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From the President

Ken Klein

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From the President

Tso Ssu (or perhaps I should say, Zuo Si?), the subject of the *Jin Shu* biography shown on the cover, spent ten years researching a poem he was writing about the capital cities of the period recently ended, the era of Three Kingdoms. When he finally finished his "Three Capitals Poem," all of the powerful families in Luoyang vied to have copies made, thereby causing the price of paper to rise.

This story can be used to illustrate a number of different points: that the law of supply and demand was well at work in third century Luoyang, or that paper had, by that time, entrenched itself as the medium of choice for the written word. The interpretation I want to call attention to, though, is simply that, for intellectual products as well as for other commodities, quality sells.

I frankly do not know what sort of financial rewards Zuo Si and other poets of the day derived from their work, but I am sure that he benefitted somehow. Patronage of some sort, maybe, or consideration for official positions. I rather doubt that the Jin state had copyright laws which would have allowed him to profit directly from the sale of his poem. Whatever they were, the benefits, though real, were likely more indirect.

Now that I have beat around 1700 year-old bushes for half my page, let me come to my point. Much of the work we do, whether in the form of articles written, website development, or preparation for meetings, carries no immediate or tangible reward. Nevertheless, there are definite pay-offs, and I would like to both acknowledge the good work done in our field and to urge that we all continue to see such contributions as vital to the furtherance of our profession and to the advancement of culture. *JEAL* will continue to need quality writers, and the new blank slate (okay, now less-than-blank) of the world wide web needs the attentions of innovative and thoughtful html-ists.

Working together, we will be able to produce quality intellectual products, and the profession and culture will profit together. As my term as President of CEAL comes to an end in a few weeks, I would like to thank the countless members who have contributed to our organization's successes over the last three years. I look forward to many more years working with you all. We may never drive up the price of paper, or even band-width, on our own, but we can certainly excite the interest of the academy in this important period in the world's history.

