

## Gūngmíng Yí 公明儀

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**Abstract.** This intriguing figure turns up 4x in the Mencius: in the southern 3A1, 3B3, and 3B9, and the northern 4B24. He is explained as “a follower of Mencius” by Jàu Chí, which took no particular imagination. Can we do any better?

### The Surname Gūngmíng

The surname Gūngmíng 公明 is itself strange. A bearer of that surname occurs in LY 14:13 (c0310), a passage which is contemporary with the last years of Mencius:

LY 14:13. The Master asked Gūngmíng Jyǎ 公明賈 about Gūngshú Wíndǔ, Is it true that His Excellency did not speak, did not laugh, and did not take? Gūngmíng Jyǎ replied, Whoever said that has exaggerated. His Excellency spoke only when it was timely, and others did not weary of his speaking . . . The Master said, Could it have been so? How could it have been so?

That is, Gūngmíng Jyǎ is knowledgeable about certain persons, but Confucius in the end is moved to doubt Gūngmíng Jyǎ’s positive description. The paired LY 14:14 gives another example of Confucius doubting a positive report about an early figure (in that case, Dzàng Wín-jùng; the positive claim is made in DJ 9/23:5). No one with the surname Gūngmíng figures in the DJ. The Analects Gūngmíng Jyǎ is said to have been a man of Nán Wǔ-chíng 南武城. In LY 14:13 he is clearly a contemporary rather than a disciple of Confucius (nor, consistently, does he figure on the Disciple Register 弟子籍 which underlies both KZJY 38 and SJ 67.

In Mencius we have Gūngmíng Yí 儀 and Gūngmíng Gāu 高, the latter appearing only in the northern passage MC 5A1, where, like the Analects Gūngmíng Jyǎ, he serves as an informant about a historical matter. Besides Gūngmíng Jyǎ, Morohashi sv 公明 has only these two persons and one other, Gūngmíng Sywǎn 宣. They seem to have been much confused in Hàn tradition. The Morohashi identifications are:

- Gūngmíng Gāu of Lǔ Nán Wǔ-chíng; disciple of Dzǎngdǔ (MC 5A1)
- Gūngmíng Yí of Lǔ Nán Wǔ-chíng; disciple of Dǔ-jāng (Lǐ Jì)
- Gūngmíng Sywǎn of Lǔ Nán Wǔ-chíng; student of Dzǎngdǔ (Shwō Ywǎn)

Note the recurrence of Nán Wǔ-chíng, the home of Dzǎngdǔ and also the origin of the Analects Gūngmíng Jyǎ. No disciple’s disciple of Confucius would have been alive in the time of Mencius, so if these, or the possible single tradition from which they diverge, has a basis in fact, they (or he) must be seen as from an earlier generation.

In direct conflict with this, as Jörg Schumacher points out (WSW 29 Sept 2013), the 索隱 commentary calls both Wán Jāng and Gūngmíng Gāu “disciples of Mencius” 蓋並軻之門人也. We have here an unmistakable conflict. Ignoring Gūngmíng Sywǎn as a figment of Hàn creativity, we may next take up the two persons who actually appear in the Mencius.

### Gūngmíng Yí

**MC 3A1.** Mencius, in Sùng, gives three examples to the heir apparent of Tíng. One is Chéng Jyèn 成闢, who refuses to be in awe of his ruler Chí Jǐng-gūng. A second is Yén Hwéi, who asserts that he is a man just as Shùn was a man. A third is given indirectly, in a quote from Gūngmíng Yí, who asserts (in an unclear sentence) that Jōu-gūng was sincere in modeling himself on Wǎn-wáng. This last example is used to show that Tíng is big enough for its ruler to succeed by “going good” 爲善.

**MC 3B3.** In response to a question from Jōu Syāu 周霄, Mencius first quotes an otherwise unspecified Jwàn 傳 to the effect that when Confucius went for three months without serving a ruler, he was disturbed 皇皇如. He then quotes Gūngmíng Yí as saying, “When one of the ancients went for three months without serving a ruler, he was consoled with 弔.” The quote from Gūngmíng Yí seems to be on the same level as the quote from the unidentified Jwàn, and not part of the 3B3 conversation.

**MC 3B9.** Mencius is explaining why he must engage in disputation with those who advocate wrong ideas. He several times quotes the Shū; he quotes Confucius’s remark on compiling the Chūn/Chyōu, he describes the present depraved condition of things. He then quotes Gūngmíng Yí as saying, “In your kitchen there is fat meat, in your stables there are fat horses, but your people have a starving look, and in the wilds are the corpses of those who have died of hunger.” This is identical with a key phrase in the interpolated MC 1A3:5, a passage written by someone later than, and different from, the one who wrote the spurious 1A3:4 (itself appended, by a different person than its author, to the also spurious MC 1A7). These accusatory passages are not only later than the more constructive MC 1 interpolations, they are seemingly later than all of MC 2, which has no counterpart to them. That is, 1A3:5 (including the lines here attributed to Gūngmíng Yí) were written not too long before 3B9 itself. It would be tempting to identify Gūngmíng Yí as the Mencius disciple who added 1A3:5 to the previous text, but we refrain until we have considered the rest of the evidence.

**MC 4B24** begins with a statement (from the narrator, not by Mencius) that Píng Míng killed his teacher, the Archer Yì 羿. To this, Mencius remarks that Yì was himself to blame for this. Gūngmíng Yí responds “It would seem that he was not at fault therein” 宜若無罪焉. In this northern passage as usually read, Gūngmíng Yí is in the conversation with Mencius, whereas in the other three passages (all from the southern school) he is, as it were, quoted as an outside authority. The northern and southern images of Gūngmíng Yí seem not to match very well. This is our problem.

### Gūngmíng Gāu

**MC 5A1.** This is another narratively strange passage. Wàn Jāng begins by asking a question about Shùn, and Mencius answers. Wàn Jāng then asks whether Shùn resented his parents, not directly, but by what turns out to be a quote from Dzǎngdǎ.<sup>1</sup> He then puts his own question: did Shùn feel resentment toward his parents? Mencius answers, again not directly, but by quoting another conversation, in which:

<sup>1</sup>It occurs in the Dà Dài Lǐ Jì and also in the Lì Jì. See also Brooks: **The Hàn Dzǎngdǎ**.

(1) Cháng Syí 長息 says to Gūngmíng Gāu, as though he had just heard an explanation from him, that he “now understands why Shùn toiled in the fields,” but he does not understand why he wept. (2) Gūngmíng Gāu says, “That is beyond your understanding.” Mencius then proceeds to explain Gūngmíng Gāu’s explanation, and continues in his own voice to the end of the passage. We get the impression of suddenly breaking in on a conversation between Cháng Syí and Gūngmíng Gāu, in the middle of a later conversation on the same subject by Wàn Jāng and Mencius. Stranger still, the previous question was put by Wàn Jāng partly in the form of a tacit quote from Dzṽngdž, who (in at least one tradition) was the teacher of Gūngmíng Gāu.

Whatever may be the case with this embedded conversation or conversations, we must conclude that like Dzṽngdž himself, Gūngmíng Gāu is here not a disciple of Mencius, but as an earlier figure whom Mencius quotes and indeed expounds.

The southern Gūngmíng Yí passages, discussed above, can also be understood as quotations from an authority earlier than Mencius. In light of the foregoing, we may construe the northern Gūngmíng Yí passage 4B24 this way:

**4B24** [Narrator]: Pṽng Mṽng learned archery from Yí, and when he had learned all of Yí’s art 道, he reflected that in all the world only Yí was superior to him, and thereupon he killed Yí. Mencius said, “In this, Yí too was at fault therein.”

[Unnamed Interlocutor, quoting an earlier authority]: Gūngmíng Yí said, “It seems that he was without fault therein.”

[Mencius explains Gūngmíng Yí’s statement]: “He meant that it was slight. How could he be entirely without fault? [He then gives his counterexample].

This is choppy, but not moreso than 5A1. It follows that Gūngmíng Yí and Gūngmíng Gāu (assuming them to be different persons) are not disciples, but earlier authorities. Their surname implies a Lǚ origin. Whether they or he were native to Nán Wú-chṽng, they may have had some connection with the Dzṽngdž tradition, since in at least one case their tradition is quoted in close proximity to a seeming use of Dzṽngdž tradition. They the two lines in MC 1A3:5 which are attributed to Gūngmíng Yí in MC 3B9 may really be from Gūngmíng Yí, but it does not follow that they were original to the writer of 1A3:5. They may there have been an unacknowledged quote from Gūngmíng Yí.

### Possibilities for Research

The use of other traditions by the Mencius writers is a complex subject. Another example is MC 1B4, in which “Mencius” does not offer a persuasion in his own words, but instead explicitly quotes a long persuasion of Yèndž against burdensome royal tours. This passage occurs also as YZ 4:1 in the eventual Hàn Yèndž, but differences between them make it clear that YZ 4:1 is the prototype, and that MC 1B4 derives from it. This shows us that the Yèndž tradition was already well advanced in Chí by the time MC 1B4 was written. The above notes suggest that the same may have been true (at a perhaps somewhat later date) of the traditions of Gūngmíng Yí (now lost) and Dzṽngdž (preserved in several forms, of which the Hàn Dzṽngdž is earlier than the parallel passages in the Lǚ Jì). It might now be of interest to systematically gather the Dzṽngdž quotes in Mencius, and compare them with the Hàn Dzṽngdž.