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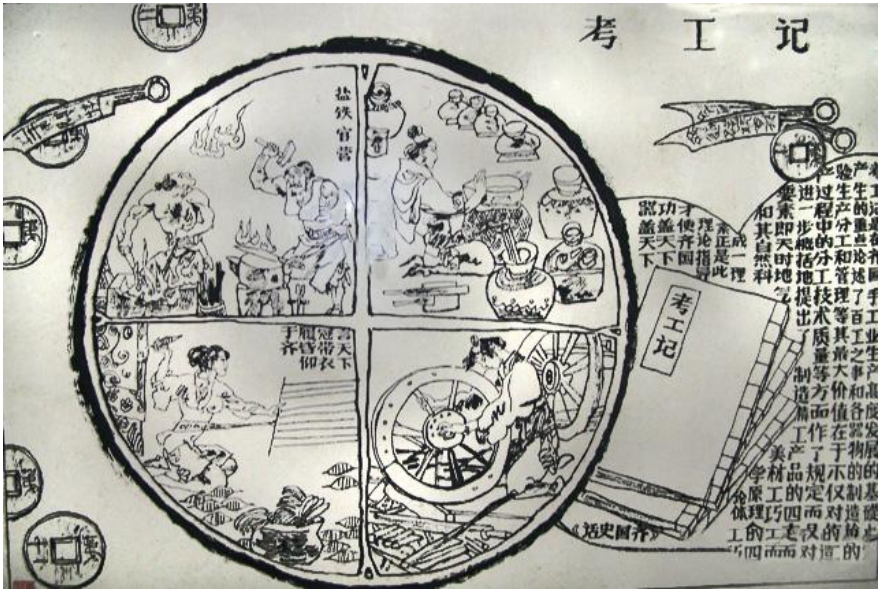
ALL STORIES ARE TRANSLATED BY ERIC HENRY

CHAPTER EIGHT
TALES FROM ZHÈNG AND CHǓ



A representation of pre-imperial Chinese manufacturing techniques. Ink painting in the Zibo Chinese Ceramics Museum, Zibo City, Shandong Province, Summer, 2007. Artist unknown. Image edited by David Henry.

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Of the seven stories in this section, the first is from Fascicle 19 on Zhèng, the second is an item excerpted from *Zuǒ Tradition* that recounts an anecdote concerning King Zhuāng of Chǔ (the fifth of the five hegemons), and the remaining five are from two fascicles devoted to Chǔ.

Zhèng 鄭, throughout the Spring and Autumn Era, was a large State directly east of the Zhōu royal domain in what is now Hénán Province, the capital of which was called "Xīn Zhèng" ("New Zhèng). The State was founded in 806, when it was conferred by King Xuán as a fief on his younger brother Prince Yǒu, known to posterity as Lord Huán of Zhèng. At that time, however, Zhèng was not in its later location, but was still close to the Hào, the western Zhōu capital on a site by the Wei 渭 River. Lord Huán lost his life along with (his nephew) King Yōu during in the fall of the Western Zhōu. His son, known to history as Lord Wǔ of Zhèng (reigned 770–744), assisted King Píng in reestablishing Zhōu in the east, and also moved his Zhèng fief to its Eastern Zhōu location. In the early Spring and Autumn Era, Zhèng was one of the most powerful States, and its Rulers served as advisors to the Zhōu King. It later became less dominant politically and had to pay fealty alternately to Jìn in the north, and to Chǔ in the south.

Chǔ 楚, known also as Jing 荊, was an enormous State that lay well to the south of the Zhōu heartland. Its territory included most of the territory of the modern provinces of Húběi and Húnán. Over the course of its history this State had several capital cities, the most long-lasting of which was Yǐng 郢 in the western part of modern Húběi Province, just north of the modern city of Jīngzhōu 荊州. Unlike most other pre-imperial Chinese States, Chǔ was not created by an act of enfeoffment. It was an independent entity in the south that was drawn into the orbit of Chinese power during the Western Zhōu, without ever becoming entirely

subordinate to Zhōu. Its Rulers bore the ancestral name of Mī 羋 and the lineage name of Xióng 熊. According to the Zhōu ranking system, Chǔ's Rulers were Viscounts (zǐ 子), but from 704 on, they began to call themselves "King" (wáng 王), though they had no authorization to do so. Originally located along the Hàn 漢 River (a tributary of the Yangzi), Chǔ grew steadily in several directions through the annexation of many smaller States. People of the states in the northerly central plain often spoke disdainfully of Chǔ as being "semi-barbaric" (other outlying States, such as Qín, and later Wú and Yuè, were also objects of this kind of opprobrium), but, due to its size and strength, Chǔ had to be treated with studious respect. ~ Eric Henry.

Author: Unknown, 4th Century BCE.

57. The Decline of Zhōu

Summary: In this story, only the latter half of which is supplied here, a Zhōu Prince who is soon to be enfeoffed as the first Ruler of the newly created principality of Zhèng has a long consultation with Bó, the Chief Archivist of the Zhōu Court. This Prince, known to posterity as Lord Huán, his posthumous designation as a Zhèng Ruler, was a younger son of King Lì, and the brother of King Xuán. In response to Lord Huán's questioning, Chief Archivist Bó supplies him with an exhaustive account of the geopolitical situation of many dozens of the major and middling States in the realm. In the portion of the story excerpted here, Chief Archivist Bo observes that the House of Zhōu must soon decline, and recounts many evidences of this decline, including the whole of the legend of Bāo Sì, a femme fatale associated with the fall of the Western Zhōu. This story tells how Lord Huán responds to the advice. This is Item 1 in "Tales from Zhèng." No parallel account appears in *Zuǒ Tradition*. The "Zhèng" section of this work contains only two items, this

enormously long and complicated one, and a brief and apparently fragmentary narrative that scarcely mentions Zhèng at all.~ Eric Henry.

Lord Huán asked, "Will Zhōu sink in defeat?"

"It is to be feared that their defeat is certain," was the reply. "The "Great Declaration" has a passage that goes, 'What the people desire, Heaven will be sure to accede to.'[1] The King has now cast away enlightened and distinguished counselors and is fond of those who are flattering and benighted. He hates deep insight[2] and is attracted instead to childish stupidity. He expels those who seek merely to achieve a constructive relationship with him, and instead chooses those who follow him blindly in everything. Harmony, please note, is capable of giving rise to many fruits, but blind compliance has no lasting results. Using a differing thing to correct another thing is called 'harmony,' thus it gives rise to richness, and affairs are attracted to it; [but] when things of like nature are added to other things of like nature, all is cast away.

"Thus, the former Kings used earth together with metal, wood, water, and fire to bring the hundred things into existence; and thereupon harmonized the five flavors to please the mouth, made the four limbs hard so as to protect the body, combined the six modes to make hearing keen, put the seven sensory apertures so as to serve the mind; laid out the eight trigrams so as to make a complete human form;[3] built up the

[1] "Zhōu Shū" in the *Documents*, paragraph 6.

[2] Literally, "rhinoceros-horns and filled-out features," the first being a metaphor for sharpness, and the second a physiognomic indication of wisdom.

[3] Each of the eight trigrams has a corresponding part of the body. The trigram Qián, Heaven, indicates the head; the trigram Kūn, Earth, the belly; the trigram Zhèn, Thunder, the feet; the trigram Xūn, Wind or Wood, the thighs; the trigram Kān, Water, the ears; the trigram Lí, Fire, the eyes; the trigram Gēn, Mountain, the hand; and the trigram Duì, Marsh, the mouth.

nine viscera so as to achieve entire strength; and combined the ten numbers so that the hundred affairs could be ordered. The thousand offices were put forth so that the ten thousand districts could be administered; the hundred million affairs were put under calculation so that a trillion goods could be collected and a regular income secured. Thus, the King lived in the nine divisions of the realm[4] and received its revenue so as to feed the numberless multitudes, and provided them with comprehensive instruction so to be able to use them, and be one with them in harmony and joy. We may, thus, see that harmony is the supreme quality.[5]

"This being the case, the former Kings took Consorts from lineages with different surnames, varied the regions from which they sought tribute, and in selecting officers and admonition-declaiming blind men, took those who had different stores of wisdom to offer, thus showing the importance they placed on harmony.[6] They did this because a single note is not pleasing to the ear, a single shape does not make a pattern, one flavor does not please the palate; and an isolated fact is not a fit topic for discussion. But now the Zhōu King is casting aside all these sources of harmony and instead associates only with those who are one with him. Heaven has taken away his understanding—how can he do anything but go into decline?

"That man Guó Shífù[7] is a flatterer adept in the arts of currying

[4] This perhaps refers to the nine divisions into which Yǔ the Great divided his territory.

[5] As is clear from the foregoing, "harmony" here refers to the coordination of different or opposite things.

[6] i.e. the orchestration of differences.

[7] Guó Shífù 虢石父: possibly Lord Gū of Cài. Cited in Kno block, *The Annals of Lu Buwei*, p. 713.

favor, and he has been made Minister of State—he is among those who echo the King's thoughts. The King has cast aside his Principal Consort and established a concubine in her place, and is inflexibly devoted to his own pleasures. Dwarves and hunchbacks are at his side assisting him; he is little different from an obstinate boy. The Laws of Zhōu are not upheld, he does whatever his female favorite tells him to do, and he employs flatterers and schemers. He does not establish worthy Ministers of State, but uses miscreants and opportunists [in their stead] to pursue dark and sinister activities. Such circumstances cannot endure long.

"In the time of King Xuān, moreover, there was a children's ditty, whose words went, 'Mulberry bows and quivers of grass / These will bring an end to Zhōu.' The King then heard that a man and his wife were selling just such bows as these, so he ordered that they be apprehended and slain. In the meantime, a low-ranking concubine in the palace had given birth to a girl baby that was not the King's. Terrified by this event, she abandoned it. These people [the bow and quiver venders] received the infant and fled to Bǎo 褒. Heaven had long ordained that this would happen; what could be done to prevent it?

"A Zhōu work, the *Book of Teachings* (*Xùnyǔ* 訓語) has a passage that goes as follows: 'In the waning days of the Xià, a spirit from the people of Bǎo changed into two dragons who came into the King's palace, and used speech, saying, 'We are the two Kings of Bǎo.' The Xià ruler made a divination to determine whether he should kill the dragons or drive them away, but neither alternative was auspicious. He, then, made another divination to see if he should preserve the dragons' spittle. This was auspicious. He, then, had silk brought forth and spread out to receive the spittle, and had a formal inscription made to announce this. The dragons disappeared, but their spittle, stored in a box, remained, and was transferred to the site in the capital outskirts where sacrifices

were offered to it for generations. The Xià was succeeded by Shāng and then Zhōu, and no one opened the box. Then, late in the reign of King Lì of Zhōu, the box was opened and its contents examined. The spittle flowed through the palace; no one was able to do away with it. The King had women in a state of undress shout at it,[8] whereupon it changed into a dark crimson lizard and went into the King's chambers. A little serving maid who had not yet cut her teeth came upon it, and when she was of an age [fifteen] to wear the hairpin of marriage, she became pregnant, and in the reign of King Xuān she gave birth. Having given birth without a husband, she grew fearful and abandoned the infant. The bow and quiver venders, who had been arrested on the road and were to be slain, took pity on [the baby's] mournful cries at night, took up the infant, and escaped, fleeing to Bǎo. A person of Bǎo named Bǎo Xǔ 褒姁, who was in detention due to a dispute with the Throne, had the infant, now a young woman, presented to the King [to redeem himself]. The King thereupon pardoned Bǎo Xǔ, and bestowed great favor on this young woman, whom he elevated to the status of Principal Consort, and who gave birth to a son, Bó Fú 伯服. Heaven prepared this poison long, long ago, and the evil it has wreaked is great. It will corrupt the King's virtue and will add to the State's distresses. The poison is potent, like the alcohol in twelfth-month wine, and its deadly blows will be swift.

"At present, Shēn, Céng, and the Western Róng are strong, and the Royal House is just now unsettled, and the King is determined to give free rein to his desires—is not the situation difficult? The King wants to kill the Crown Prince in order to establish Bófú. To do this, he will surely

[8] In ancient and traditional times, the ancestors of the Chinese believed that the intimate parts of females, if exposed, could inflict devastating damage on an adversary.

have to seek Shēn's permission,[9] but the men of Shēn will grant him no such thing, and he will attack them. If he attacks Shēn, and if Céng and the Western Róng join in an attack on Zhōu, Zhōu will be unable to defend herself. At present, Céng and the Western Róng hold Shēn in high esteem, and Shēn and its kindred group in Lǚ 呂 are just now strong, so their secret concern for the Crown Prince can be guessed. As long as the King's Army is in Shēn, they too will be sure to come to Shēn's assistance in rescuing him.

"The King is enraged, and His Lordship Guó Shífù seconds him in everything. Zhōu cannot outlast three harvests! If Your Lordship wishes to escape this debacle, then you should at once carve out a place to retire to. If you wait until the time arrives to do this, I fear it will be too late!"

"If Zhōu declines," asked Lord Huán, "who with the Jī surname will flourish?"

"I have heard," said Chief Annalist Bó, "that it was King Wǔ who made glorious King Wén's accomplishments. Wén's ordained mandate is now at an end. The future will lie with the progeny of Wǔ. Of King Wǔ's sons, the descendants of Yīng 應 and Hán 韓 no longer exist; it must lie with Jìn! Jìn lies in rugged terrain and is surrounded by small States; if they add strength of rule to this, they may become a great power.

"Of the lineages of Jiāng 姜 and Yíng 嬴," asked Lord Huán, "which will flourish?"

"States whose territories and kingly virtue are great," Chief Archivist Bó replied, "are on the verge of flourishing. Qín Zhòng 秦仲 and the Marquis of Qí are scions of the lineages Jiàng and Yíng, and their states are moreover large—surely, they will flourish?"

Lord Huán was pleased at this, and thereupon settled his family

[9] The State of Shēn was at that time the Crown Prince's place of refuge.

and goods in the east. Guó 虢 and Huì 鄶 received him. There were ten towns to whom he entrusted parts of his possessions.[10]

Author: Unknown, Late 5th Century BCE.

58. An Indiscreet Question

This story is not from *Tales of the Principalities* but from *Zuǒ Tradition*, Xuān 3. Nevertheless, it is very much in the style of a "*Principalities* narrative," and is supplied here to help round out the portrait of the era offered by that work. In this story the Chǔ Ruler, King Zhuāng, meets a royal officer of Zhōu and asks a question revealing that he harbors improper ambitions. The question concerns the size and weight of a set of nine bronze sacrificial vessels, supposedly cast in primordial times by the mythical Yǔ the Great. These vessels were potent symbols of the legitimacy of the reigning Son of Heaven.

Wángsūn Mǎn, the savant in this tale, is the same figure who, in item 12 of this issue of *Rising Asia*, predicts the defeat of a Qín Army on the basis of their ritually incorrect way of mounting their chariots.

Summary: King Zhuāng of Chǔ, an unusually charismatic and effective Ruler was the last of the five figures of the Spring and Autumn Era referred to in ancient texts as "the five hegemons." His reign dates were 613 to 591. Early in his career, in the course of a northward campaign against a group Róng tribesmen, he stopped at the border of the Zhōu royal domain so as to review his troops. On this occasion, King Dīng, the Zhōu "Son of Heaven," sent Wángsūn Mǎn out to meet him (the Chǔ Ruler) with congratulations and gifts. In the course of his conversation with this royal emissary, King Zhuāng inquired about the size and weight of the Nine Sacred Vessels of Zhōu. This was an indication that he harbored unseemly political ambitions.

[10] This possibly refers to gift-giving, that is, bribery.

Wángsūn Mǎn's response to the Chǔ Ruler's inquiry, given below, was a masterpiece of evasion coupled with disdainful condescension. ~ Eric Henry.

Wángsūn Mǎn said, "The strength of the kingdom depends upon the sovereign's virtue, and not upon the vessels. When the sovereign's virtue is commendable and brilliant, the vessels, even if small, would be heavy. When the sovereign's virtue is darkened and obscured, the vessels, even if large, would be light. Heaven blesses intelligent virtue; on that its favor rests.

"King Chéng [our former Ruler] divined . . . that the Dynasty would extend through thirty reigns, over seven hundred years. Though the virtue of Zhōu is decayed, the decree of Heaven has not yet changed. The weight of the vessels may not yet be inquired about."

Author: Unknown, 4th Century BCE.

59. Posthumous Designations For Rulers

Summary: On his deathbed, King Gōng of Chǔ summons his officers and expresses his shame over his defeat at Yānlíng in 575, and suggests that he be given a relatively non-honorific temple name such as Líng or Lì. After the King's death, Prince Náng, his younger brother, insists that this dying wish not be followed. This story explains why the Prince took such a decision. This is Item 2 in "Tales from Chǔ" (Book 1). See also *Zuǒ Tradition*, Xiānggōng 13.~ Eric Henry.

When King Gōng fell ill [in 560], he summoned his officers, and said, "I lack Kingly virtue and have allowed the accomplishments

of our former Ruler[11] to slip away. The defeat of the Chǔ troops was my fault.[12] If I should manage to die with my head and neck intact,[13] then there will be a name to add after those of the former Rulers in the spring and autumn sacrifices. Let it be 'Líng,' or better yet, 'Lì.'"[14]

The officers assented to this.

The King died. When it came time to perform the mourning observances, Prince Náng 子囊 broached the question of the temple name.[15] The officers said, "The King left orders."

"They cannot be obeyed," said Prince Náng. "Those who serve Rulers, please note, put their good deeds foremost and do not dwell on their faults. Chǔ is a great and splendid State, it was he who stood at the helm. Chǔ has pacified the southern tribes, and her instructions have reached to the Lords of the Central States. His glory is great. As he enjoyed such glory, yet still was able to acknowledge his faults, could he not be referred to as 'Gōng?'[16] If the Ruler's good deeds are to be put foremost, then I beg to have 'Gōng' be the name."

The officers followed this proposal.

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[11] King Zhuāng of Chǔ (Chǔ Zhuāng-wáng, reigned 613–591).

[12] The King is here referring to the Battle of Yānlíng, which occurred in 575 (Chénggōng 16).

[13] i.e. "If I should escape corporeal punishment for my crimes."

[14] "Líng" was used for Rulers who were debauched but not harmful, while "Lì" was used for Rulers who slaughtered the innocent.

[15] Prince Náng was Prince Zhēn 公子貞, Chief Counsellor of Chǔ and younger brother of the King Gōng.

[16] Used for Rulers capable of correcting their errors.

Author: Unknown, 4th Century BCE.
60. Sacrificial Offerings To the Departed

Summary: Qū Dào, a Minister of Chǔ, leaves instructions to offer water chestnuts to his spirit; but his son Qū Jiàn will not permit it because water chestnuts are nowhere to be found in the ritual prescriptions concerning sacrifice, and because such a departure from prescribed practice would ill accord with the dignity and importance of his father's position. This is Item 3 in "Tales from Chǔ" (Book 1).~ Eric Henry.

Qū Dào 屈到[17] was addicted to water chestnuts. When he fell ill, he summoned the elders of his clan and enjoined them, saying, "When you make offerings to my spirit, you must use water chestnuts."

When it came time to perform the sacrifices, the elders prepared water chestnuts, but Qū Jiàn[18] ordered that they be put aside.

"The deceased's dying instructions were to use them," objected the elders.

"It would be wrong to do so," replied Qū Jiàn. "The deceased held responsibility for the government of Chǔ. His Laws remain in the people's hearts and are kept in the King's storehouses. In merit, he may be compared with the former Kings, and may himself serve as a source of instruction for later generations. Even if there were no Chǔ, the Regional Lords would all praise him. In the Court Regulations are lines that say, 'the Ruler of the State is to enjoy sacrifices of beef; an officer repasts of mutton; men of service offerings of pig and dog; and the common people meals of fried fish. As for the preserves, minced meats, bamboo baskets, and wooden trays supplied with them, they are the same for high and low

[17] Qū Dào, also known as Qū Dàng 屈蕩, was a Minister of State in Chǔ.

[18] Qū Jiàn was Qū Dào's son; his personal name was Zǐmù 子木.

alike.'[19] The offerings are to be excessive neither in preciousness or quantity. The deceased's personal tastes must not be allowed to violate the established ritual procedures of the State."

The water chestnuts were not used.

Author: Unknown, 4th Century BCE.

61. Brain Drain

The point of this long item is that Chǔ, though powerful, encountered many difficulties due to the inability of its Rulers to make proper use of Chǔ's homegrown talent. In case after case, Chǔ's harsh measures force its best officers to flee Chǔ and take refuge in rival States, where their wise advice enables those States to win victory over Chǔ.

Summary: Jiāo Jǔ of Chǔ is implicated in a crime of his father-in-law and takes refuge in Zhèng, intending to go later to Jìn. In Zhèng he is entertained by his friend Shēngzǐ of Cài, who offers to fix things in Chǔ so that Jiāo Jǔ can return. Jiāo Jǔ gratefully accepts his offer and gives him a team of four horses.

Shēngzǐ goes to Chǔ and has an interview with Chief Counselor Zǐmù in which he observes that Chǔ has fine officers but is unable to use them. He cites the cases of four former Chǔ officers whose flight to Jìn led to setbacks for Chǔ. The loss of Wángzǐ Qǐ led to Chǔ's defeat at Chéngpú; the loss of Xīgōng Chén led to Chǔ's defeat at Ráo Jiāo; the loss of Yǒngzǐ led to Chǔ's defeat at Yānlíng; and the loss of Wú Chén led to an increased threat to Chǔ from the State of Wú. Now, he says, Chǔ is about to suffer in the same way from the loss of Jiāo Jǔ to Jìn. Zǐmù thereupon decides to enrich Jiāo Jǔ's household and recall him to Chǔ. This is Item 4

[19] Differing, perhaps, only in quantity; according to sumptuary regulations, some had more and some less. The bamboo baskets were for dried fruits and salted goods. The wooden trays had long legs.

in "Tales from Chǔ" (Book 1). See *Zuǒ Tradition*, Xiānggōng 26, Item 10. ~Eric Henry.

Jiāo Jǔ[20] took a daughter of Prince Móu, the Duke of Shēn,[21] as his bride. When Prince Móu committed an offense and fled elsewhere, King Kāng[22] believed that it was Jiāo Jǔ who told him to run away. Jiāo Jǔ, therefore, fled to Zhèng, intending to continue on to Jìn .[23]

Shēngzǐ 聲子 of Cài 蔡, who was also about to go to Jìn, met him in Zhèng, invited him to a banquet with vessels of jade, and said, "You will still eat fine food.[24] Our two forebears will surely assist you.[25] You will still be able to serve the Ruler of Jìn in his capacity as Chief of the Vassal Lords."

Jiāo Jǔ declined, saying, "It is not what I wish. If you can cause my bones to be returned to Chǔ, I will not forget the favor even in death."

Shēngzǐ said, "You will still eat fine food. I will bring about your return."

Jiāo Jǔ descended the banquet hall steps, bowed low three times,

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[20] Jiāo Jǔ椒舉, a.k.a. Wǔ Jǔ 伍舉; he was the son of Wǔ Shēn 伍參, the father of Wǔ Shē 伍奢, and the grandfather of Wǔ Zǐ Xū 伍子胥.

[21] The Duke of Shēn 申, a.k.a. Wángzǐ Móu 王子牟. He was a son of King Gōng. He fled to Jìn after becoming Duke of Shēn.

[22] King Kāng 康 (Prince Zhāo 昭; reigned 559–545) was the son of King Gōng 恭 (reigned 590–560).

[23] It was because Zhèng was small and close to Chǔ that he wished to go on to Jìn (Wéi Zhāo's note).

[24] This means "you will not have to endure the hard life of a refugee with no position."

[25] Shēngzǐ is here referring to Jiāo Jǔ's father Wǔ Shēn and to his own father Zǐzhāo 子昭. *Zuǒzhuàn* says, "Wǔ Shēn of Chǔ and Grand Tutor Zǐzhāo of Cài were friends, and their sons, Wǔ Jǔ and Shēngzǐ, were very fond of each other." Shēngzǐ's given name was Guī Shēng 歸生.

and presented Shēngzǐ with his team of four horses. Shēngzǐ accepted his gift.

On his return from Jìn, Shēngzǐ met with Zǐmù, the Chief Counselor of Chǔ.[26] As he conversed with Shēngzǐ, Zǐmù said, "Though your State and Jìn are brothers, Cài is our maternal nephew.[27] Which is the worthier of the two States, Jìn or Chǔ?"

"The great ministers of Jìn don't measure up to those of Chǔ," replied Shēngzǐ.[28] Her officers, on the other hand, are worthier than Chǔ's; they are all gifted enough to be ministers. They are to Jìn like our catalpa wood and rhinoceros hide; and it is, in fact, Chǔ that has let Jìn get them. Chǔ may have talented men, but she is not able to make use of them."

"Jìn has her ruling clan, and clans related to them by marriage, to supply her needs," protested Zǐmù. "That being so, how could Chǔ be giving away talent to Jìn?"

"In former times," replied Shēngzǐ, "after the troubles brought on by the Chief Counselor Zǐyuán,[29] someone slandered Wángsūn Qǐ to

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[26] Zǐmù 子木, a.k.a. Qū Jiàn 屈建. *Zuǒzhuàn* says, "After accomplishing his mission in Jìn, Shēngzǐ went to Chǔ in the course of his return journey."

[27] The Rulers of Cài and Jìn were of the same surname. Those of Cài and Chǔ were of different surnames and exchanged daughters as brides.

[28] This was a tactful remark, according to Wéi Zhāo. The Prime Minister of Jìn at that time was Zhào Wǔ 趙武. Shēngzǐ meant to imply that Zhào Wǔ wasn't as devoted a minister as was Zǐmù.

[29] Zǐyuán 子元 was Prince Shàn 善, the son of King Wǔ of Chǔ (Chǔ Wǔwáng 楚武王, reigned 740–690) and the younger brother of King Wén (Chǔ Wénwáng, reigned 689–677). He took up residence in the inner quarters of the palace, so as to cast a spell on Lady Wén 文夫人 (Lady Guī of Xí), with whom he was infatuated. Dòu Bān 鬥班 killed him. These events took place in the years 666–664 (Zhuāng-gōng 28–30).

King Chéng,[30] and the King didn't believe Qǐ's explanations. Qǐ fled to Jìn, and the men of Jìn employed him. Later, at the time of the Battle of Chéngpú, Jìn was about to run from the encounter when Wángsūn Qǐ, who took part in the military deliberations of Jìn, said to Xiān Zhěn,[31] 'It is only Zǐyù[32] who wants to pursue this campaign; his aims conflict with the king's wishes. Because of this, the King has supplied Zǐyù with two detachments only, that of the Crown Prince [Dōng Gōng 東宮] and that of the western flank [Xī Guǎng 西廣].[33] As for the Lords who have been following Chǔ, half have abandoned the campaign, and the Ruò'ào clan is disaffected.[34] The Chǔ Army is sure to lose! Why leave?' Xiān Zhěn took this advice. The great defeat he inflicted on Chǔ's Army was all Wángsūn Qǐ's doing.

"In former times, when King Zhuāng of Chǔ was still in his minority,[35] Zǐ Yìfù 子義, the Duke of Shēn, was his senior advisor [*shī* 師] and Prince Xiè 燮 his tutor [*fù* 傅].[36] They had Shī Chóng and Zǐkǒng lead troops against the tribes of the Shū 舒.[37] Xiè and Yìfù then brought charges against the absent commanders and seized their property,

[30] Wángsūn Qi 王孫啟 was Zǐyuán's son. King Chéng (reigned 671–626) was King Wén's son by Lady Guī of Xí. He gained the Throne by arranging the assassination of his elder brother Xióng Jiān 熊艱.

[31] Xiān Zhěn 先軫 was the Commander of Jìn's Army of the Center.

[32] Zǐyù 子玉 was also known as Dé Chén 得臣; he was the Chief Counselor of Chǔ.

[33] The term "Xī Guǎng" is specific to the structure of the Chǔ Army.

[34] Ruò'ào 若敖: this was the most powerful of the ministerial clans in Chǔ at that time and was the clan to which Zǐyù himself belonged.

[35] i.e., when he was less than twelve. King Zhuāng reigned from 613 to 591.

[36] i.e., they were acting as regents for the King, who was still in his minority.

[37] Shī Chóng 師崇, a.k.a Pān Chóng 潘崇, was Chief Tutor (tàishī 太師) of Chǔ. Zǐgōng 子, also known as Chéng Jiā 成嘉, was the Chief Counselor (lìngyǐn 令尹) of Chǔ.

dividing it among themselves. When the Chǔ troops returned, the two ministers [Yìfù and Xiè] took the King with them to the town of Lú,[38] whereupon Jī Lí of Lú[39] killed Yìfù, and Xiè and returned the King to the capital.[40] Someone later slandered Xīgōng Chén to the King,[41] and the King did not believe his explanations. Xīgōng Chén fled to Jìn, and the men of Jìn employed him. Thus, through slander, Chǔ was defeated. The one who caused the eastern Xià States to abandon their allegiance to you was none other than Xīgōng.[42]

"In times past, the elders in the clan of Yōngzǐ 雍子 slandered him to King Gòng,[43] and the King did not believe his explanations. Yōngzǐ fled to Jìn, and the men of Jìn employed him. Later, at the time of the Battle of

[38] Lú 廬 was a walled settlement in Chǔ. The Ministers went there with the King because they were afraid. *Zuǒzhuàn* says, "In former times, Dòu Kē [Zǐ Yìfù] was made a prisoner by Qín [635]. When Qín was defeated [by Jìn] at Yāo 殽 [627], he was sent back to arrange a blood covenant between Qín and Chǔ. He arranged the covenant, but did not attain his own political aims. Prince Xiè sought unsuccessfully to be made Chief Counselor, and so at length rebelled. He had Yǐng 郢 walled and sent bandits to assassinate Zǐgōng, but they came back without success" (Wéngōng 14, Item 10, p. 605). This rebellion occurred in 613, the year of King Zhuāng's accession.

[39] Jī Lí 戢黎 of Lú was the Town's Ruler.

[40] Jī Lí 戢黎 was an officer in the town of Lú.

[41] Xīgōng Chén 析公臣 was a Chǔ officer, the Duke of Xí. The slanderer said that Chén had been aware of the plans of the ministers prior to their rebellion.

[42] The "eastern Xia" States were Cài 蔡 and Shěn 沈. *Zuǒzhuàn* says, "At the Battle of Rǎo Jué 繞角 [585], Jìn was about to abandon the field when Xígōng said, 'The Chǔ troops are excitable and may easily be thrown into confusion. If you beat many drums all at once and advance upon them at night, they will be sure to abandon the battleground.' The men of Jìn took this advice, and the Army of Chǔ dispersed in the night. The men of Jìn then invaded Cài, made a surprise attack on Shěn, and took their Rulers captive. Upon this, Zhèng no longer dared to face south [i.e. acknowledge Chǔ's authority] and Chǔ lost the Central (Huá-Xià 華夏) States" (Xiānggōng 26].

[43] Yōngzǐ was an officer of Chǔ. King Gòng reigned from 590 to 560.

Yānlíng [575], Jìn was about to run from the encounter when Yōngzǐ, who was taking part in their military deliberations, said to Luán Shū, 'The Chǔ troops' strength can be assessed. Everything rests upon the Central Army led by the King's clansmen. If we have our Army of the Center exchange positions with our Lower Army, Chǔ will surely be tempted by this [i.e., enticed into attacking the Center]. If they bunch their forces in order to break into our Center, then our Upper and Lower Armies will surely defeat their Armies of the Left and Right, and then all three armies will combine to attack their royal detachment,[44] and we will certainly inflict a great defeat on them.' Luán Shū took this advice and inflicted a great defeat upon the troops of Chǔ, in which the Chǔ King was himself wounded in the face.[45] All this was brought about by Yōngzǐ.

"In former times, Prince Xià of Chén took a bride for his son Yùshú from the House of Lord Mù of Zhèng,[46] and she gave birth to Zǐ Nán. Zǐ Nán's mother brought such disorder and destruction to the State of Chén that it was lost, and caused her son to be put to death by the Vassal Lords.[47] After King Zhuāng of Chǔ bestowed the household and possessions of the Xià clan [including the widow Xià Jī] upon Wú Chén

[44] Jìn at this time had four armies. The three assaults probably refer to attacks by the Upper, Lower, and "New" Armies after the initial attack by the Central Army.

[45] The King referred to was King Gòng. He was hit in the eye by an arrow fired by Lǔ Qǐ 呂錡.

[46] Prince Xià 夏 was the son of Lord Xuān of Chén [r. 692-648]. The bride he took for Yùshú 御叔 was Xià Jī the daughter of Yáozǐ 姚子, a lesser concubine of Lord Mù of Zhèng 鄭穆公 (r. 627 – 606)..

[47] Zǐ Nán 子南 was the courtesy name of Xià Zhēngshū 夏徵舒. Yùshú died young, after which Chén Línggōng and his ministers Kǒng Níng 孔寧 and Yí Xíng-fù 儀行父 debauched his widow Xià Jī. Zhēng Shū assassinated Lord Líng, whereupon King Zhuāng of Chǔ together with the Vassal Lords punished him and destroyed Chén. These and subsequent disasters were all blamed by storytellers on Xià Jī, who was viewed by them as a *femme fatale*.

the Duke of Shēn 申, he turned her [and those possessions] over to Zǐ Fàn, and at last gave her and them to Xiāng Lǎo.[48] After Xiāng Lǎo died in the Battle of Bì 邲 [597],[49] Wú Chén and Zǐfàn contested with each other their right to Xià Jī, neither gaining the upper hand.

"When King Gòng sent Wú Chén on a mission to Qí, the latter took Xià Jī with him, then fled with her to Jìn.[50] The men of Jìn employed him—they had him establish regular diplomatic relations between Wú and Jìn.[51] Wú Chén had his son Hú Yōng 狐庸 act as Wú's emissary [to the northern powers]. He taught the men of Wú how to shoot with bows and drive chariots and led them on to attack Chǔ. This has been a calamity to Chǔ ever since, and it was all the doing of Wú Chén, the Duke of Shēn.

"Most recently, Jiāo Jǔ took as his bride one of Zǐmóu's daughters, and Zǐmóu, having offended the King, fled the State. Those in authority did not believe Jiāo Jǔ's explanations, but said to him, 'It was

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[48] Wú Chén 巫臣 was also known as Qū Wú 屈巫 and went by the courtesy name Zǐlíng 子靈. Zǐfàn was the courtesy name of Prince Zè 側, who held the position of Army Marshal (*sīmǎ* 司馬). Xiāng Lǎo was the *lián yǐn* 連尹 (Liason Officer) of Chǔ. King Zhuāng at first intended to take Xià Jī for himself, but Wú Chén persuaded him that this would create a bad impression among the Lords. He, then, was about to bestow her on Wú Chén, but then settled on Zǐfàn 子反 instead. Zǐfàn wanted to accept, but Wú Chén raised further difficulties, so at last King Zhuāng gave her to Xiāng Lǎo 襄老.

[49] Xiāng Lǎo was shot by Zhì Zhuāngzǐ 知莊子 of Jìn, who captured the body and brought it back to Jìn.

[50] Wú Chén arranged for Xià Jī to return to Zhèng, her home State, under the pretext of seeking the return of the body of her husband Xiāng Lǎo. King Gòng himself sent her there. Wú Chén, who had been ordered by King Zhāng to go on a mission to Qí, sent betrothal gifts to Zhèng, which were accepted by the Count of Zhèng. Upon arriving there himself (after abandoning his mission to Qí), he went with her to Jìn.

[51] Zǐfàn slaughtered all of Wú Chén's clan that were left in Chǔ after his departure. In revenge Wú Chén decided to do his utmost to build up the power of Chu's enemy, Wú. To effect this, he went as an emissary from Jìn to Wú, and later sent his son to live there as well.

you who advised him to run away.' He grew fearful and fled to Zhèng. From afar, he craned his neck and extended his gaze to the south, saying, 'Perchance they will pardon my offense.' But again, you have failed to think the matter through, and so he has sought refuge in Jìn; and the men of Jìn will employ him as they have employed so many others. If he schemes for them against Chǔ, Chǔ is sure to suffer yet another great defeat."

Looking deeply worried, Zǐmù said, "Where has that man gone? If he is summoned, will he return?"

"When a man, who is lost from his native land, can regain his life there, how could he not return?" responded Shēngzǐ.

"If he doesn't come, what can be done?" asked Zǐ Mù.

"That man will not stay where he is," Shēngzǐ replied. "He will be performing missions season after season, causing the guardrail of his chariot to go back and forth between the Courts of all the Lords. If we pay the Dōngyáng brigands to kill him, that might prove effective; otherwise, nothing will do."

"That cannot be done," said Zǐmù. "If, as a high Minister of Chǔ, I should bribe a bandit to slaughter a man in Jìn, it would not be just. You summon him for me—I shall double his holdings here." He then had Jiāo Míng 椒鳴 send for his father and restored him to his former position.

Author: Unknown, 4th Century BCE.

62. A Chǔ Officer Perceives that Wú is Doomed

Here, a prescient observer foresees that the character of a Prince will lead his nation's destruction after his assumption of the Throne.

Summary: Prime Minister Zǐxī worries about the threat of Wú. Wěi, the Commandant of Lán, observes that while the habits of King Hélǘ of Wú are energetic and ascetic, those of his Crown Prince Fūchāi are

luxurious. He is able to tell from this that Wú will perish. This is item 6 in "Tales from Chǔ" (Book 2). *Zuǒ Tradition*, Aigōng 1, has a parallel account in which Wěi's remarks about Hélǘ and Fūchāi are attributed to Zǐxī and where Zǐxī's forebodings are attributed to the Chǔ officers in general, excluding Zǐxī. ~ Eric Henry.

Zǐxī[52] 子西 sighed while in Court, whereupon Wěi, the Commandant of Lán 蘭尹亹,[53] said, "I have heard that a man of quality sighs only when he is alone and broods on the majesty and decline of former States, or on the sadness of mourning and burial—for such things he may sigh when by himself; otherwise he does not. When a man of quality takes part in government, he thinks of obligation, when eating and drinking, he thinks of what is proper, when at a banquet, he thinks of good cheer, and when experiencing pleasure, he thinks of goodness—he does not sigh. But now, while taking part in the State's affairs, you are sighing. Why?"

"Hélǘ was able to defeat our Army," said Zǐxī. "Hélǘ has passed away, and I have heard that his successor surpasses his father in ability; that is why I sigh."

"You should fear our failure to cultivate the virtue that enables us to rule; you should not fear Wú," replied Wěi. "Hélǘ did not seek to please his palette with delicacies, nor to delight his ear with lascivious melodies, nor did he feast his eyes on alluring young bed-partners. He did not seek to be at ease, but diligently exercised his mind both early and late. He took to heart the ills of his people, and regarded every instance of good behavior that he heard of as an astonishing revelation, and received every man-of-service as if receiving a reward. If he made

[52] The Chief Counselor Prince Shēn 公子申. See "Tales from Chǔ," Book 2, Item 4.

[53] See "Tales from Chǔ," Book 2, Item 4.

an error, he was sure to correct it. If he did something wrong, he was full of trepidation, and for these reasons he was able to gain the people's support and was able to achieve his aims.

"But now I hear that Fūchāi is fond of exhausting the people's strength in order to accomplish selfish projects that delight him. He gives rein to all his faults and resists admonition. Wherever he passes a single night, he must have pavilions, kiosks, hills, and pools built there, and requires that all six domestic animals be supplied for his amusement. Fūchāi is defeating himself; how can he defeat others? Cultivate your virtue so as to be in readiness for Wú; Wú will go down to destruction."

Author: Unknown, 4th Century BCE.

63. What is Precious to a State?

This story is one of a several in *Tales* that depict the social downfall of a man put tartly in his place when he evinces an improper sort of pride. It is significant that the overweening fool in the story is a Court Officer of Jìn, a State held by all to be fully civilized, whereas the man who corrects him is an emissary from Chǔ, regarded as a rude, semi-civilized State. As Kǒngzǐ (Confucius) is said to have observed, "When ritual and propriety are not to be found in the capital, one may seek those qualities in the wild."

Summary: Wángsūn Yú goes on a mission of greeting to Jìn and is entertained at a banquet by Lord Dìng (reigned 511–475). At the banquet, Zhào Jiǎnzǐ, a Jìn Minister and clan-chief, makes his jade pendant ring by way of salutation, and asks if Chǔ still has its white jade cross-piece and how many generations the men of Chǔ have treasured it.

Wángsūn Yú replies that it is not considered a treasure. Among the things that Chǔ treasures, he lists several things, giving the reasons why they are deemed precious.

This is Item 7 in "Tales from Chǔ" (Book 2). It is alluded to, though without precise quotation, in *The Great Learning* (a Hàn Dynasty text), 10:12. No parallel item appears in *Zuǒ Tradition.* ~ Eric Henry.

Wángsūn Yǔ[54] went on a mission of greeting to Jìn and was entertained at a banquet by Lord Dìng.[55] At the banquet, Zhào Jiǎnzǐ[56] by way of greeting made his jade girdle-pendant ring by striking it, and said to Yǔ, "Does Chǔ still have its white jade ornament?"[57]

"Yes," was the answer.

"For how many generations has this been your State's treasure?" asked Jiǎnzǐ.

"It has never been considered a treasure," said Yǔ. "The items that Chǔ treasures include: Guān Shèfù, who was able to supply instructive counsel on how to conduct ourselves among the Lords, so that the Ruler of our humble realm would not become the butt of scandal; there was also the Annalist of the Left Yǐ Xiàng, who was able to freely quote the ancient statutes, so as to keep all things at Court in order; and all day long he recounted instances of past success and failure to our humble Lord, so that he never forgot the careers of former Kings; he was

[54] Wángsūn Yǔ 王孫圉 was an Officer of Chǔ. The name appears sometimes as Wángsūn Wéi 王孫圍.

[55] Jìn Dìng-gōng (reigned 511–475) was the son of Jìn Qǐng-gōng.

[56] Zhào Jiǎnzǐ, also known as Zhào Yāng 趙鞅, was the head of the ministerial clan of Zhào and the founder of the later State of Zhào.

[57] Héng 珩. This type of ornament is described as being either like a semicircle of jade or a horizontal ornament similar in shape to a sounding stone. (CG)

also able to speak with the greater and lesser spirits and persuade them against doing us injury, and cause them to feel no resentment toward Chǔ.

"There is also the island of Tú in the marshlands of Yún Méng—this is where we obtain metal, wood, and bamboo arrow shafts, as well as turtle-shells, pearls, horns, ivory, pelts, leather, feathers, fur, and animal tails, which are gathered as a military tax, so as to keep our troops in readiness to deal with the unexpected. It is from such resources that gifts of silk and brocade are drawn, which are used to entertain visiting Lords. When the Lords show fondness for silken things, we present them with seemly words, as a safeguard against the unexpected, and the greater spirits aid us as well. Thus, our Ruler is able to avoid giving offense to the Lords, and the people are thereby protected. These are the treasures of Chǔ. As for the jade ornament, it is but a plaything of our former Rulers. What value could it possess?

"I have heard that the treasures of a State are six and six alone. Enlightened Kings and wise individuals who are able to makes proper dispositions of all things and guide the State in the correct courses—these are to be valued; jade for sacrifice, which is able to serve as protection for fine crops and prevent drought—this are to be valued; turtles, whose plastrons may be used for determining future good or misfortune—these are to be valued; pearls able to prevent disastrous fires[58]—these are to be valued; stores of metal sufficient to provide a defense against troops and insurrections—these are to be valued; and mountains, forests, lowlands, and marshes sufficient to provide items for use—these are to be valued. But as for ornaments that merely

[58] Pearls were thought to consist of congealed water, and so perhaps were thought to be efficacious, through some kind of sympathetic magic, against fire.

produce a splendid ringing noise, Chŭ, though a barbarous southern State, does not value them"