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features and characteristics in the various texts are sometimes even contradictory, at first sight. There would appear to be many *Hsi wang mus* who have separate roles.

I suggest, however, that there was a single multifaceted and multiform goddess who was called *Hsi wang mu*, or the Mother in the West. She had a variety of functions like mother goddesses in other areas. In this paper, an attempt is made to understand her origins and her various characteristics, making reference to the fundamental nature of the mother goddess. Near Eastern sources relating to the cult of great mother goddesses (Cybele, Anat and Inanna) are employed for comparative purposes.

Such a comparative method in the study of mythology is useful in order to identify mother goddess in China and other regions of the world. In other words, it leads to the phenomenology of mother goddesses. This particular method is needed for the study of Chinese mother goddesses because matriarchal society in China was corrupted very early, perhaps even before the Shang-Yin period, and after that the idea of the mother goddess was lost. The method that is used here aims to revive the original image of this powerful mother goddess of ancient China.

# 訂正

第五六卷第二号 (大浦眞紀子・阿部祥人論文)

四七(一六三)頁上段一〇行目

「…それらがⅡ類を伴うか、…」→「…それらがⅠ類を伴うか、…」

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