

Extend your rule, put an end to cruelty, oh!  
 Raise the best, suppress the worst, punish the wrongdoers, oh!  
 Be the upright and honest in power, as with Great Yǔ of old, oh!  
 Let the heroes guide affairs, and their influence reach far, oh!  
 Soul, come back! For the sake of state and home, oh!  
*Mighty and awesome, Heaven's Power is manifest, oh.*  
*In their dignity, the Three Princes ascend and descend, oh.*  
*The Several Lords are present, the Nobles take their places, oh.*  
*Early dawn has come; the targets are placed, oh.*  
*Holding bow and grasping arrow, they show perfect courtesy, oh –*  
 Soul, come back! Restore the ways of the Three Kings, oh!

And the highly Confucian final ceremonies end with a ritual archery contest.

**Joining Chǔ.** Chǔn Shǐ 陳舍 was the first Chín rebel to turn to Chǔ. His movement had begun in 0209. It quickly expanded. Chǔn Shǐ's formal name was Shèng 勝 "Victory." He and his mate Wú Gwǎng 吳廣 made their move as members of a party of conscript laborers, sent to work on Chín fortifications. The party were delayed, and delay (see #8:32) meant death:

**Chǔ/Hàn Chūn/Chyōu** 楚漢春秋 (CHCC) "The Epic of Chǔ and Hàn." Attributed to Lù Jyǎ of early Hàn. Tells of the rivalry between Syàng Yǔ and Lyóu Bāng and the perilous early years of Hàn. CHCC is the source for some of the most exciting parts of the Shǐ Jì. Lost in Tāng, and now known only from quotations in Shǐ Jì commentaries.

**8:36** (SJ 48, excerpt, late 02c). In the first year of the Second Emperor, in the seventh month, they sent out nine hundred men from the left [poor] side of town to garrison Yǔ-yáng. They camped on the way at Great Marsh County. Chǔn Shǐng and Wú Gwǎng were among those required to go; they were made camp chiefs. It happened that there was a great downpour, and the road became impassible. They realized that they had lost all hope of arriving by the assigned time, and for missing the assigned time, the law provided that they should all be beheaded. Chǔn Shǐng and Wú Gwǎng took counsel together, saying, "If we go on, we will die; if we undertake some great scheme, we will die. As long as we are going to die, may we not as well die in the hope of establishing a state?"

This they did. Their enterprise, based on the city of Chǔn, was recognized by the revived Chǔ court. Several nearby towns murdered their Chín-appointed officials and joined Chǔn Shǐ. Following the lead of the Chǔ court, where old ways, including Confucian thought, were welcome, Chǔn Shǐ added to his retinue Kǔng Fù, the son of Dǔ-shǐn, the last head of the Analects school in Lǔ, thus affirming the older ideology. But then rival rebellions broke out, and in the resulting confusion, Chǔn Shǐ, the King, was murdered by his chariot driver. Kǔng Fù, aged 57, died with the rest of Chǔn Shǐ's appointees.

Back at the Chín court, with all political action useless or dangerous, the literati at the Academy still felt they had to do something. Thus it happened that the last advice given to Chín by the successors of Lǚ Bù-wéi, filling out the rest of the six-chapter plan of this part of the book, was merely informational.

**Agriculture.** From Spring and Autumn on, the power of the state had rested on the land, its conquest and cultivation. Chín's conquests had been completed, but it remained to make the most of those conquests. It is then not surprising that the last four sections of LSCC 26, the end of the work, incorporate, seemingly entire, an agricultural text in more or less poetic form, ascribed to the mythical Jōu ancestor Hòu Jì, the Lord of Millet. When in 0771 the Jōu were forced to leave their northwestern homeland, it was Chín which had inherited that strategically advantageous territory. Now Jōu (in the voice of Hòu Jì) again comes together with Chín, in a treatise whose concern for the proper season echoes the groundplan of the original 12 Jì chapters of the LSCC (#3:82-84). It concludes with an assurance that doing everything at the appropriate season makes for health and longevity:

**8:37** (LSCC 26/6:8, c0206). So a planting done at the right season will thrive; a crop grown out of season will be scanty. With stems of the same length, the seasonable one will be heavier; its grains more numerous.

When equal weights are hulled,  
the seasonable one will yield more rice.

When equal amounts are consumed,  
the seasonable one will better sate hunger.

So, with a crop planted at the right season,

Its aroma will be fragrant,  
its taste sweet,  
its energy strong.

Eat it for a hundred days:

The ears and eyes will be percipient  
and the mind will be sharp.

The four limbs will be strengthened,  
no noxious vapors will enter,  
and the body will receive nothing harmful.

The Yellow Emperor said, If the Four Seasons are irregular, one need only adjust the Five Grains.

Man can compensate for the caprices of nature, and the state can be secure through understanding of its agricultural basis. This advice would be equally relevant to Chín, then in turmoil, or to anything that might succeed Chín.

**Syàng Yǚ 項羽.** The successors were hard at work. Chín Shǜ was killed by a subordinate in 0208, but other rebels appeared. A Chǔ successor was made the King of Chǔ. As war weeded out the weak, the final contenders emerged: Lyóu Bāng 劉邦, a commoner from Lǚ with uncommon organizational gifts, and Syàng Yǚ, a Chǔ nobleman of unmatched martial prowess.

Chǔ recognized both as Kings. Lyóu Bāng, who at the end of 0207 had successfully entered the Chín capital area, claimed it as his territory, but Syàng Yǔ, on behalf of the Chǔ King, gave him the land of Hàn instead. Their rivalry soon developed into a war between Chǔ, represented by Syàng Yǔ, and Hàn, Lyóu Bāng's domain. The early Hàn romance Chǔ/Hàn Chūn/Chyōu, from which we have quoted above, told the dramatic tale of the end of Syàng Yǔ. This account has been famous down the years, in the original and as an opera. It is the kind of thing no book on the period can omit. Here is how it ends:

**8:38** (SJ 7, excerpt, late 02c). King Syàng camped at Gāi-syà. His troops were few, his food was gone; the Hàn armies and the soldiers of the Lords had surrounded him several lines deep. In the night, from the Hàn camps on all four sides, he heard songs of Chǔ. King Syàng was startled, and said, "Has Hàn already gained all of Chǔ? How many Chǔ men they have!" King Syàng got up in the night and began to drink in his tent. He had a beautiful woman named Yú whom he always favored and took with him, and a fine horse named Dapple which he always rode. King Syàng now sang a sad air of heroic melancholy, and himself made verses for it:

My strength tore up the mountains, ah! The age I overtopped,  
 The times give no advantage, ah! and Dapple's hoofs are stopped.  
 Dapple's hoofs are stopped, ah; what more can I do?  
 Yú, ah! Yú, ah! how can I lose you too?

He sang it several times, and the beautiful woman echoed it. King Syàng's tears ran down in several streams, and his attendants to left and right all wept too. Not one of them could bear to raise his head to watch.

King Syàng then mounted his horse and rode forth. The stout officers and their mounted followers under his banner were eight hundred some men. While it was still night, they broke through the encirclement and galloped south. At dawn, the Hàn armies saw what had happened, and ordered cavalry commander Gwàn Yīng to pursue them with five thousand riders.

King Syàng crossed the Hwái; those who could keep up with him were only a hundred some men. When King Syàng reached Yīn-líng, he became confused and lost his way. He asked a farmer, but the farmer deceived him, saying "Go left." He went left, and stumbled into a marsh. For this reason, the Hàn pursuers caught up with him. King Syàng once more led his troops to the east, but by the time he reached Dūng-chíng, he had only twenty-eight riders left. The Hàn pursuing cavalry numbered several thousand.

King Syàng realized that he could not get away. He said to his riders, "It is eight years from the time when I first raised troops until today. I have fought more than seventy battles. All who opposed me I destroyed; all I attacked submitted. I was never defeated; in the end, as Hegemon, I possessed the world. Now at last I find myself hemmed in here. It is Heaven destroying me; it is no fault of mine in arms.

Today I am resolved to die, but I should like to make a sally for you gentlemen and win three victories – for you gentlemen, I shall break through the encirclement, behead a commander, and cut down a flag, so that you gentlemen will know that it is Heaven destroying me, and no fault of mine in battle.” He then divided his riders into four companies, facing four ways, and the Hàn army surrounded them several ranks deep. King Syàng said to his riders, “I will now get one of their commanders for you.” He ordered the riders facing in four directions to ride down, planning to form again in three companies east of the mountain. Then King Syàng gave a great shout and rode down, and the Hàn troops broke in confusion; he did in the end behead one Hàn commander. The Lord of Chì-chywæn led the cavalry in pursuit of King Syàng. King Syàng glared and shouted at him, and the Lord of Chì-chywæn’s men and horses were startled and gave way for several leagues. His riders regrouped in three places; the Hàn army did not know which group King Syàng was in.

King Syàng now thought to cross the Wū River on the east. The Wū River station chief was waiting with a ferry boat. He said to King Syàng, “Though the land east of the river is small, its area is still a thousand leagues, with several tens of myriads of people; it too is worth ruling over. I beg the Great King to quickly cross. Only your servant has a boat; when the Hàn army arrives, it will have no way to cross.” King Syàng laughed and said, “Heaven is destroying me; what use is there in crossing over? Moreover, years ago, with eight thousand youths from east of the river, I crossed over and headed west; now I return without one man of them. Even if the fathers and brothers east of the river pitied me and made me king, how could I face them? Even if they did not speak of it, would I not be ashamed in my heart?” He then said to the station chief, “I see Your Excellency is a worthy man. I have ridden this horse five years; in all who faced him there was not his equal; he once went a thousand leagues in a day. I cannot bear to kill him; I make Your Excellency a present of him.”

He then had his riders dismount and go on foot, carrying short swords. When they joined battle, he alone killed several hundred of the Hàn army. King Syàng bore on his body more than ten wounds. He turned and saw the Hàn cavalry marshal Lǚ Mǎ-túng, and said, “Are you not my old friend?” Mǎ-túng turned toward him, and gestured to Wáng Yì, saying, “This is King Syàng.” King Syàng then said, “I hear that Hàn has put a price on my head: a thousand in gold, and a city of a myriad households. I will do you the favor.” He then cut his own throat and died.

Wáng Yì took his head and others trampled on each other, contending for King Syàng; several tens were killed in the ensuing scuffle. When it was all over, Rider of the Guard Yáng Syǐ, Cavalry Marshal Lǚ Mǎ-túng, and Guardsmen Lw Shvng and Yáng Wǔ, had each gotten one limb. When the five put the body together, the pieces fitted.

And so they divided the prize territory into five fiefs.

## Envoi

To the earlier Nine Songs (#6:67-68), the revived Chǔ court had added a tenth and eleventh Song, memorializing those who had fallen in the service of Chǔ and its imperial ambition. We quote them here in farewell to Syàng Yǔ:

**8:39** (Chǔ Tsǔ, Nine Songs #10, c0207).

## Those Who Died For the State

Spears of Wú we grasp, ah! armor of hide we wear,  
 Wheel-hubs clash below, ah! swords slash through the air;  
 Pennons hide the sun, ah! like clouds the foemen swarm –  
 Crisscross fall the arrows, ah! but on our captains storm.  
 Our lines are overwhelmed, ah! our ranks are put to flight,  
 A dead horse falls on the left, ah! and a wounded one on the right;  
 Axles twain are tangled, ah! turn the team around –  
 Seize the jaden drumsticks, ah! let the signal sound!  
 Heaven's times smile not ah! the gods are of angry mind,  
 The fearful slaughter done, ah! we leave the field behind.  
 They never shall return, ah! forever they are gone,  
 The level plain is distant, ah! the road runs on and on;  
 Swords yet girt about them, ah! their longbows firm they hold –  
 Head from body severed, ah! but still their hearts are bold.  
 Brave you were indeed, ah! and in battle skilled,  
 Valiant to the end, ah! your fearless blood you shed;  
 Though perished be your bodies, ah! your spirits still strike dread –  
 Your immortal souls, ah! are heroes among the dead.

The memorial service concluded with a solemn dance, accompanied by this address to the spirits of the fallen warriors:

**8:40** (Chǔ Tsǔ, Nine Songs #11, c0207).

## The Service To The Souls

The service ends, ah! in a flourish of drum.  
 The dancers' fronds, ah! are held at plumb.  
 The maidens' voices, ah! now softly hum.  
 The fragrant orchid, ah! the chrysanthemum –  
 Through endless ages, ah! of time to come.

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And so our story ends as it began, in a showdown between Chǔ and the North. In that last contest, there perished the Last Warring State, the China That Was Not To Be, amid the ruins of the Empire That Was To Last Forever. And it did last forever, starting with its successor, the Hàn Dynasty. The heroic attempt of Syàng Yǔ – to reinstate something along the old lines – had decisively failed.

What the Warring States had long labored to produce, and what they had destroyed themselves in the process of producing, now securely existed.