

### The 03rd Century

This is the century of the military showdown. In the east, Chí Mǐn-wáng, who ruled from 0300, was eager for conquest. After long delay for preparation, a delay which the Gwǎndǔ theorists urgently advised, he attacked Sùng in 0285. And conquered it, but allied states drove him from Sùng and from Chí itself. He died far from his capital in 0284, and Chí never again ranked as a major power. Its eclipse favored its western rival: Chín.

**Lord Shāng** or Wèi Yāng, a general of Chín, had defeated Ngwèi in 0342; he was given the fief of Shāng and a ministership in 0341. His reputation in other states was military, but Chín tradition (found in the Shāng-jyǔwǎn Shū) claimed him as a statesman, and it is possible that he applied military discipline (harsh punishments, no exemptions for nobles) to the civilian population also. As in Chí, reward and punishment are the root axioms of 03c Chín legal theory:

**3:72** (SJS 9:2a, excerpt, c0295). Now, the nature of men is to like titles and salaries and to hate punishments and penalties. A ruler institutes these two things to control men's wills . . .

But in contrast to eastern thought, the SJS firmly rejects antiquity arguments:

**3:73** (SJS 7:2c, excerpt, c0288). The Sage neither imitates the ancient nor cultivates the modern . . . the Three Dynasties had different situations, but they all managed to rule. Thus, to *rise* to the Kingship, there is one way, but to *hold* it, there are different principles.

Governing conquered territory requires attention to the specific situation.

Chín conquered the Chǔ capital Yǐng in 0278, but presently Chǔ made a counterattack. The tone of the SJS becomes more absolutist from this point on. It is clear that all power in the state *belongs* to the state, and none to the people:

**3:74** (SJS 20:1, excerpt, c0276). If the people are weak, the state will be strong; if the state is strong, the people will be weak. Therefore, the state which possesses the Way will be concerned to weaken the people.

**Mician Theory** favored law. The Micians were the ideal citizens of the new state, who accepted law as protecting them from criminal behavior. They expected law to protect the good and punish the bad, and in government, they expected meritocracy: the employment of the virtuous. These expectations were so blatantly violated by 03c governments as to provoke this angry denunciation:

**3:75** (MZ 10:5, excerpt, c0275) . . . But when the art of judging is not understood, though virtuous men may compare with Yǔ and Tāng, with Wǎn and Wǔ, there will be no commendation. And though some relative of the ruler may be lame and dumb, deaf and blind, as evil as Jyé or Jòu, there will be no condemnation. Thus does reward not come to the virtuous, nor punishment to the evil . . .

From the Mician viewpoint, the evil are favored and the virtuous are neglected. The new system has failed to produce a moral government.

The Mician answer to these ills was still the reward and punishment system, but now reorganized as a meritocratic reporting system at each social level:

**3:76** (MZ 13:7, excerpt, c0273) . . . Let the Son of Heaven announce and proclaim to the masses of the world: “If you see someone who loves and benefits the world, you must report it; if you see someone who hates and harms the world, you must report it.” Whoever, on seeing someone who loves and benefits the world, reports it, is like one who himself loves and benefits the world. If his superior can get him, he will reward him; if the masses hear of him, they will praise him. But whoever, on seeing someone who hates and harms the world, fails to report it, is himself one who hates and harms the world. If his superior can get him, he will punish him; if the masses hear of him, they will oppose him . . .

Not to put too fine a point on it, the people have here become the police force, or if one prefers, the merit recruitment and reproof agency, of the state.

In some parts of the world, law limits the ruler. Chinese law did not arise in that way. It functioned to *empower* the ruler. Law made the state easier for the ruler to control, whoever the ruler might be. This merely set things up for a usurper, like the Tyén usurpers in Chí. As the Jwāngdž people pointed out:

**3:77** (JZ 10:1a, excerpt, c0257) . . . Of old, the neighboring towns of Chí could be seen from each other; the cries of dogs and chickens could be heard from each other; where its nets and seines were spread, what its ploughs and spades turned, was an area of more than two thousand leagues. It filled all the space within its four borders. In its establishing of temples and shrines or altars of soil or grain, in its governing of its cities and towns, its districts and regions, its counties and hamlets, what was there that did not model itself on the Sages?

But Tyén Chýngdž in a single morning killed the ruler of Chí and stole his state. And was it only the state he stole? With it he stole the laws which Sagely wisdom had devised. And so Tyén Chýngdž gained the name of a thief and a bandit, but he himself rested as easy as Yáu or Shùn. Small states dared not denounce him, large states dared not attack him, and for twelve generations his family has held the state of Chí . . .

That twelfth Tyén ruler, King Jyèn (r 0264-0221), favored Confucianism. He responded to the Chǔ threat by reactivating, and attempting to Confucianize, the Jì-syà theory group. Chí thought was still cosmological in character . . .

**3:78** (GZ 40, excerpt, c0250). Yīn and Yáng are the grand rationale of Heaven and Earth; the Four Seasons are the great cycle of Yīn and Yáng. If punishment and amnesty correspond to the seasons, they will beget good fortune; if they are adverse, they will beget disaster . . . In summer, if one carries out the spring schedule, there will be windstorms; if one carries out the autumn schedule, there will be floods; if one carries out the winter schedule, there will be shedding [of leaves]. . .

. . . but that routine had not protected the state against recent disasters such as the near-destruction of Chí following its 0285 conquest of Sùng.

So to the new Jì-syà, King Jyèn in 0258 invited the Confucian Sywǎndž.

**Sywǎndž** 荀子 (SZ). The preserved writings of the 03c Confucian Sywǎn Kwàng (c0310-c0235) of Jàu. Of its 32 chapters, most are authentic; some additions are as late as early Hàn. Translated by Knoblock.

Sywǎndž had begun as a student of ritual and music at the court of Lǔ. At first he followed traditional Confucian philosophy, but later diverged from it. He was the most abrasive controversialist of his day, though this did not prevent him from appropriating what he thought was good in others' ideas. As of 0258, Sywǎndž was a well-known figure, but had not yet gained a court position.

Sywǎndž considered his 0258 appointment in Chí as a mandate to bring Confucian light to the erring Chí philosophers. To counter the Chí theory of a determining Heaven, he wrote what he surely intended as a thoughtful and considerate account of the subject. It is still considered to be his masterpiece:

**3:79** (SZ 17:1, beginning, c0257). The course of Heaven is constant. It does not survive because of Yáu, nor perish because of Jyé. If you respond to it with order, there will be good fortune; if you respond to it with disorder, there will be misfortune. If you strengthen basics and keep expenses low, Heaven cannot afflict you. If you follow the Way faithfully, Heaven cannot bring disaster on you. So flood and drought cannot cause famine, cold and heat cannot cause sickness, strange and weird events cannot cause misfortune. If basics are neglected and expenses wasteful, Heaven cannot make you rich; if food is scarce and initiative lacking, Heaven cannot make you whole; if you forsake the Way and act irrationally, Heaven cannot make you fortunate . . .

**3:80** (SZ 17:4, excerpt, c0257). Are order and chaos due to Heaven? I say, Sun and moon, stars and constellations, the calendrical markers, were the same for Yǔ and Jyé. With Yǔ they led to order; with Jyé they led to disorder: Order and chaos are then not due to Heaven. Are they due to the seasons? I say, crops sprout and grow in spring and summer; they are gathered and stored in autumn and winter. These too were the same for Yǔ and Jyé. With Yǔ they led to order; with Jyé they led to disorder. Order and chaos are then not due to the seasons . . .

**3:81** (SZ 17:7, excerpt, c0257). When stars fall or trees creak, the country is terrified. They ask, Why is this? I reply, No reason; these are things that happen when Heaven and Earth change, or Yīn and Yáng mutate. We may marvel at them, but it is wrong to fear them. As for eclipses of sun and moon, unseasonableness of wind and rain, or the uncanny appearance of a strange star, there is no age but has had them . . .

All this tact and eloquence did not convert the cosmologically committed philosophers of Chí to a more human-centered view. Relations at Jì-syà became so uncomfortable that in 0254, Sywǎndž departed for a less philosophical post, as the Chǔ governor of newly conquered Lǔ.