

A Note on Chūn/Chyōu Shr̄-yǎ 春秋事語 Item 5

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Introduction. Chūn/Chyōu Shr̄-yǎ 春秋事語 (CCSY) is the name given by its discoverers to a text found at Mǎwángdwēi in 1974. It contains sixteen narratives about Chūn/Chyōu personages that are very much in the style of the Gwó Yǎ 國語: the point and climax of each item is a prophetic discourse attributed to a wise observer. Each discourse is validated by later events. The text has many incorrect characters, mostly phonetic substitutions, and the silk is so damaged that only portions of the items are readable, but enough survives that the subject and intent of each item is apparent. Though the text has no major surprises, it helps to round out our picture of early narrative lore about the Chūn/Chyōu period, and sharpens our sense of the degree of narrative variation that was found acceptable as these stories were told and retold in the courts of the various states.

Except for CCSY 2, a previously unknown story about Yēn and Jìn, the CCSY items have analogues in Dzwǒ Jwàn 左傳 and Gwó Yǎ, but many speeches and a few narrative details do not occur elsewhere. I here draw attention to CCSY 5 because it explains a puzzling passage in its DJ analogue, and in Hán Fēidǎ.

Substance. The CCSY and DJ items tell how a Jìn officer, Shòu-yǎ of the clan of Wèi 魏, dupes Chín into letting a former Jìn officer, Shr̄ Hwèi 士會, now in Chín service, escape back to Jìn. The DJ version (Wǎn 13:2) relates that Shòu-yǎ, in order to allay Chín's suspicions, pretends he has revolted from his clan seat in Wèi and has come to serve Chín. To give this plausibility, the men of Jìn seize his family and have him depart at night for Chín. Soon afterward, some men of the Wèi clan appear on the east bank of the Yellow River to hold a parley with Chín. The ostensible purpose of this parley is to arrange the transfer of Wèi lands to Chín. Shòu-yǎ suggests to the count of Chín that “an able man of the East” (that is, Jìn) go with him to negotiate. Shr̄ Hwèi is appointed, but feigns reluctance. This draws from the Chín count a promise, under oath, that if the men on the other bank seize him, the count will send Shr̄ Hwèi's family to Jìn. Shr̄ Hwèi prepares to go. At this point, a new character, Rào Cháu 饒朝, presents Hwèi with a whip, and says, “Don't suppose there are no men in Chín – my advice was not followed.”

The rest of the item recounts the success of the ruse, and how the Count of Chín, true to his oath, returns Shr̄ Hwèi's family to Jìn (though some choose to remain in Chín and revert to a former clan surname). There is no further mention of Rào Cháu. We must suppose either that something slipped out of the text, or that Rào Cháu was so familiar to early readers that the DJ narrator felt no need to explain his sudden appearance and disappearance from the narrative.

In the CCSY version, the presence of Ràu Cháu is more fully explained: the account shows him warning the Chín ruler that Shòu-yw's real purpose in coming to Chín is to obtain Shè Hwèi's return to Jìn, and says that the ruler did not accept his warning. Ràu Cháu's bestowal of a whip and his remark about not being listened to are recounted, as in DJ. The prophecy which follows is almost illegible, but it seems that the commentator disapproves of Ràu Cháu's lack of caution in speaking with Shè Hwèi. The item ends by saying that Shè Hwèi and Shòu-yw of Wèi later used agents to spread slander about Ràu Cháu in the Chín court, with the result that the latter was executed.

Hán Fēidǔ. The DJ version says nothing about Ràu Cháu's execution by Chín, but a cryptic reference to it occurs in HFZ 12 (說難): "In the same way, the correctness of Ràu Cháu's speech resulted in his being a sage in Jìn and suffering execution in Chín." This occurs suddenly in the midst of a discussion of other figures; there is no preparation and no follow-up. Here too, the writer is acting as if the Ràu Cháu story is familiar to his audience. The reference was inexplicable until the discovery of CCSY – previous commentators explained lù 戮 "execute" as "be subjected to insult," and suggested that the failure of the Chín ruler to listen to Ràu Cháu's admonition constituted such an insult.

Connections such as the one discussed above show that there existed in the courts of early China a body of narrative matter about the Chūn/Chyōu era that was independent of our surviving texts. Discussions about the genesis of the texts therefore need to be concerned, not merely with the provenance of the texts themselves, but with the genesis of the matter that formed the basis of the texts.

Appendix 1: DJ Wǎn 13:2

晉人患秦之用士會也。夏，六卿相見於諸浮。趙宣子曰，隨會在秦，賈季在狄，難日至矣，若之何？中行桓子曰，請復賈季，能外事，且由舊勳。郤成子曰，賈季亂，且罪大，不如隨會。能賤而有恥，柔而不犯。其知足使也，且無罪。

乃使魏壽餘僞以魏叛者，以誘士會。執其帑於晉，使夜逸。請自歸於秦，秦伯許之。履士會之足於朝。秦伯師於河西，魏人在東，壽餘曰，請東人之能與夫二三有司言者，吾與之先。使士會。士會辭，曰，晉人，虎狼也。若背其言，臣死，妻子爲戮，無益於君，不可悔也。

秦伯曰，若背其言，所不歸爾帑者，其如河。乃行。饒朝贈之以策，曰，子無謂秦無人，吾謀適不用也。魏人譟而還。秦人歸其帑。其處者爲劉氏。

Translation: The men of Jìn were alarmed at Chín's use of Shè Hwèi, and in summer the six high ministers had a meeting about it in Sū-fù. Jàu Sywǎndǔ said, "Hwèi of Swéi is in Chín, and Jyǎ Jì is among the Dí, so difficulties come daily upon us – what is to be done?" Syì Chýng [Syì Chywē 郤缺] said, "Jyǎ Jì is insubordinate, and his crimes are great – he cannot compare with Hwèi of Swéi. Hwèi maintains a sense of shame even in a mean position; he is mild and not disruptive. His wisdom is equal to the position and he is guilty of no crime."

The DJ story focused on the need of Jìn to attract able men of Jìn who for various reasons were serving other states and peoples; a need which was made more urgent by the youthfulness of the current Jìn ruler. The story is all about the successful ruse of Shòu-yǐ, which (augmented by Shì Hwèi's own spontaneous cleverness) restored not only Shì Hwèi, but his family, to Jìn. That Rào Cháu detected the ruse only adds to the drama of the DJ story, in the moment before its successful climax. The DJ story, it seems to me, can be read as complete in itself.

The CCSY version includes Shì Hwèi's return, and it goes on to climax in the subsequent sowing of doubt in Chín, by a *further* stratagem, about the loyalty of Rào Cháu, who is put to death in the CCSY story's last line: "The great officers of Chín believed [this slander], and their ruler executed Rào Cháu." Quite apart from the greater complexity and thus the possible later date of this version, does the new segment speak to anything in the early Hàn ambience? It might be thought that it does. Slander was a constant fact of life from the beginning of Hàn, as witness the Shǐ Jì accounts of the lives of its founding generals and its high ministers. The element of intimate betrayal is strongly present in the Shǐ Jì account of Hán Fēi (SJ 63) and, in the military sector, in that of Sūn Bīn (SJ 65). The sowing of doubt in neighbor states by word and by letter figures prominently in the Jàn-gwó Tsù material which is preserved at Mǎwángdwēi (c0168). Both in life and as a literary topos, the tale of the Ruse Against Rào Cháu would seem to be very much at home in early Hàn.

The only other known allusion to Rào Cháu's execution is in HFZ 12, in my view an early Hàn piece, and probably a more sophisticated version of the genuine HFZ 3. In a 1994 study, I tentatively dated HFZ 12 to c0192. This is about a generation earlier than the MWD tomb itself, and I suggest that it may reflect a similar taste for intrigue and sudden death. All together, it seems to me reasonable to conclude that the CCSY story is a DJ tale recast in terms which were appropriate to the sensibilities, and fears, of its early Hàn audience.

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