assumed. Both adverbs are lexically more or less empty. They are in general either labelled as temporal adverbs or as modal adverbs¹⁴. Since my focus of investigation lies on the language of the early Han-period, namely the language of the *Shiji* 史記¹⁵, I will concentrate mainly on the semantics and the syntax of *jiang* 將 and *qie* 且 in this text.

2. The Semantics of *jiang* 將 and *qie* 且

Jiang 將 and *qie* 且 predominantly serve to locate a situation on the time axis. In narrative texts such as the *Shiji*, the time at which the narrated event happens is taken as the point of reference from which the future event is viewed. The reference time can either be the present or the past. Both adverbs can refer to a point of time in the future in general or to an immediate future indicating that an event is at the imminent point of happening¹⁶ as in the following example:

(2) 「盜兵且至，急絕道聚兵自守！」

Shiji: 2967

dao bing qie zhi ji jue dao ju bing zi shou
thief soldier FUT arrive hasty block road collect soldier self defend
the bandits will arrive soon, let us hastily block the roads, collect our soldiers and defend ourselves."

Both adverbs basically seem to be neutral as far as an epistemic qualification of the future is concerned, (future certainly can be implied but is not marked by them in the first place¹⁷). The modal notions of intention and volition, involving the human will and often being related to the concept of future, mainly depend on the thematic role of the subject of the sentence. If the subject represents the thematic role of the patient, the theme or the experiencer of the situation to which the predicate refers then no intention or volition, (i.e. no root modality) is implied. This can be seen in the following example where the subject is the patient or theme of the verb 'to die':

Shiji: 2768

(3) 文帝且崩時，屬孝景曰。

wen di qie beng shi zhu xiao jing yue

Wan emperor FUT pass-away time charge Xiao Jing say

When Wendi was going to die, he charged Xiao Jing, saying: ..."

¹⁴ See particularly Wei Peiquan (1999) for the interpretation as modal adverb *faxiang fuci* 法相副詞.

¹⁵ Quoted after the following edition: *Shiji* 史記. Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1959, 1985.

¹⁶ See Ao Jinghao, He Leshi et al. (1985: 279f, 435).

¹⁷ Although some linguists explicitly point to this epistemic value of *jiang* 將, I would prefer to analyse it as a meaning derived from the context.

If the subject represents the thematic role of the agent of the action to which the verb refers then the modal notions of intention and volition are implied¹⁸ as in the following example:

(4) 我非忘諸校尉功也，今固且圖之。
wo fei wang zhu xiao wei gong ye jin gu qie tu zhi Shiji: 2926

I NEG forget all sub-commander success FIN now certain FUT consider OBJ

‘It is not the case that I forgot the success of the subcommanders and now I will certainly consider it.’

In my analysis, intention is considered as an inherent feature of action verbs with a subject representing the agent of the action: it is impossible, unless it is not particularly marked, to carry out actions such as ‘to kill, to attack, to leave, etc.’ unintentionally. On the other hand, volition is regarded as an additional feature of the same sort of verbs, explicitly indicating the volitional attitude of the agent of the action. Sometimes, it is difficult to distinguish between both categories, particularly if the agent of the action and the locutionary agent, the speaker, are identical and the prospective intentional action the speaker is talking about can be assumed to be volitional as well. If they are not identical¹⁹, very often the speaker’s attitude concerning the prospective intentional action carried out by the agent is definitely not volitional, as in example (2):

(2) 「盜兵且至，急絕道聚兵自守！」
dao bing qie zhi ji jue dao ju bing zi shou Shiji: 2967

thief soldier FUT arrive hasty block road collect soldier self defend

‘The bandits will arrive soon, let us hastily block the roads, collect our soldiers and defend ourselves.’

¹⁸ Barbiers (2002: 12): ‘At first sight, it seems plausible to expect that modals with a root interpretation require verbs assigning an agent role as their complements. An agent may seem to be necessary to carry the permission, obligation, ability or will to perform the action denoted by the embedded verb. Passive, unaccusative, stative and complements with a perfect might then be expected to force epistemic interpretations. ... However, these types of complements all allow root interpretations...’ A verification of this hypothesis for Classical and Han-period Chinese requires a comprehensive study of all grammatical features that are liable to express modality during this period. These are mainly different modal adverbs expressing either epistemic or root modality or auxiliary verbs with the same function. As far as the adverbs *jiang* 將 and *qie* 且 are concerned, an agentive subject apparently allows a root interpretation while a non-agentive subject does not.

¹⁹ Frequently, the future is explicitly marked in direct speech, in which the locutionary agent and the agent he is talking about are not identical and the locutionary agent is either guessing or predicting what the agent of the action is going to do. Accordingly his point of view is not necessarily identical with that of the agent.

Consequently, the assumption that the modal notions of intention and volition are present requires taking into consideration the interplay of the pragmatic situation, the semantics of the verb, the thematic role of the subject and the employment of one of the adverbs indicating the future. In my analysis, I will distinguish between the following three categories:

1. future without intention – usually a simple prediction: the thematic role of the subject does not permit an intentional interpretation of the predicate;
2. implied intention – the most complex category: the role of the subject and the semantics of the verb permit an intentional interpretation of the predicate, which might include volition, but, as far as the locutionary agent is concerned the predicate very often does not express a volitional attitude;
3. intention and volition: the thematic role of the subject permits an intentional interpretation and as far as the locutionary agent – who in this case is often identical with the agent of the action – is concerned, the action referred to by the predicate is volitional.

The notion of volition can be expressed explicitly by the auxiliary verb *yu* 欲 ‘wish, want’ on its own or following the adverb. Epistemic futures or futures with root (deontic) modality are often marked explicitly by an additional adverbial *bi* 必 giving the epistemic notion of certainty or indicating the root modality of obligation and by *qi* 其 indicating the epistemic notion of possibility, or by either of them alone, but these modal adverbs are apparently not entirely²⁰ restricted to future contexts (as the following examples show).

Examples for *bi* 必 and *qi* 其 in non-future contexts:

(5) 所以然者，遠漢，而漢多財物，故必市乃得所欲，... Shiji: 3173

suo yi ran zhe yuan han er han duo cai wu gu

SUO PREP like-this ZHE far-away Han CON Han many goods things therefore

bi shi nai de suo yu

certainly bargain then get SUO wish

‘This was because they found that Han was very far away and had plenty of goods, therefore they had to pay and then they got what they wanted ...’

In this example an obligation in a past context is expressed. This compares well with the following example where a certainty is expressed.

²⁰ Most of the instances of *bi* 必 are certainly found in future or in hypothetical contexts, but it never serves to indicate the future in a neutral sense, it always explicitly marks the certainty the locutionary agent wants to express with respect to the future event.

(6) 好氣，為人小吏，必陵其長吏。

Shiji: 313A

hao qi wei ren xiao li bi ling qi zhang li
great spirit be man little official certainly outdo his above official
‘He was a man of great spirit, and when he was a petty official, he definitely wanted to outdo his superior.’

Shiji: 1452

(7) 吾聞衛康叔，武公之德如是，是其衛風乎？
wu wen wei kang shu wu gong zhi de ru shi shi qi wei feng hu
I hear Wei Kang shu Wu gong ZHI virtue be-like this this Qi Wei ballad FIN
‘I have heard, that the virtues of Kangshu of Wei and of Wangong were like this, and I suppose that this is a ballad from Wei?’

In this example a supposition or a possibility in a present context is expressed.

In the following example, *bi* 必 occurs in a hypothetical context, expressing an event that only under certain conditions will happen in the future:

Shiji: 167

(8) 交善，周君必以為公功。交惡，勸周君入秦者必有罪矣。
jiao shan zhou jun bi yi wei gong gong jiao e quan
Mutual good Zhou ruler certainly PREP make duke merit mutual bad encourage
zhou jun ru qin zhe bi you zui yi
Zhou ruler enter Qin ZHE certainly have guilt FIN

‘If your relations were good, the ruler of Zhou would regard it as your merit. If they were bad, you as someone who has encouraged the ruler of Zhou to invade Qin would certainly be found guilty.’

In this example, *bi* 必 is found in the apodosis of a conditional sentence, expressing that if the conditions mentioned in the protasis are true, the result expressed in the apodosis will certainly be true as well. This is a very typical occurrence of modal *bi* 必.

Both future adverbs, *jiang* 將 and *qie* 且, are also typically employed in conditional sentences: ‘if X, then Y will be’, but the attitude of the locutionary agent towards the future event is more neutral than with *bi* 必, exemplified by the fact that he simply states or predicts, without focussing on its epistemic values, that under certain conditions the expressed event will happen in the future.

Sometimes sentences with an adverb indicating future tense are additionally marked by a temporal adverbial mostly indicating the reference time of the narrative and providing the temporal frame for the future event. In some cases in *Shiji*, future events are marked by temporal adverbials explicitly referring to a point in the future such as *lai nian* 來年 ‘next year’ as in example (16).

2.1 Examples for the Semantics of *jiang* 將 and *qie* 且

(a) Future without intention:

(9) 今楚王病，旦暮且卒，而君相少主，因而代立者，如伊尹、周公，...
Shiji: 2397

jin chu wang bing dan mu qie zu er jun xiang
now Chu king sick morning evening FUT die CON lord be-prime-minister young
zhu yin er dai li dang guo ru yi yin zhou gong
master therefore replace establish responsible-for state like Yi Yin Zhou gong
‘The king of Chu is sick now. He will pass away any time during the day and you will be prime-minister for a young master and therefore you will be established in his place and rule the country just like Yi Yin and Zhougong, ...’

Shiji: 1713

(10) 「能致二子則生，不能斃死。」
neng zhi er zi ze sheng bu neng jiang si
can bring two son then live NEG can FUT die
‘If you are able to make your two sons come, you will live, if not, you will die.’

In both sentences, the fact that the subject is the theme of the event, does not permit an intentional interpretation.

In passive sentences:

(11) 有一於此，豈為戮乎。 Zuoziwan, Zheng, 2 (Shi san jing zhushu: 1895)

you yi yu ci jiang wei lu hu
there-is one PREP this FUT PASS execute FIN
‘Now, there is one here and he is going to be executed.’

Shiji: 313

(12) 不者，若屬皆且為所虜。
bu zhe ruo shu jie qie wei suo lu
NEG ZHE you be-attached-to all FUT PASS PASS capture
‘If you don’t, all of you will be imprisoned.’

(13) 無忌曰：「王今不制，其事成矣。王且見禽。」 Shiji: 2172
wu ji yue wang jin bu zhi qi shi cheng yi wang qie jian qin
Wu ji say king now NEG decide his affair complete FIN king FUT PASS catch
‘Wuji said: ‘If your majesty will not make a decision to control now, his scheme will succeed and your majesty will be caught.’”

(14) ... 王若蚤圖之，其事又豈未可知也。 *Guoyu: 21/3b/464*

wang ruo zao tu zhi qi shi you jiang wei ke zhi ye
king if early plan it its affair again FUT NEG can know FIN
"... and even if your majesty will quickly make your plans, it will be impossible to gain [sufficient] knowledge about the affair."

In all these examples, the subject represents the patient of the event referred to by the verb. It is not agentive and accordingly, no intention or volition on the side of the locutionary agent can be implied.

(b) Future with implied intention:

(15) 四人相謂曰：「郁戎王漢國所毒，今生豎去，卒失大事。」
Shiji: 3178

si ren xiang wei yue yu cheng wang han guo suo du jin sheng jiang
four man each-other tell say Yu cheng king Han state SUO poison now live FUT
qu zu shi da shi
depart in-the-end fail great affair

"The four men said to one another: 'The king of Yucheng was very mean in his behaviour towards Han; now he is still alive and if he is going to escape, we will in the end fail in this important affair.'"

In this example, the present tense of the narrative is marked by *jin* 今, which provides the frame of perspective for the action that might happen in the future. Here, intention is implied as far as the agent is concerned, but there is no volition on the side of the locutionary agent.

(16) 秦復求割地，王豎與之乎？ *Shiji: 2373*

lai nian qin fu qiu ge di wang jiang yu zhi hu
come year Qin again demand cut-off territory king FUT give OBJ FIN
"If in the coming year Qin again demands that you partition out some territory, will you then give it to them?"

Here, the sentence – a typical conditional sentence with *jiang* 將 in the apodosis – is additionally marked by a temporal adverbial indicating a point of time in the future, which is quite rare. In this sentence the action expressed by the predicate is intentional, but it is very likely that it is not volitional.

(17) 三公子之徒將殺孺子，子豎何如？ *Guoyu: 8/7a/217*

san gong zi zhi tu jiang sha ru zi zi jiang he ru
three prince ZHI colleague FUT kill child you FUT what like
"If the party of the three princes are going to kill the child, what are you going to do about it?"

In both clauses the adverb marks a predicate with implied intention, but not necessarily with volition as far as the locutionary agent is concerned.

(18) 其後將霸，未老而死。 *Shiji: 2787*

qi hou jiang ba wei lao er si
PRO after FUT hegemony NEG old CON die

"Their predecessors will have the hegemony, but they will die before becoming old."
This example seems to be a simple predication which is neutral with respect to a volitional attitude of the locutionary agent.

(c) Future with intention and volition:

(19) 里克將殺奚齊，先告荀息曰： *Guoyu: 8/7a/217*

li ke jiang sha xi qi xian gao xun xi yue
Li Ke FUT kill Xi qi before report Xun Xi say

"Li Ke wanted to kill Xiqi, but he first reported to Xun Xi saying: ..."

The first clause of this sentence definitely expresses volition as far as the locutionary agent is concerned.

(20) 已而復聞齊初與三國有謀，豎欲移兵伐齊。 *Shiji: 2006*

yi er fu wen qi chu yu san guo you mou jiang yu yi bing
after again hear Qi originally PREP three state have scheme FUT wish move soldier
fa qi
attack Qi

"Afterwards, they heard again that Qi had originally been making his plans with the Three States, and they wanted to move their troops to attack Qi."

In this example, volition is explicitly expressed by the auxiliary verb *yu* 欲.

(d) Immediate future without intention:

(21) 季友之將生也，父魯桓公使人卜之，曰：「男也，其名曰友。」 *Shiji: 1533*

ji you zhi jiang sheng ye fu lu huan gong shi ren bu zhi yue nan
ji you ZHI FUT be-born FIN father Lu Huan gong send man divine OBJ say boy
ye qi ming yue you
FIN his name say You

"When Jiyou was about to be born, his father, Huangong of Lu, ordered someone to ask the oracle about it which said: 'It will be a boy and his name will be You.'"

(e) Immediate future with intention (and volition):

(22) 瞻射，使者遷走，遂出奔吳。

Shiji: 1713

jiang she shi zhe huan zou sui chu ben wu

FUT shoot envoy ZHE turn-round run then go-out flee Wu

"I was on the point of shooting / I wanted to shoot, but the envoy turned around and fled, and in the following he (Wu Xu) fled to Wu."

(23) 仲由將入，遇子羔將出，曰：「門已閉矣。」

Shiji: 1601

zhong you jiang ru yu zi gao jiang chu yue men yi bi yi

Zhong you FUT enter meet zi Gao FUT go-out say door already close FIN

"When Zhong You wanted to enter, he met Zi Gao, who wanted to go out and he said: 'The door is already closed.'"

3. Syntactic Behaviour of the Modal Adverbs Marking Future

The adverbs *jiang* 將 and *qie* 且 belong to the relatively closed class of adverbs that indicate tense, aspect, actionality or mood of the verb, which I call proper adverbs²¹. These adverbs are usually confined to preverbal position in contrast to those adverbs and adverbial phrases that are either found in preverbal or in sentence-initial position.²² The proper adverbs can normally be separated by the verb only by other adverbs and adverbials and prepositional phrases. Belonging to the class of modal adverbs, *jiang* 將 and *qie* 且 are found quite high in the hierarchy of the sentence, as was already noted by Wei Peiquan.²³ As adverbs, they are never found on their own in the sentence, but are always followed by the predicate they modify, thus being distinguishable from auxiliary verbs, which – e.g. in answers – can occur independently of a following verb. Also in contrast to auxiliary verbs which usually follow negatives, they usually precede them. The rare instances in which negatives

²¹ I have adopted this, *mutatis mutandis*, from the definition given by Viviane Alleton (1972) who used it for Modern Chinese.

²² The adverb *jiang* 將 can sometimes precede the subject in early Classical texts. See Pulleyblank, Edwin G. 1995. *Outline of Classical Chinese Grammar*. Vancouver: UBC Press, p.120 (no example) and Wei Peiquan (1999: 263). These cases are relatively rare and obviously confined to particularly marked instances. There are apparently no instances of adverbial *jiang* 將 preceding the subject in *Shiji*.

²³ Wei Peiquan (1999: 261). However, according to Wei Peiquan (1999: 263), during their history the modal adverbs show a tendency to be found in a lower position - closer to the verb - in the hierarchy of the adverbs, e.g. the modal adverb *jiang* 將 which is historically later than *qi* 其 usually follows the earlier modal adverb *qi* 其.

precede the modal adverb are especially marked cases, for example rhetorical questions. Both adverbs can be employed in quite complex sentences, with several syntactic elements following or preceding the modal adverb. In particular *jiang* 將 is employed in very complex sentences. It can precede preverbal prepositional phrases and preverbal interrogative pronouns either being used adverbially or referring to an object. Furthermore it is found preceding an inverted object in preverbal position either followed by *shi* 是 or *zhi* 之. The latter cases are very rare and since this sort of inversion becomes less common during the Han-period, they are more or less restricted to Classical texts and consequently they are usually found with the adverb *jiang* 將 and not with *qie* 且; in the *Shiji* the structure is only found in quotations from earlier texts. *jiang* 將 and *qie* 且 can precede manner adverbs which hierarchically are very close to the verb since they qualify the way in which the situation the verb refers to happens. They also usually precede the pronominal adverbs²⁴ *xiang* 相 and *zi* 自, which - according to Pulleyblank - occur immediately in front of the verb²⁵. There are very few examples in *Shiji* in which *jiang* 將 seems to follow the pronominal adverb *zi* 自 and in almost all of these cases *jiang* 將 has to be analysed as a verb²⁶. Sentences with *qie* 且 basically contain a less complex structure of the verb phrase. This might be due to the fact that the particular syntactic structures, mainly involving the position of the object (quite common during the Classical period), are not common during the Han-period. They are thus not found in combination with the historically younger adverb *qie* 且. Both adverbs usually follow conjunctive adverbs such as *yi* 亦, *you* 又, *shang* 尚, the quantifier *jie* 皆²⁷, and those modal adverbs expressing possibility / probability, such as *qi* 其 (and *qi* 豈), and expressing certainty such as *bi* 必 (and *gu* 固). The latter ones can also follow *jiang* 將 and *qie* 且 depending on the scope they govern. In this case, they apparently function as manner adverbs, expressing the way in which a situation (activity, event) takes place, rather than as modal adverbs.

According to their syntactic constraints, both adverbs *jiang* 將 and *qie* 且 obviously take scope over (c-command) the verb phrase including its negatives, any manner adverbs, the object independently of its position, obligatory or non-obligatory prepositional complements of the verb and they can even take scope over more than one verb phrase in a row.

²⁴ Pulleyblank's terminology is adopted here. See Pulleyblank (1995: 136).

²⁵ Pulleyblank (1995: 136): *Zi* 自 can refer either to the object or to the subject of the sentence, while *xiang* 相 usually refers to the object of the verb.

²⁶ The only possible exception is the one found in example (41).

²⁷ But they usually precede the quantifier *jie* 皆.

3.1 Examples for the syntax of *jiang* 將 and *qie* 且

(a) Preceding a manner adverb:

(24) 今君既定而列成，君其整列，寡人盍親見。 Guoyu: 9/4b/236

jin jun ji ding er jie cheng jun qi zheng lie gua ren
 now ruler already establish CON rank complete ruler Q1 put-in-order rank lonely
 man

jiang qin jian

FUT in-person see

“And if the ruler is established now and the ranks are completed, and if he has put the ranks in order, I will personally come to visit him.”

In this example the intention and volition of the locutionary agent is expressed by the modified predicate. The predicate is additionally modified by adverbial *qin* 親 ‘in person, personally’.

(25) 帝告我：「晉國且世衰，七世而亡。嬴姓豎大敗周人於范魁之西，而亦不能有也。」
Shiji: 2787

di gao wo jin guo qie shi shuai qi shi er wang
 emperor report I Jin state FUT generation decline seven generation CON perish

ying xing jiang da bai zhou ren yu fan kai zhi xi er yi bu
 Ying clan FUT great defeat Zhou people PREP Fan kai ZHI west CON also NEG

neng you ye
 can have FIN

“The emperor told me: ‘The power of the state of Jin will decline from generation to generation, and after seven generations it will perish. The Ying clan will overwhelmingly defeat the people of Zhou in the west of Fankui, but will not be able to take possession of them.’”

In the first sentence in (25), future without intention is marked by *qie* 且 preceding adverbially used *shi* 世 ‘from generation to generation’. In the second sentence the future with implied intention is marked by *jiang* 將 which precedes the adverbially used stative verb *da* 大.

(26) 帝告我：「晉國且大亂，五世不安。」
Shiji: 2787

di gao wo jin guo qie da luan wu shi bu an

emperor report I Jin state FUT great turmoil five generation NEG in-peace

“The emperor told me: ‘The state of Jin will be in great disorder, and for five generations it will not be in peace.’”

No intention is implied.

(27) 申生曰：「諾，吾盍復請帝。」
Shiji: 1651

shen sheng yue nuo wu jiang fu qing di

Shen Sheng say agree I FUT again ask emperor

Shen Sheng said: ‘Alright, I will ask the emperor again.’”

The adverb *fu* 復 follows *jiang* 將, which marks future with intention.

(b) Preceding a prepositional phrase:

(28) 又謂夫人鄭袖曰：「秦王甚愛張儀，而王欲殺之，今邕以上庸之地六縣賂楚，以美人聘楚王，以宮中善歌者爲之媵。楚王重地，秦女必貴，而夫人必斥矣。」
Shiji: 1725

you wei fu ren zheng xiu yue qin wang shen ai zhang yi er wang yu

in-addition tell wife Zheng Xiu say Qin king very love Zhang Yi CON king wish

sha zhi jin jiang yi shang yong zhi di lu xian lu chu yi

kill OBJ now FUT PREP Shang yong ZHI territory six district present Chu PREP

mei ren ping chu wang yi gong zhong shan ge zhe wei zhi

beautiful people offer Chu king PREP palace middle good sing ZHE make OBJ

ying chu wang zhong di qin

attendant-accompanying-a-bridge-to-her-new-home Chu king important territory Qin

nu bi gui er fu ren bi chi yi

woman certainly honour CON wife certainly drive-away FIN

“Again addressing the royal wife Zheng Xiu, he said: ‘The king of Qin loves Zhang Yi deeply, but our king wants to kill him, and now he will present Chu six districts of the area of Shangyong, he will offer a beautiful woman to the king of Chu as his bride, accompanied by very good singers of his palace. For the king of Chu territory is very important, and the woman from Qin will certainly be honoured and you, the royal wife, will surely be driven away.’”

In this sentence the predicate is marked for future with implied intention and possibly volition as well. If volition is implied, the volitional attitude on the part of the agent is not expressed by the agent himself but is assumed by the locutionary agent (the agent and the locutionary agent are not identical). In the preceding clause, this assumption is explicitly expressed by the auxiliary verb *yu* 欲. In the second sentence the epistemic value of certainty in a future context is twice expressed by *bi* 必.

(29) 吳王夫差哭於軍門外三日，豎從海入討齊。
wu wang fu chai ku yu jun men wai san ri jiang cong hai
 Wu king Fu chai cry PREP army-camp door outside three day FUT PREP sea
ru tao qi
 enter punish Qi

Shiji: 1508

“The king of Wu, Fuchai, cried almost for three days outside the military camp and he wanted to enter from the direction of the sea to punish Qi.”

Here a prepositional phrase with *cong* 從 follows adverbial *jiang* 將, which marks future with intention and volition. The temporal frame is set by the complement of duration in the preceding clause.

(30) ...曰：「今如此不取，恐爲大害，非獨樓船，又且與朝鮮共滅吾軍。」
 2988

Shiji:

yue jin ru ci bu qu kong wei da hai fei du lou chuan
 say now be-like this not take afraid make great disaster NEG only tower ship
you qie yu chao xian gong mie wu jun
 furthermore FUT PREP Chao xian together extinguish I army

“... and said: ‘Well, if we are not going to act now, I am afraid, it will cause a great disaster, and this will not only concern the commander of the “tower-ship”, but additionally they will together with Chaoxian extinguish our army.’”

The predicate is marked for future with implied intention, but no volition as far as the locutionary agent is concerned is implied. In this example, two different analyses of *qie* 且 are possible: 1) as an adverb indicating future and 2) as a conjunction combined with the conjunction *you* 又 ‘again, additionally’. No semantic or syntactic evidence seems to give one of the two possible interpretations precedence.

(c) Preceding an interrogative:

(31) 「舍適而外求君，豎安置此？」
 1672

she di er wai qiu jun jiang an zhi ci
 abandon legitimate-heir CON outside seek ruler FUT how place this

“To abandon the legitimate heir and to seek a ruler abroad, how can it be, that such a person will be established?”

(32) ...謂魯人曰：『子盍何以待吾君？』
 2463

wai lu ren yue zi jiang he yi dai wu jun
 tell Lu people say you FUT what PREP wait-on I ruler

“... and he said to the man from Lu: ‘How will you wait on my prince?’”

(33) 夫所謂賢人者，必能安天下而治萬民，今身且不能利，豎惡能治天下哉！
 2553

fu suo wei xian ren zhe bi neng an tian xia er chi
 well SUO call virtuous man ZHE certainly can pacify empire CON put-in-order
wan min jin shen qie bu neng li jiang wu neng chi
 ten-thousand people now person QIE NEG can profit FUT how can put-in-order
tian xia zai
 empire FIN

“Well, what we call a worthy man is someone who can certainly secure the peace in the empire and govern the ten-thousand people, and if he himself will not be able to profit, how will he then be able to govern the empire!”

In all three examples, future with implied intention is marked by *jiang* 將. As far as *qie* 且 in example (33) is concerned, it very likely functions in this instance as a concessive conjunction in correlation with the adverbial interrogative *wu* 惡 ‘how’, a variant of the interrogative *an* 安 ‘how’, which is found more frequently in this combination.²⁸

(d) Preceding an inverted object:

(34) 豎民之與處而難之，豎災是備禦而召之，則何以經國？
 Guoyu: 3/11a/87

jiang min zhi yu chu er li zhi jiang zai shi bei
 FUT people ZHI PREP be-located CON leave OBJ FUT catastrophe SHI prepare
yu er zhao zhi ze he yi jing guo
 ward-off CON invite OBJ then what PREP pass-through state

“If one wants to live together with the people but separates oneself from them, if one wants to be prepared to ward off catastrophes but invites them, how will one then continue the state?”

In the first clause, *jiang* 將 precedes a phrase which is traditionally regarded as a prepositional phrase with an inverted object of the preposition,²⁹ in the second clause it precedes an inverted object in preverbal position. Both *jiang* 將 indicate intention and volition. They have scope over the second VP as well.

²⁸ See *Guidai hanyu xuci cidian* 古代漢語虛詞詞典 (2000: 426).

²⁹ See Unger, Ulrich. 1989. *Grammatik des Klassischen Chinesisch*. III. Teil, Verbaersatz, Bd.5 Präpositionen. Münster, (unpublished), p.171. From a general linguistic point of view, this analysis seems to be quite problematic and the exact functional status of *yu* 與 (and other prepositions) in constructions of this kind requires further analysis which cannot be given here.

(40) 武安君引劍將自剄，曰：...

Shiji: 2337

wu an jun yin jian jiang zi jing yue

Wu an lord draw-out sword FUT self cut-the-throat say

“The lord of Wu’an drew out his sword and when he was about to cut his throat, he said: ...”

Immediate future, as well as intention and volition is marked by *jiang* 將.

The following example is – except for the position of *zi* 自 – quite similar to (39), and accordingly an analysis of *jiang* 將 as an adverb indicating the future with a preceding *zi* 自³² can be taken into consideration. If this analysis is correct,³³ it is the only example in *Shiji* with *zi* 自 preceding *jiang* 將.

(41) 高帝十一年秋，淮南王英布反，東并荆地，劫其國兵，西度淮，擊楚，高帝自將往誅之。

Shiji: 2821

gao di shi yi nian qiu huai nan wang ying bu fan dong bing jing di

Gao di ten one year autumn Huai nan king Ying bu rebel east annex Jing territory

jie qi guo bing xi du huai ji chu gao di zi jiang wang zhu

plunder its state weapon west cross Huai attack Chu Gao di self FUT go execute

zhi

OBJ

“In the autumn of the eleventh year of Gao di, the king of Huainan, Yingbu, rebelled and in the east he annexed the territory of Jing and plundered the weapons of its state, in the west, he crossed the Huai and attacked Chu, and Gao di himself wanted to go there and execute him.”

If the interpretation is correct, future with intention and volition is indicated by *jiang* 將.

(E) Preceding a negative (see also ex. (14)):

(42) 管叔及其群弟流言於國曰：「周公將不利於成王。」

Shiji: 1518

guan shu ji qi qun di liu yan yu guo yue gong zhou gong jiang

Guan shu and his all younger-brother flow word PREP state say Zhou duke FUT

bu li yu cheng wang

NEG advantage PREP Cheng king

³² If this analysis is correct, this would agree well with Wei Peiquan's assumption that modal adverbs show a tendency to move to a lower position in the sentence.

³³ Contrastively to this analysis see Watson, Burton. 1961, 1993. *Records of the Grand Historian. Han Dynasty 1*. Hongkong: New York: Columbia University Press, p.403. He analyses *jiang* 將 as a verb, an interpretation which cannot be excluded: “Emperor Gaozu in person led a force to punish the rebels.”

Guan shu and his younger brothers sent a word to the state saying: ‘Zhou gong will not be advantageous for Cheng wang.’”

(43) 「君多內寵，太子無大援將不立，三公子皆君也。」

Shiji: 1761

jun duo nei chong tai zi wu da yuan jiang bu li san

prince many inner favour crown prince NEG great help FUT NEG establish three

gong zi jie jun ye

duke son all prince FIN

“The prince has many favourites in the inner part (of the palace), and if you the crown prince will not get a great help you will not be established and the three ducal sons will all be princes.”

4. The Adverbs *jiang* 將 and *qie* 且 in Combination with the Adverb *fang* 方

Sometimes, an adverb indicating the future follows the adverb *fang* 方. In the linguistic literature the adverb *fang* 方 in preverbal position is generally analysed as having, amongst others, functions which are related to simultaneity and progressiveness or duration. As a temporal and/or aspectual or action adverb, respectively it can: 1) indicate simultaneity of situations; 2) mark a situation that is just on the point of happening;³⁴; 3) mark a situation that has very recently happened; 4) mark an ongoing situation. For example, Yang Bojun and He Leshi³⁵ regard *fang* 方 as marking the simultaneity of actions in the present, the past and the future, while Wang Haifen³⁶ analyses some of its functions as marking a situation happening right then (‘to be just then in a particular situation’), or as marking an activity which has been just put in motion. Generally, it serves to indicate imperfectivity, simultaneity and continuous action. If it is combined with one of the adverbs indicating future, it indicates that an imperfective situation is on the point of happening. As far as the deictic, temporal value of this combination is concerned, it always indicates the immediate future.

³⁴ Other functions are for example as an adverb with the meaning ‘together’ (in the same place).

³⁵ Yang Bojun 楊伯峻 and He Leshi 何樂士. 1992. *Gu Han yu yufa ji qi fazhan* 古漢語語法及其發展. Beijing: Yuwen chubanshe, p.253.

³⁶ Wang Haifen et al. (1996: 80)

³⁷ A quite extensive treatment of *fang* 方 is found in Yu Xinle 余心樂, Song Yilin 宋易麟 (1996: 92ff). 1. with the meaning ‘together’; 2. in the function of indicating simultaneity of events ‘the action is just happening’; 3. an event happens a second time, repeatedly; 4. an activity has been put in motion just now, quite recently; 5. an activity is on the point of happening; will happen in the very near future; 6. marking an ongoing activity or state.

(44) 張儀曰：「賴子得顯，方且報德，何故去也？」 Shi: 2280

zhang yi yue lai zi de xian fang qie bao de he gu
Zhang Yi say lean-on master get apparent FANG FUT pay-back virtue what reason

qu ye
go away FIN

“Zhang Yi said: ‘Thanks to you, I attained to some importance and I was just on the point of paying you back your virtue / friendship, so why are you leaving?’”

(45) 「兩虎方且食牛，食甘必爭，爭則必鬥³⁸，...」 Shi: 2302

liang hu fang qie shi niu shi gan bi zheng zheng ze bi dou
both tiger FANG FUT eat ox meal sweet certainly quarrel quarrel then certainly

fight
“Two tigers are about to eat an ox, and if it is tasty they will certainly quarrel, and if they quarrel they will certainly fight, ...”

In both examples *qie* 且 follows *fang* 方, indicating a background situation, which is intentional and probably volitional in the immediate future.

(46) 「方將約車趨行，適聞使者之明詔。」 Shi: 2297

fang jiang yue che qu xing shi wen shi zhe zhi ming zhao
FANG FUT bind carriage quick go just hear envoy ZHE ZHI bright instruction

“I was just on the point of providing a carriage so that you can go quickly, when I happened to hear the enlightening instructions of the envoy.”

Here as well, the immediate future with intention and volition is indicated by the combination of *fang* 方 and *jiang* 將.

5. Conclusion

Both adverbs *jiang* 將 and *qie* 且 are syntactically proper adverbs. They explicitly locate an event on a far or near future point of the time axis. Epistemic values can be implied by them, but they don't have the function of marking them in the first place. These values can be explicitly marked by additional adverbs. Very often - but depending mainly on semantic constraints - the modal values of intention or volition are implied by both adverbs. These constraints are: 1) No intention is implied, if the subject of the event the predicate refers to has a thematic role different from that of the agent, namely it represents the patient, theme or experiencer of the situation; 2) Intention is implied if the subject of the action to which the predicate refers represents the thematic role of the agent of the action. 3) Volition can be implied if

38 In the *Shiji*, the word *dou* 'to fight' is written in its more complicated variant, which I replace here.

the subject represents the same role as in 2); in most of these cases the locutionary agent of the utterance and the agent of the action are identical. If they are not identical, the locutionary agent usually gives his assumptions about the volitional attitude of the agent of the action. If the modal notion of volition is not explicitly marked by the auxiliary verb *yu* 欲 and its synonyms, the interpretation of an action as volitional or not depends entirely on the semantic constraints described above. There is apparently no syntactic evidence for an interpretation of a predicate as being volitional or not. There are no obvious restrictions on the nature of the action (i.e. lexical aspect) of the verb, modified by *jiang* 將 or *qie* 且.

A tentative functional label in a frame of tense, aspect and the nature of action of both adverbs is:

Tense: Future (definitely deictic), general and immediate;

Modality: No intention (simple prediction without any obvious modal functions);

intention, volition (not necessarily) (root modality);

Nature of action: Neutral;

Aspect: Neutral.

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