

Dennis Grafflin
Introduction to the Panel: Classical China Today

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This panel provides a window on the revolution in our understanding of ancient China led by Taeko and Bruce Brooks.

They have demolished the credibility of the traditional view that the surviving texts are unified wholes dating from whatever period they claim, and forced us / enabled us! to see them as dynamic, interwoven products of the political and military transformation of China in the last centuries before the imperial consolidation / petrification.

Today, we hear some of the real history of the Spring and Autumn period, 0722 to 0481, from Taeko Brooks, and we get to look into the editorial workshop that produced the Classic of Poetry in the subsequent Warring States period, with Bruce Brooks.

Karen Turner introduces us to ancient Chinese thinking about law and kingship as a complex historical process, while Al Cohen delves below the elite for evidence of popular thinking about justice in a time of change.