2. The Economy

An equilibrium had been reached with the old landed warrior system. The states were defensively secure: no large state had conquered any other. If the large states wanted to continue as a multi-state system, nothing was lacking. They had enough army not to depend on alliances for their own protection. They had increased their land area, and they had also increased the efficiency with which that land fed their population.

But the larger states wanted more: they wanted to conquer their neighbors and rule a unified domain. For that, the old system was inadequate. The root of the problem was that each landed warrior took up *too much* land. Any new land gained by conquest or by clearing forest cover could be parceled out in new landholdings, but the military power *per land unit* was the same. The ruler, as a landholder, directly controlled little land, and so had little wealth. He had his court orchestra; he could supply his ancestral sacrifices; the tomb furnishings of the ruler of even a tiny state are impressive.[1] But personal wealth is not state power. State power, the ability to conquer and rule states of comparable size, could be enhanced only by increasing the military power per unit of land. This involved a military revolution, and the military revolution had to be supported, and thus preceded, by an economic and political revolution.

The obvious way to increase a state's land was to take more direct control of what land the state already had, much of which was taken up by elite warrior landholdings. Doing this therefore meant the end of the landed-warrior system. With the land came the people living on it, who would furnish the manpower for a larger army of a different kind. This meant a major change in the relation between ruler and populace. With the people came those engaged in trade, a profitable activity which the state had previously ignored, but which it would now incorporate into its own way of doing things. These changes took time, and each step in the process required its own support structure.

Officers had to learn how to lead the new mass army.[2] Before the army could be trained, there must be officials in charge of gathering resources for it.[3] To coordinate their work, a new and larger bureaucratic structure was required, with specific expertise and permanently assigned responsibilities.[4] All these resources, in both food and men, had to be accurately surveyed and allotted. This was done with a remarkable degree of economic understanding.

[1]For one example, see So **Music**; for the whole story, **Artistic**.

[2]For details, see Chapter 5, The Civilian Elite.

[3]For details, see Chapter 4, War and Peace.

[4]For details, see Chapter 3, The State.

The 05th Century

Lǔ Jāu-gūng had died in exile in 0510. His brother and successor Dìng-gūng (r 0509-0495) ruled from the capital, but had to accept the dominance of the Three Clans: for ten years, no member of the loyalist Dzāng or Shú clans is mentioned in the Lǔ chronicle. In 0499 Shú Sywǽn was sent to make a peace treaty with Jvng. In 0498, the walls of the Jìsūn and Shúsūn clan fortresses were razed, reducing their power. Still, under Aī-gūng (r 0494-0468), members of the Three Clans led most military campaigns. The growing power of coastal Wú, to the southeast of Lǔ, also had to be taken into account. In 0488, Aī-gūng invaded the small state of Jū, and brought back its ruler, in this way asserting the local territorial ambition of Lǔ. It was twice resisted. In 0487, Wú invaded Lǔ. Almost simultaneously, Chí took a Lǔ city (in the next month, Aī-gūng sent back the ruler of Jū, and Chí returned that city). Here was a dilemma. It was solved by siding with Wú. Aī-gūng twice joined Wú in attacking Chí, but as a junior partner; no additions to Lǔ territory resulted. But Wú did at least stand by Lǔ: an 0484 Chí attack on Lǔ provoked a joint attack on Chí by Lǔ and Wú.

Land Tax. This did nothing for the land area of Lǔ; it may have increased the internal prestige of Aī-gūng. And his next initiative was internal: in 0483, the key *social* change was made: the assertion of direct control of land in Lǔ. This we know from an entry, three words long, in the Chūn/Chyōu chronicle:

2:1 (CC 12/12:1, 0483). 用田賦 Implemented land tax.

Salaried Officials. Grain from the elite landholdings now went to the state, and was used as salary for the new class of civil officials, including those who were not of the old warrior elite class, and thus had no permanent support of their own. Desire for wealth was the one foundation of the new civil service. In advising members of his client circle, Kǔng Chyōu 孔丘 of Lǔ (0549-0479), known to us as Confucius, added this important qualification:

> **Analects**; Lún Yw̌ 論語 (LY). The house text of the Confucian school, compiled over the span 0479-0249. It continually adjusts the image of Confucius to agree with his increasing fame; it also invents sayings by him on issues arising long after his death. It is perilous as a source unless earlier and later layers are distinguished; see Brooks **Analects**.

2:2 (LY 4:5, excerpt, 0479). The Master said, Wealth and honor: these are what men desire, but if [the gentleman] cannot do so in accord with his principles, he will not abide in them . . .

The point here is not wealth, nor the social position which came with state employment (these are perfectly valid desires), but integrity. There are things the gentleman will not do; there are aspects of himself that are not for sale. The new civil servant has freed himself from the old personal loyalty to the ruler, and is now being coached in loyalty to a more general principle.

We can see Confucius' followers, not long after his death, struggling to define the proprieties of the new salary system and its expense accounts:

> **2:3** (LY 6:4, c0460). Dž-hwá went on a mission to Chí. Master Răn requested a grain allowance for his mother. The Master said, Give her a fù.[5] He said, I request more. He said, Give her a yw̌.[6] Master Răn gave her five *loads*.[7] The Master said, When Chr̀ went to Chí, he drove sleek horses and wore light furs. I have heard that the gentleman relieves the needy, but does not enrich the wealthy.

The gentleman has an obligation of charity, but he does not abet profiteering. He fits into the old society, but is less at ease in the new salary-based society.

The Analects sayings are grouped in pairs. Often the second saying of a pair is a corrective to the first. As a corrective to LY 6:4, we have this passage about a salary which was *not* needed by the already well-off recipient:

> **2:4** (LY 6:5, c0460). Ywǽn Sz̀ was the Steward [of the Jì clan]. They were going to give him nine hundred measures of grain, but he declined. The Master said, Was there no way you could have given it to the neighboring village 鄰里 or the county association 鄉黨?

We might expect that unneeded salary would be declined. This Ywǽn Sz̀ does, *but he is wrong to do so*. He should have donated it to someone who needed it. The point is not whether one needs the salary, it is that the poor need support.[8] Consideration for others, and a focus on public rather than personal welfare, was to remain a central element in Confucian thinking.

Industry. Weaving had always been a specialty of rural women. It was now more efficient, and shifted focus from utilitarian hemp to more marketable silk. The wider availability of silk produced changes even in ceremonial usages:

> **2:5** (LY 9:3, c0405). The Master said, The hemp cap was customary, but now silk is cheaper. I follow the majority. To bow below [before ascending the ruler's platform] was customary, but now they bow above. It is presumptuous. Though I differ from the majority, I follow "below."

Silk production involved higher technology and greater initial investment than anything before it. Making silk thread implied ownership of a mulberry grove, to feed the silkworms, and the kind of weaving done at this time required a loom which was a very advanced piece of machinery.

[5]An allowance for one person for 16 days (the duration of the mission to Chí).

[6]An allowance sufficient to support *the whole household* for that period.

[7]Six times greater than the whole-household allowance; no longer a compensation for the expenses of the trip, but a profit level approaching that of a commercial venture.

[8]This is the "noblesse oblige" form of elite charity to the less fortunate, familiar in many feudal and postfeudal cultures. Note that part of this aid is given through an existing local association. For its later takeover by the government, see #**6:14.**

Trade. Between spinners and weavers, local traders played a necessary role. Here is a poem, perhaps of the 05c, about such a trader courting a local girl:

> **Shī** 詩 "Poems." A repertoire eventually numbering 305 poems, mostly written during the 05c and 04c, and divided into Fēng (popular), Yǎ (courtly), and Sùng (sacrificial); later became one of the Five Classics. Confucius did not compile or teach the Shī, though some of the poems were current in his day. Translations by Legge and Waley.

2:6 (Shī 58, excerpt, 05c).

58A A peasant lad, and simple-seeming,
Bringing cloth to trade for thread –
It was not to trade for thread,
But only to propose to me.

Later stanzas show that the marriage ended badly:

2:7 (Shī 58, excerpt, 05c).

58E For three years I was wife to you.
Nor did I my toil neglect.
At dawn I rose; at night I slept.
Never a morning to myself.
My given word I have fulfilled,
But ever harsher you became.
My brothers disacknowledged me,
Loudly did their laughter ring;
And now that I think back on it,
I only have myself to blame.

The whole poem is a sermon on the instability of merchant life and character.

Industry was stimulated by trade possibilities. The bronze works at Hóumǎ[9] were founded when Jìn moved its capital to that site in 0585, and were most active in the 05c. The workers lived nearby, in the partly subterranean houses of the period.[10] Some factories made coins or weapons; others, like Hóumǎ, made objects for sale, both to the Sinitic world and also to the northern steppe. Designs were influenced by steppe art motifs, some deriving from Persia, an empire which reached its height around 0450. There was also trade in silk and lacquer wares.[11] Steppe horses were traded at markets on the northern border.[12]

[9]At the time called Syīn-tyén; Hóumǎ is the modern site name. For an extensive illustrated account of the work of the foundry, see **Art**.

[10]von Falkenhausen **Waning** 462f.

[11]For the general situation, see So **Traders**. Several objects from this trade have been found at the Pazyryk site in the Altai; for its date, see Brooks **Textual**.

[12]Jade from the Altai was another major import; see Peng **Coinage** 255-260.

Divination. Trade involves uncertainties. For such matters, supernatural guidance is often sought. Shāng and Jōu rulers had used bone divination to read the will of the spirits. By the 05c, a form of divination was also available to private persons. There is reason to think that behind the Yì 易, the canonical divination text of 64 hexagrams, each composed of six lines, there lay an earlier and simpler system, one based on 32 five-line complexes or pentagrams:

> **Proto-Yì** (05c). Our reconstruction of a divination system based on 32 pentagrams, the core of the later hexagram-based Yì 易.

A pentagram, obtained by counting out stalks of the milfoil plant,[13] is a set of five whole (or odd) ▬ and broken (or even) ▬ ▬ lines. This one describes the various stages of a troubled and in the end (Line 5) unlucky trading venture. The text should be read from the bottom (Line 1) upward:

2:8 (Proto-Yì: Pentagram Lǔ 旅 "Travel," 05c).

5. ▬ Travelers first laugh; later weep and wail.
   They lose their ox at the Yì River [the border]. Bad.
4. ▬ Travelers reach destination; get goods and weapons.
3. ▬ Travelers' inn is burned; they lose their escort. Critical.
2. ▬ ▬ Travelers halt; they hide goods and get an escort. Persist.
1. ▬ ▬ Travelers troubled. Whatever they choose is disastrous.

Reaching the market is lucky (Line 4), but they later lose their ox and cannot get their goods back home. Note the need for an escort – and weapons – in distant territory.[14] Travelers must rest (Lines 2-3); they need an understanding with those along the route. Early trade may thus have been partly in the hands of the pre-Sinitic peoples, who knew the paths, the inns, and the languages.[15]

By the late 05c, elite trade in luxury items, sometimes obtained from distant places,[16] was so familiar that it could serve as a metaphor for Confucius:

> **2:9** (LY 9:13, c0405). Dž-gùng said, I have a beautiful jade here. Shall I wrap it up in its box and keep it, or look for a good price and sell it? The Master said, Sell it! Sell it! I myself am just waiting for a buyer.

"Selling it" means finding an employer for the qualified civil servant.

[13]For one description of the method, see Wilhelm **I Ching** 1/392f.

[14]For a hexagram, with an emphasized line giving the specific prediction, see #**3:17.**

[15]For a modern retracing of an ancient route and its hazards, see Young **Journey**.

[16]Some jade came from Lake Baikal, far to the north. For the cutting of a rare jade, as delicate a matter as the cutting of a rare diamond in European culture, see #**5:62**.

Coinage. Cowry shell currency was used in Shāng, and in Warring States times, tiny metal coins imitating the form of cowry shells were issued by Chǔ. Useful items like forked metal spades and angled harvesting-knives were probably common in barter; small replicas of them (like the knife coin, above) were the oldest currency in the north. The spade money of Jōu circulated in the central states;[17] the knife money of Chí in the northeast.[18]

A tale about a minister protesting the Jōu issuance of heavy coins . . .

> **Gwó Yǔ 國語** (GY, c0300). A set of anecdotes arranged by state. The original GY had sections on Jōu, Lǔ, Jvng, Chí, Jìn, and Chǔ. GY was inspired by the DJ, and develops many motifs from the DJ.

> **2:10** (GY Jōu 3:5, excerpt, c0300). In the 21st year of Jǐng-wáng, they were going to cast large coins 大錢. Shàn Mù-gūng remonstrated, saying, It should not be done. In antiquity, disasters from Heaven came down, and they then . . . adjusted the ratio between light and heavy, to aid the people. When the people's worries were light, they made heavy coins.

. . . is surely a fable, but the year in which it is set (0524) is not implausible.[19] From other evidence we may infer that a practical currency existed by the 05c.

The 04th Century

Food had been the main economic concern of the Spring and Autumn state. The food supply had been steadily increased during that period by clearing forest for farmland, by introducing new crops, and by double cropping.

[17]The specimen illustrated above is probably from the northern state of Jàu.

[18]For the archaeological distribution, see Li **Eastern** 387-391.

[19]All round coins throughout Eurasia derive from those of Lydia (c0630). Early heavy coins were better suited for capital transfer than for ordinary buying and selling.

The next advance was metal tools (or metal tips for wooden tools).[20] Some Shī poems are ecstatic about the new results, while denying that they *are* new:

2:11 (Shī 290, excerpts, early 04c?).

290A They clear the grass, they clear the brush,
Their ploughs open up the ground.
A thousand teams to plough and turn,
Over the wetlands and the dry . . .

290B . . . Then with their ploughshares all so sharp,
They turn to the southern acreage.

290C . . . Luxuriant stand the rows of shoots,
Numerous are those who weed . . .

290E . . . Not only do they this possess,
Not only in the present time,
But from of old it has been so.

So the managers are happy, but the work was hard for whose who did it. Complaints about popular hardship first appear from below the elite level.

Mwòdž 墨子 "Master Mwò" (MZ), 04c-03c. The writings of the Micians, the sub-elite followers of Mwò Dí 墨翟. A key Mician concept was profit (social benefit; lì 利). The Micians later investigated logic and the art of defensive warfare. Translations by Mei and Johnston.

Here the Micians criticize the suffering caused by the new tax policies:

> **2:12** (MZ 20:3, excerpt, c0382). Modern governments have many ways to diminish the people. Their use of the people is wearisome, their levying of taxes is burdensome, and when the people's resources are not enough, those who die of hunger and cold are innumerable . . . Are not the ways of diminishing the people more numerous with the governments of modern rulers? When the sages were in charge of the government, there was none of this.

The ultimate argument here is shrewdly based. It does not just depict suffering; that would be merely an appeal to elite compassion. Instead, it makes the historical point that the present system is not the system of the ancient Sages; *it has no ancient precedent.*

Universal Sovereignty. In this society, even more than in other law-based societies (where legal precedent tends to govern), antiquity was prized. To label the new system *as* new was thus to score a telling point against it. One response was to *reconstruct* antiquity, to include in it such new ideas as the principle of central ownership. And so lines were added to one of the Shī poems, Shī 205.

[20]First of bronze, later of iron; see Wagner **Iron** sv ploughshares.

Methodological Moment. How do we know? Shī 205 is a soldier's song. It begins with three 6-line stanzas. All use one rhyme-sound, *except the second,* which uses two. The content of that stanza also marks an ideological change:

2:13 (Shī 205, excerpt, with rhyme pattern marked, early 04c?).

205A	I climb upon that northern hill,	–
	I pluck the medlars growing there.	A
	Assiduous, those officers,	A
	Morn and eve about their work.	A
	The King's affairs are never done,	–
	And for my parents I must grieve.	A
205B	Here beneath the Heaven so wide,	A
	None but are the King's own lands.	A
	Here within the ocean shores,	B
	None but are the King's own men.	B
	The noblemen are most unfair –	B
	And in the service, I alone am worthy.	B
205C	My four steeds go unceasingly,	A
	The King's affairs last endlessly.	A
	They compliment me on my youth,	–
	They praise me for my sturdiness –	A
	And while my body still is firm,	A
	I fortify on every side.	A

– it claims universal Jōu sovereignty. The irregularity of a passage in context, and the fact that the context is made smoother by its removal, are the standard signs of an interpolation. We can also see why it was added: *with that stanza*, the accepted Shī text supports a new idea: everything is owned by the King.

The elite at this time had a certain presence at local ceremonies:

2:14 (LY 10:7b, c0380). When the country folk 鄉人 are drinking wine and the elders have left, he also takes his leave.

2:15 (LY 10:8, c0380). When the country folk are doing an expulsion (nwó 儺),[21] he takes his stand in his court dress on the formal stairs.

Like the Micians (**#2:12**), the Confucians deplored the new economy. They preferred the old decentralized system, with its lighter tax burden on the people:

2:16 (LY 11:14, c0360). The men of Lǔ were going to rebuild the Long Treasury. Mǐn Dž-chyēn said, How would it be to keep to the old lines? What need is there to build it on a new plan? The Master said, That man does not talk much, but when he *does* talk, he is sure to hit the mark.

This is not about architecture; it is against the new centralized agriculture.

[21]A **Missing Methodological Moment** should go here. What would it contain?

Trust. The Confucians ultimately relied on trust (syìn 信) between ruler and people, and not on food or other resources, as the real strength of the state:

> **2:17** (LY 12:7, c0326). Dž-gùng asked about government. The Master said, Enough food, enough weapons, the people having trust 信 in him. Dž-gùng said, If he had to let something go, of the three, which would be first? He said, Let weapons go. Dž-gùng said, If he had to let something else go, of the two, which would be first? He said, Let the food go. Since ancient times there has always been death, but if the people lack trust, he cannot stand.

Tax. How much of the farmer's crop does the state take? The custom was a tenth. In hard times, the state is tempted to tax more, but the farmer does not have it. The Confucians held that ruler and people must share the hardship:

> **2:18** (LY 12:9, c0326). Aī-gūng asked Yǒu Rwò, It is a year of scarcity, and there is not enough for my needs; what is to be done? Yǒu Rwò replied, Why not tithe?[22] He said, With *two* tithes, I do not have enough, how then should I tithe? He replied, if the Hundred Families have enough, what ruler will not also have enough? But if the Hundred Families[23] do not have enough, what ruler can expect to have enough?

But rulers *did* expect to have enough, in good years and bad. They got it by bringing new land under cultivation and cultivating old land more intensively. This required expert managers, and that need created a new class of official.[24] Here is the job description for the official in charge of the land survey:

> **Gwǎndž** 管子 "Master Gwǎn" (GZ), referring to Gwǎn Jùng, the supposed minister of the 07c ruler Chí Hwán-gūng. These are in fact the writings of a Chí school of statecraft thought, dating from the accession of a new Chí ruler in 0357 to early Hàn. The group's distinctive focus was economics, including market economics. Translated by Rickett.

> **2:19** (GZ 4:7, c0312). To observe high and low ground, to assess fertile and barren soil, to observe what are the suitable uses of the land, to set the terms of labor service wisely, so the farmers, both before and afterward, can do their tasks at the proper season; to assure that the five grains, the mulberry and hemp, are thriving where they are planted – these are the duties of the Inspector of Fields.

The new system lacked the sanction of antiquity, and the Micians (#**2:12**) and the Confucians (#**2:16**) used that lack to argue against the bureaucratic state. To this challenge, one response was to invent an already bureaucratic antiquity.

[22]That is, collect the traditionally standard 10% of the crop.

[23]Bǎi-syìng 百姓 "the hundred families" at first meant the aristocracy; in some late 04c and in most 03c texts (as here), it came to mean instead "the common people."

[24]For the new manager class in early modern Europe, see Reynolds **Europe** 410.

And thus it was that, somewhere around the year 0320, an anecdote was inserted into the Dzwŏ Jwàn commentary under the year 0548:

> **2:20** (DJ 9/25:11, c0320). Wěı Yĕn of Chŭ was Marshal. [Prime Minister] Dž-mù assigned him to adjust the tax rates and inventory the arms and armor. On the day jyă/wŭ, Wěı Yĕn recorded lands and fields, calculated the extent of mountains and forests, defined the wetlands, distinguished high land and low, marked off salt and fresh, delimited the flood plain, raised small banks on level land between dikes, assigned soggy land for pasture, divided fertile fields into well-units, fixed taxes according to incomes, and assigned quotas of carriages and horses and foot-soldiers, along with quantities of armor and shields. When he had finished his task, he delivered the result to Dž-mù. This was proper.

This gave 04c resource managers the approval of the minister of a great state, two centuries earlier. The DJ narrator emphasizes that all this was in accord with proper procedure (lĭ 禮), this being the standard DJ term of approval.[25] What more could a tax collector want? For one thing, not to have to listen to remarks like this one, which cast doubt on the worth of the whole setup:

> **2:21** (LY 13:20, c0322). Dž-gùng asked, What must one be like before we can call him an officer? The Master said, In carrying out his own purposes he has a sense of shame; if sent on a mission to the Four Quarters, he does not dishonor his ruler's command – *he* may be called an officer. Dž-gùng said, I venture to ask which is next. He said, If his lineage and clan regard him as filial; if his county council regard him as fraternal. Dž-gùng said, I venture to ask which is next. He said, In word he is always faithful, in deed he is always effective: he may be a stubborn little man, but we may still rank him next. Dž-gùng said, Those who are now in government; what about them? The Master said, Ugh! Those dipper-and-scoop people; how are *they* worth calculating about?

"Dippers and scoops" are the officials' grain-measuring tools. There is a pun: those who do all this measuring have, themselves, no measurable value.

Markets. The Analects Confucians were not entirely at home in the new bureaucracy. They preferred the arrangements of the old palace state, where a small, culturally homogeneous circle managed affairs by personal experience and discretion. As in many elite cultures, judgement was a highly prized skill. This insistence on the personal element tended to align the Confucians against their modernizing opponents, the architects of the new state. The new managers did not want decisions made intuitively by individuals; they wanted objective standards and uniform and predictable outcomes. Among other mechanisms, they thought that the market mediated ideally between producers and buyers.

[25]LY and DJ are both Confucian texts; both quote "Confucius" in judging men and events. But they take different stands on some issues. The word "Confucian" thus does not denote a fixed ideology, any more than does the name of a modern political party.

Here is a piece on weapons procurement, which shows how selection was made from the goods offered by the various makers:

> **2:22** (GZ 6:4, excerpt, c0313) . . . Therefore, he assembles the world's finest products; he examines the sharp weapons of the various artisans. In spring and autumn, there are competitions to make a selection. The best and sharpest are given a superior rating. Until they have been inspected, the finished weapons are not used. Until they have been tested, they are not stored away. . .

The best is the best – and the best will be identified by the market process. One possible flaw in the system was the wealth available outside controlled markets:

> **2:23** (MZ 47:17, excerpt, c0305). The traders go to the Four Quarters, and their profits are multiplied. Despite the difficulties of barriers and bridges, and the hazards of robbers and brigands, they persist in doing it . . .

Which led to the problem of wealth-based corruption:

> **2:24** (GZ 3:21, excerpt, c0330). If merchants and traders are accepted at court, goods and wealth will start flowing upward . . .

If kept from the court, and thus from influence over policy, the merchants might still upset the social order by displaying their own wealth:[26]

> **2:25** (GZ 4:8, excerpt, c0312). The common people should not dare to wear mixed colors; the several artisans and the merchants and traders should not be allowed to wear long furs . . .

But at bottom, the proper functioning of the new society depended on markets, and these were part of the plan for organizing the countryside:

> **2:26** (GZ 5:6, excerpt, c0312). An area of six leagues (lǐ 里) is called a hamlet (bàu 暴). Five hamlets are called a section (bù 部). Five sections are called an assembly (jyр 聚). In each assembly, there must be a market (shì 市); if there is no market, the people will be in want . . .

The price-fixing market concept is here applied to problems of procurement:

> **2:27** (GZ 5:5, excerpt, c0310). The market determines the value of goods. Thus, if goods are kept cheap, there will be no excess profits.[27] If there are no excess profits, the trades will be well organized. If the trades are well organized, the expenses [of weapons procurement] will be moderate . . .

The Chí theorists are distinctive in their concern for the economic basis of state power and for their interest in market forces. In their differences with the Analects Confucians, we can perhaps see the underlying social opposition, one familiar in many cultures, between old military merit and new money power.

[26]Sumptuary laws to control ostentation in the newly rich are common in postfeudal transitions; for Edo Japan, see Sansom **Short** 471-474.

[27]Setting prices low by government decree was also tried at Rome; it did not reckon with all the economic factors, and it did not work. See Finley **Diocletian** 147.

Attracting Population was a major policy goal. This was easier if people were unhappy where they were, and that situation had its artistic expression.

In this poem, the cry of the bird echoes the artisan's plaint, in a situation seemingly favorable but in fact full of "thornwood." A skilled craft like jade carving could be practiced anywhere, working with the stones of "other hills."

2:28 (Shī 184, mid 04c).

184A In ninefold marsh the crane-bird trills,
its voice is heard upon the moor;
Fishes hide in watery lair,
or they linger by the shore.
Pleasant is that garden there,
with timber-trees all planted fair,
but all beneath, the deadwood spills,
and the stones of other hills
would suffice for making drills

184B In ninefold marsh the crane-bird trills,
its voice is heard upon the air;
Fishes linger by the shore,
or they hide in watery lair.
Pleasant is that garden there,
with timber-trees all planted fair,
but all beneath, the thornwood fills,
and the stones of other hills
would suffice to show our skills.

Some states sought to increase their attractiveness to farmers by appointing agricultural specialists. To the Analects people, this was beside the point:

> **2:29** (LY 13:4, c0322). Fán Chŕ asked to study agriculture. The Master said, I am not as good for that as some old farmer. He asked to study gardening. He said, I am not as good for that as some old gardener. Fán Chŕ went out. The Master said, A little man indeed is Fán Syūˉ! If the superiors love ritual, then among the people none will dare not to be assiduous. If the superiors love right, then among the people none will dare not to be submissive. If the superiors love fidelity, then among the people none will dare not to respect the facts. If these conditions obtain, the people of the Four Quarters will come carrying their children on their backs. What use has he for *agriculture*?

Notice the sarcasm. Here is another Analects statement of the principle:

> **2:30** (LY 13:16, c0322). The Prince of Shv̀ asked about government. The Master said, When the near are happy, and the distant come.

In short, the real test of a government is whether people want to live under it.[28]

[28] This is the central idea of what we call populism; see further p157f.

In attracting population, the Chí theorists did not rely on the ruler's qualities (which the Confucians emphasized), but on the people's desire for wealth:

2:31 (GZ 1:1, excerpt, c0322).

If the state has much wealth,	A
the distant will come;	A
If open land is plentiful,	B
the people will remain.	B

From this angle, the desire for profit was not disruptive, but constitutive.

Beside the free farmers there were slaves, the product of the legal system. Near the Yēn state factory, dating from c0313, archaeologists have discovered several slaves, buried in their chains.[29]

Luxury. For the rich also, wealth had its attractions:

2:32 (Shī 115, early 04c).

115A Mountain thornwood fair,
Marshland elmtrees spare;
Robes you have, and raiment fine,
But them you neither don nor wear;
Horses too, and carriages,
But in the chase you do not share.
Soon enough you will be dead,
And other men will have their care.

115B Mountain medlars high,
Marshland yew-trees nigh;
Courts you have, and chambers wide,
But them you sprinkle not, nor dry;
Bells beside, and drums so grand,
But them you neither strike nor ply.
Soon enough you will be dead,
And other men will keep them by.

115C Mountain lac-trees gay,
Marshland chestnuts gray;
Wine you have, and food so choice –
Why do you not every day your cithern play,
The better to enjoy yourself,
The better to prolong the day?
Soon enough you will be dead,
And others in your house will stay.

Here we see the spread of court luxuries – horses and carriages, fine clothing and rare foods, the musical resources of the court[30] – to private residences.

[29]See Wagner **Iron** 170-176 for industrial, corvée, and estate slave burials.

[30]Bells and drums are not amateur instruments; they imply a resident orchestra. Poems of enjoyment like Shī 115 were probably composed in the first instance for wealthy individuals like the ones implied here; their inclusion in the canon is secondary.

Women. When the basic issues of staying alive are solved, and in the preceding poem they have been handsomely solved, a climate favorable to sophistication is created. One sophisticated idea that turns up in the 04c is gender equity. This appears as a protest implicit in the last two stanzas of a Shī poem. Those stanzas put before us two children:

2:33 (Shī 189, last two stanzas, 04c).

189H A son there will be born to him,
And on a couch will he be laid.
In robe of state he'll be arrayed,
With tiny scepter he will play:
Loudly will his crying sound –
With crimson greaves he'll take his place,
The Sovereign King of house and home.

189I A daughter shall be born to him,
And on the ground will she be set.
With swaddling cloth will she be wrapped,
Her plaything, but a bit of tile:
No ornaments, no courtesies –
Her place, to care for wine and food,
And not to cause her parents grief.

Methodological Moment. These stanzas are late. How do we know? Shī 189 is congratulatory. It tells of the building of a house in stanzas B through E. Stanzas F and G add to this favorable prospect with a dream of future progeny. It is this prediction which is now followed by stanzas H and I, quoted above. Might the happy omen in stanzas FG have been the original end of the poem? Consider Shī 190, the next poem in the collection. It too is congratulatory, and ends with an omen of future prosperity, this time a dream of flocks and herds:

2:34 (Shī 190, end, 04c).

190D Then the herdsman has a dream,
Of fishes in their multitudes,
Of banners waving on the wind.
The Omener interprets it:
"Fishes in their multitudes
Betoken many fruitful years;
Banners waving on the wind,
Prosperity in house and home."

This corresponds to the dream and interpretation in Shī 189FG. From this we learn that such a prediction, a blessing for the person for whom the poem was made, is a valid way to end a Shī poem. Then Shī 189FG may have been the end of Shī 189, in which case Shī 189H and I are formally extraneous. The note of social complaint they convey is also inconsistent with what precedes. Form and content thus agree in suggesting that 189HI are a later addition.

The needs of the period led to systematic surveys, including this one:

> **Shān/Hǎı Jīng** 山海經 (SHJ), c0318; "The Classic of Mountains and Seas." Only its first 5 chapters are early; they cover territory from Burma to the Amur River, and from Japan to the virtually mythical west, listing resources and describing sacrifices to local deities.

Its mixture of resource information (useful for traders) and what look like mere travelers' exotica implies more than one audience. Here are some samples:

2:35 (SHJ 2A15-16, excerpt, c0318). 200 leagues west is Cháng-lyóu Mountain. Its spirit, the God of White, Shàu-hàu, dwells here. Its animals have striped tails, its birds have striped heads. There are many patterned jadestones . . .

280 leagues west is Jāng-ý Mountain. It has no vegetation. It has much jasper and chrysoprase. Everything here is strange. There is an animal here that looks like a red leopard; it has five tails and one horn. It makes a sound like striking a stone; it is called the Jȳng 狰. . .

2:36 (SHJ 2A21, c0318). 350 leagues west is the Heavenly Mountain. It has much gold and jade, and has green ocher. The Yīng River arises here, and flows southeast until it enters Tāng-gǔ. There is a spirit here; it looks like a yellow pouch, and is as red as a cinnabar fire. It has six legs and four wings; it is featureless, and has no face or eyes, but it knows how to sing and dance. [In fact, this is the Lord of the River 河伯].[31]

The bracketed comment is an effort to harmonize this strange landscape with more familiar gods. The route here followed led along the southern edge of the Tarim Basin, and was followed by the Silk Road traffic of later ages.

One meditation-based group warned of the danger of luxuries:

> **Dàu/Dý Jīng** 道德 (DDJ), c0360-0249. The text of a meditation group in Lǔ; Lǎu Dān 老聃 or Lǎudž was one of its leaders. The first text to reflect Dàuist philosophy. A selection was made in c0286 for the Heir Apparent of Chǔ (the Gwōdyèn text). Translations by Waley and Chan.

2:37 (DDJ 9, c0335).

Than have it and add to it, better to stop.
You may grind and polish, but you cannot keep long.
Gold and jade may fill the hall, but none can ward them.
The rich, high, and mighty but send themselves bane.
When the work is done, he then withdraws –
The Way of Heaven.

[31]For this northern god in his home habitat, see **#6:68.**

The Micians also deplored extravagance. One of their favorite targets was elaborate music performances, which they saw as outrageously superfluous:

> **2:38** (MZ 32:1-2, excerpt, c0320). Mwòdž said, A benevolent policy will pursue what gains benefits for the world and eliminates its disasters. If anything, when made a law, is beneficial to the people, it should be done; if not, it should not be done. Moreover, the benevolent in their care for the world do not think of doing those things which delight the eyes, please the ears, gratify the taste, or comfort the body. When these deprive the people of the means of clothing and food, the benevolent will not do them. So the reason Mwòdž opposes music is not that the sounds of bell and drum, cithern and psaltery, pipe and syrinx, are not pleasant . . . they are found not to be in accord with the deeds of the Sage Kings of antiquity, and not to add to the benefits of the people of the present day. And so Mwòdž proclaims, To have music is wrong.

Later in the essay, the Micians insist that music has no value for the people:

> **2:39** (MZ 32:4, excerpt, c0320). There are three things the people worry about: that the hungry cannot be fed, that the cold cannot be clothed, and that the weary cannot get rest. These three are the great worries of the people. Now suppose we strike the great bell, beat the sounding drum, play the cithern and psaltery, and blow the pipe and syrinx, can the wherewithal for food and clothing be procured for the people?

. . . and that if everyone took up music, farmers would not plough, women would not weave, and the economy in general would come to a standstill:

> **2:40** (MZ 32:12, c0320). Therefore Mwòdž said, If the gentlemen really wish to procure benefits for the world, and destroy its calamities, they cannot but prohibit such a thing as music.

Welfare. Most statecraft people did not forbid wealth, but they *did* want to avoid too great a wealth differential: the farmers had to be alive for the system to work. From the Confucians there now came a new idea about welfare:

> **Mencius** 孟子 (MC), 0320-0249. The interviews of Mencius with the rulers of his day, plus the texts of two successor schools, a southern or statecraft school (MC 2-3) and a northern, more philosophical school (MC 4-7; see Brooks **Nature**). Translated by Legge and Lau.

Mencius opposed the famine relief policies that had been adopted by some states. The King of Ngwèı had found that those policies did not work:

> **2:41** (MC 1A3, excerpt, 0320) . . . If things are bad inside the River, I move people east of the River, and move grain inside the River; if things are bad east of the River, I do the same. If I observe the governments of the neighbor states, none is as solicitous as the Solitary One. But the neighbor states' population does not decrease, and the Solitary One's population does not increase? Why is this?

Mencius instead advocated a *preventive* policy: in effect, rural self-sufficiency:

> **2:42** (MC 1A3a, excerpt, 0320) . . . If fine nets do not enter the pools and ponds, the fish and turtles will be more than can be eaten. If axes and hatchets enter the mountain forests only at the proper season, the timber will be more than can be used. When grain and fish and turtles are more than can be eaten, and timber is more than can be used, this will let the people nourish their living and mourn their dead without reproach . . .

Large planks were used for coffins, hence "mourn their dead without reproach." Notice also the emphasis on including some animal protein in the diet. This was later supplemented with a more precise, top-down, economic plan:

> **2:43** (MC 1A3b, excerpt, 0301). By every five-acre homestead let mulberry trees be planted, and those of fifty can wear silk. Let not the seasons for chickens, pigs, dogs, and swine be missed, and those of seventy can eat meat. From every hundred-acre farm let not the seasonal work be taken away, and a family of several can avoid starvation . . .

In other words, the best famine relief is leaving the people enough to live on. This amounts to a return to the paternalistic local arrangements of earlier times.

Social Classes. The state needs farmers. Government needed officers. Artisans usefully provide tools and weapons. This was widely granted, but merchants were a problem in social theory. To many, they were parasites, profiting from changes in grain prices to the disadvantage of the farmer, and importing luxuries which encouraged extravagance in the elite. Trade was first recognized by governments in Warring States times, and only gradually seen as part of the state economy. This description of the four classes is from the turn of the century. Gwǎn Jùng, the legendary minister of 07c Chí, and himself supposedly a merchant in origin, is addressing the famous Chí Hwán-gūng:

> **2:44** (GZ 20, excerpt, c0300). Officers (shì 士),[32] farmers (núng 農), artisans (gūng 工) and traders (shāng 商)[33] are the foundation of the state. They cannot be allowed to dwell together. If they dwell together, their words will be jumbled and their work disordered. It was for this reason that the Sage Kings always located the officers in places of ease, the farmers in the fields, the artisans in their workplaces, and the traders at markets and wells. Now when officers dwelt together in their separate place of ease, father spoke with father of right, and son spoke with son of filiality. Those who served the ruler spoke of respect, the old spoke of love, the young spoke of brotherliness. Day and night they acted thus, teaching sons and younger brothers. Their hearts were at peace therein; they did not look upon strange ways, that they might change to them . . .

[32]The term for the old military elite, who from the 05c had served in a civil capacity; the class of people from whom such officers come, though not the hereditary nobles.

[33]The local merchants are sometimes distinguished as gǔ 賈.

Thus did the sons of officers grow up instructed in the ways of the officer class, and became officers in their turn. Similar things are said of farmers, who talked of ploughs and scythes. But there is a departure at the end of that section:

> **2:45** (GZ 20, excerpt, c0300) . . . Thus the sons of farmers always became farmers. They were simple and acquired no devious habits. If there were exceptionally talented individuals among them who had the ability to become officers, they could be depended upon.

This is the only instance of class mobility in the system here described.

Artisans are next taken up, and last come the traders. Here is that section:

> **2:46** (GZ 20, excerpt, c0300). Now when traders dwelt together in their own place, they watched for times of disaster and famine, and attended to changes in the country. They studied the four seasons and examined local products to learn their market price. They bore burdens and assumed duties; they yoked oxen and harnessed horses, to range over the four directions. They estimated quantities and calculated values; they exchanged what they had for what they lacked; they bought cheap and sold dear. Thus it was that feather banners arrived unsought, and bamboo arrows abounded in the land.[34] The strange and the wondrous came in due season; the rare and the marvelous accumulated. Day and night they acted thus, teaching sons and younger brothers. They spoke of profit, they exemplified timeliness, they compared things to teach their value. From their youth up they practiced this. Their hearts were at peace therein; they did not look upon strange ways, that they might change to them. And so the teaching of fathers and elder brothers was effective without severity; the learning of sons and younger brothers was successful without strain. For this reason, the sons of traders always became traders.

The insight here is: all classes are productive, but each has its own subculture.

The 03rd Century

State control of rural life increased, fields were opened, trade was regulated. The Chí statecraft theorists liked to call these efforts "virtuous" (dý 德):[35]

> **2:47** (GZ 10, excerpt, c0295). What are the Six Aspects [of virtue]? They are: (1) opening up fields, (2) aiding housing, (3) promoting horticulture, (4) exhorting the people, (5) encouraging farming, and (6) repairing wells and buildings. This is called "enriching livelihood."

The aim of this "virtue" is rural infrastructure enhancement and higher yield, all of which, in addition to any other benefits, also benefit the state.

[34] These are military necessities, and symbolize the value of trade to the state.

[35] One sense of dý 德 "virtue" in the 05c already had a public dimension; see **#5:17**, which contrasts that sense with the more selfish desires of the commoner. We might think of it here as "common interest;" it is bad for the individual, but also for the state, if houses fall or crops fail. A certain amount of state supervision becomes inevitable.

The Mencians were also concerned about popular livelihood, but attacked it from a different angle. This piece of late invective rewrites a moderate speech of Mencius (#**2:41**) to read as a direct accusation of the Chí ruler:

> **2:48** (MC *1A4, excerpt, c0285) . . . There is fat meat in your kitchen and sleek horses in your stables, yet the people have a hungry look and outside your cities men die of starvation. This is showing animals how to devour men. . . If one who pretends to be the father and mother of the people cannot, in ruling over them, avoid showing animals how to devour men, in what way is he a "father and mother" to the people?

The Chín theorists warned of the evils that come through trade,

> **Shāng-jyw̄n Shū** 商君書 "The Book of Lord Shāng" (SJS). Chín statecraft writings from the late 04c to Hàn; none of them is safely attributable to Lord Shāng (d 0338). Translated by Duyvendak.

and wanted to hold all state functions to the bare minimum:

> **2:49** (SJS 20:6, excerpt, c0276). Farming, trade, and administration are the three permanent functions in a state. Farmers work the land, merchants import products, and officials oversee the people. The parasites of the three functions are six: age, dependency, beauty, love, ambition, and deportment; if these six become general, the state will perish. If farmers have more than subsistence, they will lavishly indulge the aged. If merchants have excess profits, there will be beauty and love, to the detriment of the wares. If officials are appointed but not used, then personal ambition and display of virtuous conduct will be the end. When the six parasites become customary, the army will be greatly defeated.

The eastern theorists, at approximately the same time, blamed rural hardship on bad choices made by the farmers. Here is part of a treatise on the agrarian, and thus (as also in the preceding passage), ultimately the military, situation:

> **2:50** (GZ 13:2, c0279). Go over the fields, look at the ploughing and weeding, calculate the amount of agricultural work, and whether the state will starve or thrive can be known. If ploughing is not deep and weeding is not assiduous; if proper use of the land is not considered and the fallow fields are weedgrown; if land ploughed is not always fertile, and land left uncultivated is not always barren; if in reckoning land against population, the uncultivated fields are many and the opened fields few, then even though there may be no floods or droughts, these are the fields of a starving state.
>
> If so, and people are few, they will be unable to protect the territory; if so and people are many, the state will be poor and the people will starve. If in this condition they should meet with floods or droughts, then the many will disperse and not gather the harvest, and the remaining people will not be enough to mount guard, and the fortifications will be insecure.

> Starving people cannot be used in war. If many have dispersed and do not gather the harvest, the state will become a wasteland. Thus it is said: A ruler who has territory but does not attend to ploughing and weeding is a ruler dependent on others for life. Thus it is said, "Go over the fields, look at the ploughing and weeding, calculate the amount of agricultural work, and whether the state will starve or thrive can be known."

Such is the importance of the mundane matter of checking to see if the tasks of the farmer are well performed, and the land has been well chosen. The same people farm and fight. The state's concern is not simply in their farming well, but in their being able to sustain the extra tasks of offensive and defensive war.

Technology. Whether it produced hardship or prosperity among the people, infrastructure support was economically rational *for the state*, and the technical level of resource exploitation (see #**2:47**) was therefore continually raised. The hand irrigation of fields from wells, a notably laborious and inefficient process, had been improved by the 03c by the introduction of water pumping machinery. This innovation drew an anti-technological reaction:

> **Jwāngdž** 莊子 (JZ) "Master Jwāng," a collection of Dáuist and Primitivist texts deriving from many small groups. Most of it dates from the mid 03c. The Jwāngdž is famously humorous, but readers who see only the humor and not the suffering beneath the humor are missing the real point of much of the text. Translated by Watson.

2:51 (JZ 12:9a, c0270). Dž-gùng had gone south to Chǔ and was returning by way of Jìn. Passing by Hàn-yīn, he saw an old man who was about to water his garden. He had cut a channel leading up to the well, and was holding a bucket of water in his arms and emptying it out. Thus did he labor strenuously, for small result.

Dž-gùng said, There is a device which in one day can water a hundred acres. The effort is little, the result is great. Would you not like one? The gardener looked up at him and asked, What is it like? Dž-gùng said, It has a straight piece of wood for a beam, heavy in back and light in front. It lifts water as fast as if it were pouring out continuously, enough to make a flood. It is called the well-sweep.

The gardener flushed angrily, then he laughed and said, I heard this from my teacher: "Those with machines will have machine problems, and those who have machine problems will have machine minds. Once you have a machine inside you, the plain and simple is no longer there. When the plain and simple is not there, one's spirit vitality will not be stable. And those whose spirit vitality is not stable, the Way will not sustain." It is not that I did not know about it, but I would be ashamed to use it.

Dž-gùng was overcome with embarrassment; he cast his eyes down and did not reply.

> After a bit, the gardener asked, Who are you? Dž-gùng said, A follower of Kŭng Chyōu. The gardener said, Aren't you one of those who study widely to copy the sages, the better to confuse the multitude? Who sing their sad song of one string so they can market themselves to the world? You should forget your spirit and breath, break up your body and limbs,[36] and then you will be getting somewhere! Your own person you cannot take care of, so what time can you spare to take care of the world? Go away and don't interfere with my work!
>
> Dž-gùng cringed and paled; he was utterly at a loss. He traveled on for thirty leagues[37] before he recovered himself.

The Confucian Dž-gùng, who here represents the modernization of agriculture, is amusingly put to shame.

Work. One key idea of 03c Legalism is that there shall be no idleness and no unproductive effort. Here is a recommendation from Chín, that all activity (including intellectual activity) should be shifted to food production:

> **2:52** (SJS 3:1 excerpt, c0268). The means by which the ruler of men motivates his people are office and rank. The means by which a state thrives are agriculture and war. At present, the people all seek office and rank, not by means of agriculture and war, but by clever words and empty doctrines. This is what we call "wearying the people." The state of one who thus wearies the people will assuredly have no strength, and the state which has no strength will assuredly be destroyed.
>
> Those who are good at running the state, in teaching their people, all make clear that there is only one way to acquire office and rank . . .

Note the theme of concentration: the simpler economy is the stronger economy.

Diet. despite effort below and technical support above, the overexploitation of food resources led to reduced rural diet. Here, fifty years after the Mencian program of #**2:42-43**, is a much more modest Mencian goal in this area:

> **2:53** (MC 7A22, excerpt, c0262). . . In a homestead of five acres,[38] if they plant the space by the walls with mulberry trees and the wife raises silkworms on them, the aged can wear silk; if there are five hens and two sows, and they do not miss their breeding season, the aged will not lack for meat. In a field of a hundred acres, if the husband cultivates them, then even a family of eight will not go hungry . . .

Even at best, only the elderly are sure of having any animal protein in their diet; the working members of the family live entirely on grain.

[36] A metaphor for losing the self in meditation.

[37] About ten miles; a good part of a standard day's journey.

[38] The mŏu 畝 is actually only one-sixth of an acre. We use the translation "acre" and others, such as "league" for the much shorter lĭ 里, as a cultural convenience.

The Less Portable Population. Attracting other people's population, as the 04th century had sought to do, was a reasonable goal; it was the basis of policy in several states. The converse was a wish to keep the state's own people from leaving. In the 03c, as times worsened, measures were taken to restrict the movement of population even *within* the state. A late passage in the Mencian writings suggests how far this had gone.

> **2:54** (MC 3A3b, excerpt, c0262). Neither in burying the dead nor in changing his abode shall a man go beyond the confines of his village.

Thus far the Confucians, proposing rules for the eastern states. Soon afterward, a similar policy also appears in the central states. King Lí of Ngwèı (r 0295-0243) put forth a law meant to keep certain questionable segments of the population in place. It was later incorporated verbatim into the Chín laws:

> **Shwèıhǔdì** 睡虎地, in Yźn-mvng 雲夢, near Yĭng, at one time the capital of Chǔ. One grave at this site is that of a Chín law officer named Syĭ 喜, whose texts were buried with him. One of them, a brief diary of major events, fixes the date of burial at 0217. For translations of Syĭ's laws, see Hulsewé **Ch'in**, cited below as "Hulsewé."

This is how that concept reads as a law of Ngwèı:

> **2:55** (Hulsewé F1, excerpt, 0252). . . People sometimes leave the towns to go and live in the countryside, intruding among the widows and orphans of others, and demanding people's wives and daughters. This is against the old traditions of the state . . . Innkeepers, bondservants, and those who have married widows must not be allowed to form households, and must not be given land or houses . . .

This attempt to achieve social fixity is of a different kind, but has the same ultimate intent, as the Chí sumptuary legislation (#**2:25**).

The Magnates. Not all land was under the control of the several central governments. The collateral clans, which typically were descendants of one or another previous ruler of the state, kept their lands, and in some cases increased them. There were also newcomers, who were usually relatives of later rulers. Especially famous were four magnates of the 03c: Tyén Wźn 田文 or Lord Mèng-cháng 孟嘗君 of Chí, Jàu Shvng 趙勝 or Lord Píng-ywǽn 平原君 of Jàu, Wú-jì 無忌 or Lord Syìn-líng 信陵君 of Ngwèı, and Hwáng Syē 黃歇 or Lord Chūn-shīn 春申君 of Chǔ. Estate government, at least in legends dating from the Hàn period, was sometimes perceived as less harsh than state government, and several of the magnates are supposed to have taken in the indigent, treated them well, and thus acquired what amounted to private armies, numbering in the thousands. In later times, these men were regarded as having been superior to their rulers in generosity and in political understanding. How much of the tradition about the magnates is historical, and how much derives from Hàn sentimentality for bygone pre-Imperial ways, it is now difficult to say.

Agrarian Primitivism. One solution to the problem of rural poverty was rural simplicity. Separatist agrarian communities, whose patron deity was Shźn Núng 神農, the God of Agriculture, began to appear in the 03c. The Mencians here confront, and refute, an apologist for a socially simple system of this kind.

2:56 (MC 3A4, excerpt, c0261). There was a man who practiced the doctrines of Shźn Núng – Syw̌ Syíng, who came from Chw̌ to Tźng. He went up to the gate and said to Wźn-gūng, I, a man of distant regions, have heard that the Sovereign is practicing Benevolent Government, and I would like to be given a place to live and become one of your subjects. Wźn-gūng gave him a place. His followers, numbering several tens, all wore rough clothing and hemp sandals, and wove mats for sale.

Chźn Lyáng's followers, Chźn Syāng and his brother Syīn, came from Sùng to Tźng with plough and ploughshare on their backs, saying, We hear that the Sovereign is practicing Sagely Government. We would like to be the people of a Sage. Chźn Syāng met Syw̌ Syíng and was delighted. He dropped what he had previously studied, and began to learn from him.

Chźn Syāng saw Mencius, and reported what Syw̌ Syíng had said: "The Sovereign of Tźng is truly a worthy ruler. Nevertheless, he has not yet heard the Way. A Worthy would get his food by ploughing in the fields beside the people; he would govern while preparing his own food. But Tźng has its storehouses and its arsenals. He is thus oppressing the people and thereby nourishing himself: how can he be called worthy?

Mencius said, Does Syw̌dž eat only grain he has planted?

He does.

Does Syw̌dž wear only cloth he has woven?

No; Syw̌dž wears hemp.

Does Syw̌dž wear a cap?

He wears a cap.

What kind of cap?

He wears a cap of plain cloth.

Did he weave it himself?

No; he exchanged grain for it.

Why does not Syw̌dž weave it himself?

It would be detrimental to his farming.

Does Syw̌dž cook in dishes and pans, and plough with an iron share?

He does.

Does he make them himself?

No; he exchanges grain for them.

To exchange grain for implements is not to oppress the potter or smith. Furthermore, when the potter and smith exchange utensils for grain, how can they be said to be oppressing the farmer?

Here is the key point: For the Mencians, trade is not intrinsically detrimental; it has its proper place in the ideal society. The Mencius passage continues . . .

> And why does not Syw̌dž himself turn potter and smith, and from his own shop get things to use in his residence? Why all this flurrying about, exchanging things with the various craftsmen? Why does not Syw̌dž spare himself the trouble?
>
> The business of the craftsmen cannot be done on top of farming.
>
> And is it then only the ordering of the world that can be done on top of farming? There is the work of the great, and the work of the small. And with one individual, the wares of the craftsmen are all there; if he insists on making something himself before he will use it, this would lead the world off in all directions. Thus it is said, Some work with their minds, some work with their strength. Those who work with their minds govern others; those who work with their strength are governed by others. Those who are governed by others feed others; those who are fed by others govern others. This is the common principle everywhere in the world.

The radically egalitarian society of Syw̌dž is self-contradictory. Even in such a community, specialization and social hierarchy turn out to be necessary.[39]

Enterprise. Others sought their fortunes in the non-Sinitic coastal cultures. Ywè was surrounded by mountains, and little was known of it;[40] Wú, further north, was relatively accessible. This business story involves Wú:

> **2:57** (JZ 1:6, excerpt, c0240). In Sùng there was a man who knew how to make a preparation that would keep the hands from chapping. For generations his family had made a living by washing silk. A stranger heard of it, and offered to buy the formula for a hundred pieces of gold. The man called his family together and said, For generations, our family has been engaged in washing silk, and in all that time we have made no more than a few pieces of gold. Now, in one morning, we have a chance to make a hundred pieces of gold. I propose that we give it to him.
>
> So the stranger got the formula and recommended it to the King of Wú. Wú was just then in conflict with Ywè. The King of Wú put this man in charge of the Wú forces. That winter, Wú fought a great naval battle, and inflicted a great defeat on Ywè. Wú divided up the new territory, and enfiefed the stranger with part of it.
>
> The ability to prevent chapping of the hands was the same, but one used it to get himself a fief, whereas the other could never escape from the toil of washing silk. The level at which they made use of it was different.

[39]For a study of these agrarian primitivists, see Graham **Nung-chia**.

[40]Some coastal cultures of classical times have their contemporary counterparts. The name Ywè 越 (< Vyèt) survives in that of modern Vietnam 越南. In the Hàn text Shwō Ywæ̀n 說苑 (11:13), a song in the Ywè language is first transcribed and then translated into Chinese; one transcription syllable (làn 濫, < làm) probably represents Vietnamese ðêm (< ðlem) “night.” (Eric Henry, personal communication, 2010).

And this less successful story involves more remote Ywè:

> **2:58** (JZ 1:5, c0246). In Sùng there was a man who made ceremonial hats,[41] and took some to Ywè to sell. But the people of Ywè cut their hair short and tattoo their bodies,[42] so they had no use for the hats.

Some of the differences between the ways of Sinitic and non-Sinitic peoples could be commercially exploited, but others, as it turned out, could not.

Nature. A former merchant, who had risen to be a minister of Chín, commissioned a text in which the new science of cosmic coordination . . .

> **Lǚ-shì Chūn/Chyōu** 呂氏春秋 (LSCC) "Mr Lǚ's Almanac," 0241. The 12 core chapters, compiled under the patronage of the Chín minister Lǚ Bù-wéi 呂不韋, are based on a set of instructions for the work of the 12 months of the year. Translated by Knoblock and Riegel.

. . . was applied not just to farming, always a Chín focus, but to *all* the work of the state. Here is the eighth month, when the natural "balance" of the autumn equinox suggests the regulation of weights, and thus the promotion of trade:

> **2:59** (LSCC 8/1:4, c0241). In this month, one should build walls and outworks, establish cities and towns, excavate passages and pits, and repair bins and granaries. He then orders those responsible to hasten the people in gathering crops, seeing to silage and vegetables, and increasing stores and stocks. They urge them to plant [winter] wheat, so that on no account may the season be missed; those who do wrong should be in no doubt [that they will be punished].[43]
>
> **2:60** (LSCC 8/1:5, excerpt, c0241). In this month, day and night are equal. Thunder now begins to lessen . . . The Yáng force daily weakens, and waters begin to dry. When day and night are equal, unify weights and measures, adjust steelyard and balance weights . . .
>
> **2:61** (LSCC 8/1:6, excerpt, c0241). In this month, refurbish barriers and markets, attract merchants and travelers,[44] admit goods and commodities, and so facilitate the people's business. When all and sundry have come from the Four Quarters, when those of distant countries have all arrived, valuables will not be deficient, the superiors will not lack what they need, and the various kinds of business can go forward . . .

There is a distinct Mencian-economic air to this.

[41]Secured to the hair by a long pin, which will not hold in short hair. Unmentioned is the fact that the coastal culture of Ywè would have had different "ceremonies."

[42]Tattooing the face as well as the body is a trait of the coastal cultures. It may still be seen in Táiwān (which lies opposite the old Ywè territory) and Okinawa.

[43]In contrast to this rigid outline, real farmers made many decisions to secure a decent chance of survival until the next year; for the Greek case, see Gallant **Risk** 114f.

[44]"Travelers" here is lǚ 旅; see the Proto-Yì pentagram of that name (#**2:8**).

Taxes on the land remained burdensome, speculators preyed, and the state itself sometimes bumbled. Here is a summary of conditions in the east:

> **2:62** (GZ 48, excerpt, c0235). In agriculture, monthly income is never enough; only at harvest is there a surplus. So if the ruler acts suddenly in collecting taxes and has no fixed time for them, the people will be forced to borrow at a rate of 2 for 1 in order to pay them. Work in the fields has a set schedule; if the rainfall is not sufficient, again the people will have to borrow at 2 for 1 to hire help. When merchants buy grain at 5 in the fall and sell it back at 10 in the spring, we have another borrowing at 2 for 1. Fees charged at customs barriers and in markets, taxes on stored grain, the 10% tax on yields, and expenses for firewood cutters and grooms over the four seasons, will add up to borrowing again at 2 for 1 . . .

Quite apart from the caprices of nature, farmers were caught between a greedy but inept government and greedy but all too competent money-lenders.

The solution in Chín was not to reduce the taxes imposed by the state, but to make room for them by eliminating the competition from the money-lenders, and concentrating all social energies in productive directions:

> **2:63** (SJS 25:3, excerpt, c0236). And so my teaching is, that if the people want profit, they cannot get it but by farming; if they want to avoid harm, they cannot do so but by fighting. If none of the people of the state but first engage in farming and fighting, then later they will get what they like. Thus, though the territory be small, the production will be large; though the populace be sparse, the army will be strong. If one can carry out these two principles in his own territory, then the Way of the Hegemon King lies open before him.

Thus did Chín nudge its human material toward the only activities it thought were of value to the state: farming and fighting.[45] It is a crude enough formula. Its implementation led to many casualties, both in war and on the home front.[46]

None of which matters in the least. What matters is this: By that formula, the rulers of Chín came in the fullness of time to be the masters of the world.

[45]The reluctance of Chín to acknowledge the importance of trade continued to be characteristic of the dynasties which followed Chín. This agrarian preference in Chinese economics, the idea that state income should be based on activities which the state itself can properly encourage, intrigued the Europeans when they first learned of it through the reports of Jesuit missionaries. The first group of European economic theorists, the Physiocrats, imitated the Chinese system of agriculture-based taxation. Only later did European economic theory shift in a mercantile direction.

[46]So also the concluding paragraph of Gallant **Risk** 196: “Poverty became more profound and widespread. Famines did not . . . The “razor-thin” line separating the bulk of the peasantry from destitution was shaved, not severed. The system of survival strategies continued to work, and they survived.” We may say that the accountants of the Sinitic states had also calculated, perhaps not kindly, but well. Well enough.