

## II. HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

### 1. The Legendary Kings and Earliest Dynasties

The conception we now have of the earliest legends and mythology of the Chinese is mainly the result of editing and interpretation on the part of the Confucians. It was their concern to project the dynastic system as far back as possible into the past.<sup>1</sup> According to this distorted mythical interpretation, which may be called "pseudohistory", there was first a line of early "sovereigns" followed by the dynasties which bring us into historical times.<sup>2</sup>

According to pre-Han literature, there is a line of succession of early rulers: Fu Hsi 伏羲, Shen Nung 神農, Yen Ti 炎帝, Huang Ti 黃帝, Shao Hao 少昊, Chuan Hsiu 顓頊, K'u 嚳, Yao 堯, Shun 舜, and Yü 禹. These are legendary figures with many mythological features. During the Chou dynasty noble families traced their origins back to these heroes and the doctrines surrounding them constituted the *commune bonum* of the educated nobility.<sup>3</sup> These rulers are called "culture heroes" because the early achievements of civilization are attributed to them and to lesser figures like them. Such achievements

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1 WATSON 1966, p. 11.

2 FAIRBANK & REISCHAUER & GRAIG 1972, p. 21.

3 KARLGREN 1946, pp. 207, 213. The kings are listed in VANDERMEERSCH 1977, pp. 35, 36. See also MASPERO 1978, pp. 20, 73, 74; HALOUN 1926, pp. 243-270; FAN Wen-lan 1965, pp. 92, 93, 127. According to Granet, Shu Ching mentions only Yao and Shun. Szu-ma Ch'ien who made the first large compilation of general history, took as the subject of the first chapter of his "Historical Memoirs" the five sovereigns. He made Chinese history begin with Huang Ti, who during the Han dynasty was considered the patron of the Taoist sects. See GRANET 1930, p. 9; GRANET 1939, pp. 9, 10; ERKES 1938, pp. 295-333.

include the discovery of fire, fishing, hunting, agriculture, the devising of the calendar and the invention of writing.<sup>4</sup>

The dynasty, Hsia 夏, that began with Yü's 禹 reign, 2205-2198, is probably not wholly fictitious. The culture of this dynasty was agrarian with bronze weapons and pottery vessels but without knowledge of the art of writing. Moreover, it is generally accepted that Hsia had a ruling house which operated from the southern part of the lower course

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4 FAIRBANK & REISCHAUER & CRAIG 1972, p. 21. These rulers consist of three sovereigns, Huang 王; and five emperors, Ti 帝. Fu Hsi, or ox tamer, was the first of the three Huang. His reign began in 2852 B.C. He domesticated the animals and established the institution of the family. Shen Nung, divine farmer, initiated a systematic form of agriculture and promoted various agricultural techniques. Huang Ti, The Yellow Emperor, developed culture in many ways. He introduced writing, wooden houses and boats, silk, cloth etc. He also overcame the barbarians, after which he was accepted as national leader by tribes throughout the Yellow River plain. Some writers suggest that China's history as a nation began with Huang Ti. Of the Five Emperors, Yao who reigned 2357-2256 B.C. and Shun 2255-2205 B.C. in particular are highly esteemed as great sages of China's "Golden Age". Jao's son was considered unworthy to succeed him as emperor. Jao found a virtuous man to succeed him, and made him co-ruler during the last 28 years of his reign. This man, Shun, was a poor peasant, but was famous because he was an obedient and devoted son. His blind father and scheming stepmother favouring his spoiled half-brother, punished him regularly and on several occasions attempted to kill him. Shun invariably forgave them and never wavered in his duty as devoted son and loving brother. On achieving eminence, he became a model ruler.

According to the legends, the reigns of Jao and Shun were troubled by floods. Several attempts were made to control these but unsuccessfully, whereupon Shun called on Yü to drain the waters. He dredged channels through which the floodwaters drained out to the sea. In this way he created the major rivers of north China. Shun appointed Yü to succeed him and made him joint ruler for 17 years. Yü was benevolent and loved by his subjects. After his death the people ignored the successor he had designated and asked his son to settle their disputes and to guide them. This son was prevailed upon to become ruler himself, and in this way China's first dynasty was created. Jao, Shun and Yü are called the Three Sages. HUCKER 1975, pp. 22, 23.

The concept of Five Emperors is from the later years of the Warring States period. HSÜ Hsü-sheng 1962, p. 197. There has also been a tendency to try to establish a series of "emperors" to correspond to the five elements. KARLGREN 1946, p. 239. See also FORKE 1927, p. 17. For a list of early emperors and the early inventions, see KUO, P.C. 1937, pp. 121, 122. Kuo also speaks here of the origins of the Chinese race, KUO, P.C. 1937, pp. 115-119.

of the Yellow River.<sup>5</sup>

Finally, according to tradition, power passed into the hands of a depraved tyrant named Chieh 桀. In 1766 B.C. he was deposed and exiled by an inferior called Ch'eng T'ang 成湯, T'ang the Successful. He founded a new dynasty, the Shang 商, which took up once more the task of the development of civilization. Shang is traditionally given the dates of 1766-1122 B.C. or 1523-1027 B.C.<sup>6</sup>

5 EBERHARD 1971, p. 18; EBERHARD 1977, pp. 11, 12; WATSON, WILLIAM 1966, p. 15. Yü divided his empire into nine provinces and from the metal mined in these provinces he cast nine bronze tripods which became the symbol of his dynasty. CHENG, Te-K'un 1960, p. xxi. "The Yü legend incorporates two basic features of Chinese agrarian society, the regulation of waterways and the use of organised *corvée* labour for accomplishing it. If such interpretations are correct, the conclusion might well follow that the transition from primitive collectivism to proto-feudalism took place under the same environmental compulsions as the transition later on from proto-feudalism to feudal bureaucratism. For the tasks of hydraulic engineering are set by geography itself, and the interconnected aims of relief from flooding, maintenance of water-supplies for irrigation, and attainment of convenient means of bulk transport, always tended towards strong centralised government as the only effective instrument." NEEDHAM 1971, p. 251.

On Yü see also GRANET 1930, p. 16, and GRANET 1929, pp. 17, 18. Wolfram Eberhard summarises the early development of Chinese civilisation on the basis of socio-anthropological analysis:

"a) Local cultures in China until c. 2000 B.C.

b) Transformation of one or several of the animal-breeding local cultures in the north into (chariot-equipped) warrior-nomads with knowledge of bronze. Whether this group immigrated from Western Asia, or whether the technological knowledge was transmitted from the West by migrating craftsmen clans or tribes, cannot be established.

c) A series of small-scale conquests by the new group of agrarian local cultures in Shansi and adjacent easterly areas, the border area between mountains and the plains. This may have produced the first small states, such as the states ascribed to half-legendary leaders such as Yao or Shun, and the Hsia state." EBERHARD 1957, p. 110. There was a Hsia dynasty. ERKES 1956, p. 23.

6 HUCKER 1975, pp. 23, 24, 26; FAIRBANK & REISCHAUER & CRAIG 1973, p. 21; KARLGREN 1946, p. 326; VANDERMEERSCH 1977, p. 12. Chou Fa-kao lists different opinions concerning the date of Chou conquest. "In dating the record of a lunar eclipse on the day keng-shen 庚申 (cyclical 57) of the twelfth month, Professor Tung Tso-pin accepts the eclipse of November 24, 1311 B.C. and places the Chou conquest of Shang in 1111 B.C. In contrast to these dates, Professor Homer H. Dubs favors the eclipse of December 27-28, 1192, and Professor Bernhard Karlgren places the Chou conquest in 1027 B.C." CHOU Fa-kao 1960, p. 108.

"Archaeology has to this time not yet been able to find incontestable traces of the Hsia, in spite of numerous excavation attempts in the supposed centres of this dynasty."<sup>7</sup> Only with the Shang does the work of the archaeologist join with that of the historian in illuminating the first brilliant chapter of Chinese history."<sup>8</sup>

The Shang dynasty occupied altogether six seats of power or capitals, the last of them being Yin 殷. The last twelve Shang kings resided here for a total of 273 years, beginning c. 1395 B.C. The whole dynasty is often referred to as Yin after the name of the last capital.<sup>9</sup>

The last Shang emperor was a debauched and tyrannical ruler. King Wen 文王 of the principality of Chou was one of those who suffered most at his hands. The son and successor of King Wen (according to tradition in either 1122 or 1027 B.C.) founded the dynasty of Chou 周 after the name of the principality. This founder of the Chou dynasty was King Wu 武王, whose brother, Chou Kung 周公, the Duke of Chou, consolidated the dynasty. He was counsellor to King Wu's young son and heir.<sup>10</sup> Hsia, Shang and Chou are generally referred to under the common name of "the three dynasties".<sup>11</sup>

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See also KARLGREN 1945, pp. 117-120. DUBS 1954, p. 104; YUNG Meng-yüan 1980, pp. 1-21.

7 EBERHARD 1977, p. 12.

8 WATSON, William 1966, p. 15. See also BARY & CHAN & WATSON 1961, p. 4.

9 HUCKER 1975, p. 26.

10 FAIRBANK & REISCHAUER & CRAIG 1973, pp. 21, 22.

11 Karlgren points out that it is commonly believed that before the "three dynasties" there were no dynasties at all. However, this is contrary to the earliest traditions which often account for four dynasties, namely, Yü, Hsia, Shang and Chou. According to the pre Han texts the Yü dynasty could be characterized as an era with rites and customs of its own. KARLGREN 1946, pp. 217, 218.

## 2. The Shang Dynasty

The Shang state<sup>1</sup> was a centralized and absolute monarchy with strong feudalistic characteristics.<sup>2</sup> Several reasons exist for its political absolutism, one of which was the fact that the ruling class had a monopoly of bronze metallurgy, bronze weapons and chariots. This probably gave it power over the other members of society. Since the family pattern was also authoritarian, it was logical for the state to be authoritarian as well. The Chinese had a constant need for unity in their defense against nomadic neighbours. Hence, the necessity for a centralized state.<sup>3</sup>

1 The discussion below observes the following order: Shang state, society, economy and war, culture, religion with sub-divisions on the Shang gods, ancestors, priests, oracles, sacrifices. The second last paragraph is concerned with Confucius' relation to Shang.

2 HUCKER 1975, pp. 30, 50. Of the Shang state and king, Keightley says: "Conceptions of sovereignty are related to those of territoriality. It is unlikely that the full Shang state, except at its center, can be associated with a defined and bounded territory; ... There is, in fact, no evidence in the inscriptions that the Shang thought in terms of specific territorial units or delimited boundaries. The polity seems to have been conceived in terms of personal power (*who* was in control) and *kinship association* (*what* relationship he had to the center) rather than land area (*where* he was in control)... Crudely put, outside the core area the Shang world was divided into friends and enemies, and the state, such as it was, consisted of the friends." KEIGHTLEY 1979, 1980, p. 26.

Li says of the Shang people: "Shang was originally the name of a nomadic tribe, moving from place to place until it finally settled in Shangch'iu in the modern Honan province. Through contacts with the more advanced Chinese tribes, it gradually adopted agriculture and acquired the sophisticated culture of a sedentary society. Meanwhile, it lost none of the vigour and vitality of a nomadic horde." LI, *Dun J.* 1965, p. 37.

Another theory of Shang origin: "The boys and girls met, sang and danced and chose their mates... The Shang people may have risen from one of these meeting places, distinguishing themselves by introducing organized activities there, exploiting its importance and building an ancestral temple as a symbol of their power. Under their patronage a town may have soon grown up. ...forming the centre of their political and economic life. They may then have made themselves the ruler of the centre with their headman as the king and have started to exert their influence on the neighbouring villages in the area. This may well have been the beginning of the Shang dynasty." CHENG, Te-k'un 1960, p. 213. Cheng here is apparently basing his ideas on the theories of Granet. See GRANET 1975, pp. 165, 180-183. See also FEHL 1971, p. 47; CREEL 1938, pp. 252-254.

3 FAIRBANK & REISCHAUER & CRAIG 1973, p. 30.

The Shang state was ruled by a king, posthumously called Ti 帝. The supreme god was also called Ti. The king was also a high priest and was surrounded by many other priests as well. The power of the king in the state probably did not extend very far, since the more or less independent lords in the more distant parts of the realm recognized the king only as their supreme lord and religious leader. This can be described as an early and loose form of the feudal system, in which the principal duties of the lord were to send tributes of grain, to participate together with their retainers in times of war to send tortoise shells to the capital to be used there as oracles and sometimes also to send cattle and horses. The domain of the Shang king contained about thirty such dependent states.<sup>4</sup>

The Shang king was served by officials, whose titles indicated at least rudimentary differentiation and specialization by function. Some of the officials served the king personally, others were scribes and military officials. They belonged to a hereditary class of aristocrats, possibly

<sup>4</sup> Succession among the Shang rulers was rather complicated. The succession was from brother to brother in thirteen cases and from father to son in seventeen cases. After the death of the ruler, his brothers were successors to the throne, the elder brother first. After all the brothers had died, the sons of the brothers became rulers. It is not known whether the sons of older or younger brothers were preferred. Neither is it known whether the sons of the principal wives were preferred to the sons of secondary wives. EBERHARD 1977, pp. 20, 21; FAIRBANK & REISCHAUER & CRAIG 1973, p. 28. See the list of rulers: VANDERMEERSCH 1977, pp. 35, 36.

Of the reliability of Shang history, Needham says: "The *Shih Chi*, written about 100 B.C. gives (chapter 3), with all verisimilitude, an account of thirty Shang kings, beginning with Chheng Thang (whose date would be about 1500 B.C.) and ending with the 'wicked tyrant' Chou Hsin 紂 辛 (of about 1050 B.C.). It was commonly maintained that Ssuma Chhien could not have had adequate historical materials for his account of what had happened more than a thousand years earlier. One may judge of the astonishment of many, therefore, when it appeared that no less than twenty-three out of the thirty rulers' names were to be clearly found on the indisputably genuine Anyang bones (cf. the lists of Wang Kuo-Wei, and Hopkins). It must be, therefore, that Ssuma Chhien did have fairly reliable materials at his disposal a fact which underlines once more the deep historical-mindedness of the Chinese- and that the Shang dynasty is perfectly acceptable". (Shih Chi, 史記 Chheng Thang = Ch'eng T'ang, 成湯 Ssuma Chhien = Szu Ma Ch'ien, 司馬遷.) NEEDHAM 1954, p. 88. See also CHANG, Kwang-chih 1978, pp. 15, 16, 29-32.

related to the king. Specific offices were probably also hereditary.<sup>5</sup>

In Shang society the officials of the king formed a "scholar official" class. During the Shang era the ruler's ministers were given the credit for the achievements of the government. At times a particular minister was awarded a special honour. Sometimes the minister enjoyed greater prominence than the ruler under whom he served.<sup>6</sup>

Under the Shang dynasty there was a class of ordinary people or commoners in China. They could own a small piece of land on which to grow their crops and were free to lead their own lives. However, they were dependent on the nobility politically and economically.<sup>7</sup> The majority were farmers to whose land the Shang rulers claimed the right. The rulers imposed some obligations, mainly those of forced labour, upon the farmers, who, strictly speaking, were "serfs". Some of these serfs were dependent upon noble families and worked on land which the noble families regarded as their own. The families of artisans and craftsmen were hereditary servants of the nobility as well. Serfs also existed in the independent states that bordered on the Shang domains. When the Shangs seized these neighbouring states, they resettled the captive foreign aristocracy by appending them as a group to their own nobility. The captured serfs remained with their previous masters and shared their fate. This system was also later applied by the Chous after their overthrow of the Shang dynasty.<sup>8</sup>

The commoners were nominally free people. If they violated the law, they became slaves. Many of the slaves were prisoners of war, although under the Shang dynasty there were many kinds of slaves, who were employed in every kind of capacity.<sup>9</sup> Those slaves who were used in agriculture were called 衆 meaning many people.<sup>10</sup> The term probably included serfs

5 HUCKER 1975, p. 30; EBERHARD 1971, p. 24.

6 CREEL 1970, pp. 35-40

7 KUO Mo-jo 1976, p. 172.

8 EBERHARD 1977, pp. 21, 22.

9 KUO Mo-jo 1976, p. 172; HUCKER 1975, p. 59.

10 KUO Mo-jo 1976, p. 172; KAO Shu-fan 1974, p. 1133.

as well.<sup>11</sup>

The greatest gap between the three groups - aristocracy, commoners and slaves, was that between the aristocracy and the other classes of society. Only the ruler and the aristocracy could own slaves, and only the nobles preserved a surname.<sup>12</sup> In other words, the basic gap in society under Shang was that which existed between those who served as serfs and slaves and those who received the benefit of their service and who lived at their expense with a much higher standard of living.

The Shang economy was mainly agricultural and included livestock such as sheep and cattle, although the Shangs seem to have had the traditional Chinese abhorrence of milk products. Agricultural implements were made of wood and stone, since bronze was rare and expensive. Cowrie shells were used as a kind of primitive money. Jade was highly prized, as it continues to be in China even today.<sup>13</sup>

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11 The distinction between serfs and slaves in different studies does not seem quite clear. If a slave is defined as a person who is regarded as the property of his lord with no social rights, to be treated cruelly, bound and whipped, it seems that they could hardly constitute a basis for economic life in Shang society. EBERHARD 1971, p. 21. Hucker says that whether Shang China was a slave society or a rudimentary feudal society is a matter of dispute among modern scholars. HUCKER 1975, p. 30. Eberhard firmly states that the economy could not be based on the labour of a slave class. EBERHARD 1971, p. 21. A prominent Chinese scholar, Kuo Mo-jo, emphasizes that Shang society was a slave society in that the slaves were the basis of Shang production and culture. KUO Mo-jo 1976, pp. 171, 172. One reason for this dispute may well lie in the concepts used. If a distinction is made between serf and slave, the the basis of the economic life is the serf rather than the slave. If serfs are regarded as slaves, then the society under Shang was a slave society. It also seems that the Marxist interpretation of history would wish to stress the slave characteristics of the society, and it may well be that this interpretation will be reconsidered if the free development continues in the Peoples Republic of China. On the other hand, common sense alone must wonder how a person could be whipped by his guardian and also produce such works of art as vases and Shang bronzes. Such work would require peace of mind and could not be produced under the stress of whipping, which would also affect the motivation in the creation of such artifacts.

12 KUO Mo-jo 1976, p. 171.

13 FAIBANK & REISCHAUER & CRAIG 1973, p. 28; EBERHARD 1977, p. 15.



The industry of war was important under the Shang, since the Shang people were in a more or less continuous state of war with their neighbouring tribes. Some of these tribes had at one time been part of the earlier Hsia state.<sup>14</sup> The war chariot was the central weapon and remained so until late Chou times.<sup>15</sup> The army was organized in units of one hundred men. These were combined as right, left and central units into an army of 300 men.<sup>16</sup> The lords of Shang could equip armies of up to 5000 men, only some of whom were allowed bronze weapons. Moreover, there were probably not very many lords who owned war chariots. Most of the soldiers were commoners fighting on foot and even slaves may have been used as soldiers.<sup>17</sup>

Generally speaking, the Shang culture still lacked certain features that were to become typical of Chinese civilization. The family system was not yet the strong patriarchal system it was to become. The religion was still that of agrarian fertility. The feudal system continued to be very primitive.<sup>18</sup>

The form of writing used by the Shang is a rudimentary form of present-day Chinese script. It is pictorial and makes use of phonetic signs as does the script of today. It possessed many characters that are no longer used and many that are used nowadays are absent. Shang script had about 3000 characters of which some 1000 can now be read. With these 3000 characters the Shang people were well able to express themselves. The fact

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14 EBERHARD 1971, p. 21.

15 EBERHARD 1971, p. 25; EBERHARD 1977, p. 20. The chariot was two-wheeled with spokes; it was drawn by two horses, sometimes by four; it was manned by three men: the warrior who was a nobleman, the driver and the servant who handed arrows and other weapons to the nobleman when necessary. The chariot was a valuable object and was manufactured by specialists. Horses were also expensive and rare. The weapons were bows and arrows, and spears and fighting axes for close combat. The nobleman wore a bronze helmet, although not always, it seems, since the number of other weapons compared to the helmets was comparatively large. EBERHARD 1971, p. 25; ERDBERG CONSTEN, V. 1958, p. 54. See also EBERHARD 1967, p. 26.

16 EBERHARD 1971, p. 21.

17 ERDBERG CONSTEN, V. 1958, p. 55.

18 EICHHORN 1957, p. 35. See also CHANG Kwang-chih 1971, p. 185.

that they could write also demonstrates that the intellectual level attained under the Shangs was very high.<sup>19</sup>

Another remarkable legacy we have of the Shang dynasty, apart from writing, is the survival of the bronzes. The quality of bronze casting during the late Shang period was extremely fine and has never been surpassed anywhere in the world.<sup>20</sup>

The architecture during the Shang period was essentially the same as that of modern China. Wooden pillars supported the roof. The walls made at first of pounded earth but in later times usually of brick, were merely non-structural screens. The pillars rested on individual foundation stones set on a platform of pounded earth. Buildings were carefully orientated to face south.<sup>21</sup>

For the purposes of the present study the most important aspect of the life of the Shang people is their religion. The first basic concept in the Shang religion is the concept of the Supreme Being or Super God. Ti 帝 was understood as dwelling above, the lord over other gods, spirits and deified ancestors.<sup>22</sup> Dubs says that the fundamental meaning of Ti is

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19 EBERHARD 1971, pp. 17, 18.

20 FAIRBANK & REISCHAUER & CRAIG 1973, p. 27; EBERHARD 1967, p. 25. LI Chi 1957, pp. 45-59. "Bronze did not replace stone completely, as some weapons were still made of stone or animal bones." LI, Kun J. 1965, p. 39. See also CREEL 1938, p. 253. "It is generally agreed that the best living craftsmen aided by all the resources of modern science and technology can do no better than the bronze masters of the Shang period." CHENG, Te-k'un 1978, p. 9.

21 FAIRBANK & REISCHAUER & CRAIG 1973, p. 28. According to Kaizuka, bricks were not used until the Warring States period. Prior to this time timber and loess pounded solid with sticks was used. KAIZUKA 1959, pp. 6, 7.

22 SMITH 1961, p. 147. This is based on a study made by Fu Ssu-nien, which was made from oracle bone inscriptions recorded by Sun Hai-p'o in Chia Ku Wen Pien. According to Smith, "Sixty four instances of the use of the character are recorded of which one is a duplicate. In seventeen instances the character is used as the equivalent of the verb 'to sacrifice'. In six instances the character is used coupled to the name of a previous king, and indicates that an apotheosised ancestor is referred to. In fourteen cases the sense of the character is uncertain. But in no less than twenty six instances the use of the character without any

"high god", and that Shang-ti denotes the "highest high-god" or the "highest class of high gods". Ti may also be translated as "Lord", with a capital letter to denote "high-god" and Shang-ti as "The Lord on High".<sup>23</sup>

The origins of the concept of Ti can be explained in a more sociological manner. Our starting-point is the king. The king was 下 帝 "worldly god" or lower god. Since there was a low god there must also have been an "upper god", and this was Shang-ti.<sup>24</sup>

Furthermore, the deified ancestors of the Shang kings were called Ti 帝 . "When a ruler died he became 'Ti', associated on high with the first great ancestor spirit, who still continued to concern himself with the affairs of the land which he had ruled over when alive."<sup>25</sup>

Shang-ti also had characteristics belonging to a vegetation god, to whom human sacrifices were made. He needed human sacrifice to nourish him, to keep him alive. In this way Shang-ti became the most important god with all the demons subservient to him. In this way the cult of nature and the cult of ancestors are bound together in one god, Shang-ti.<sup>26</sup>

It has also been suggested that Shang-ti was conceived of as male, "living above and guiding all growth and birth, while the earth, also worshipped, was a kind of mother goddess who bore the plants and animals procreated

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title suggests that a supreme deity is referred to, who is invoked and worshipped simply as 'Ti'. This deity is conceived of as dwelling above, the lord over other gods, spirits and deified ancestors." SMITH 1961, pp. 146, 147. 帝 是 最 高 的 神 明 (Super God), JAO Tsung-i 1978, p. 78.

23 Dubs 1958, p. 220. For Shang-ti as supreme god, see also CHAO Ch'enching 1971, p. 158. See also SMITH 1961, pp. 146, 147.

24 YANG Yung-kuo 1973, pp. 3-5. It is explained further that the upper god was the father and the lower god or king or emperor of the Yin state was the son of god, the so-called son of Heaven. This son of god obeyed implicitly the commandments of Shang-ti. Probably the king was responsible to Shang-ti for everything he did. YANG Yung-kuo 1973, pp. 3, 4.

25 SMITH 1961, p. 146; Eichhorn 1957, p. 41. Fehl says: "Continuing their former tradition as hunter-warriors the Shang worshipped a war god, Ti, the apotheosis of their legendary warrior-chieftains." FEHL 1971, p. 48.

26 ERDBERG CONSTEN V. 1958, p. 44; ERKES 1940, p. 191.

by Shang-ti."<sup>27</sup> "The mother goddess She 社 was especially important for the villages and towns. At least for a time She appeared to be a goddess of death. Human sacrifice and death generally was looked upon as a return of the dead to Mother Earth, who thus for a time at least appears to have been the real goddess of death. " The earth was regarded as the true home of man, the mother from whom he was born, and to whose womb he must ultimately return.<sup>28</sup>

Apart from the Shang-ti and She, there were also many natural deities, such as river gods, gods of the mountains, of points of the compass, of clouds etc. These gods were prayed to for rain, a good harvest, the control of floods etc.<sup>29</sup> Apparently there were also sun and moon gods.<sup>30</sup> Star cults were rare.<sup>31</sup> It is noteworthy that under the Shangs there was no deity of Heaven, T'ien 天.<sup>32</sup>

In order to promote the fertility of the earth, sacrifices were offered to the gods. Many human beings being sacrifices as well as animals.

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27 EBERHARD 1971, p. 19. Eberhard continues: "It is likely that some myths which later sources report already existed in some parts of the Shang realm. Thus, we hear in a local myth that the two main deities were conceived as a married couple who later were parted by one of their children. The husband went to heaven, and the rain is the male seed that creates life on earth." EBERHARD 1979, p. 19.

28 ERKES 1940, pp. 191-193. After reviewing various opinions about Shang-ti, Needham says: "But in any case two things are clear: (a) that the de-personalisation of God in ancient Chinese thought took place so early and went so far that the conception of divine celestial lawgiver imposing ordinances on non-human Nature never developed, and (b) that the highest spiritual being ever known and worshipped had not been a Creator in the sense of the Hebrews and the Greeks." NEEDHAM 1956, p. 581.

29 CHANG, Tsung-tung 1970, p. 258.

30 Chao Ch'en-ching 1971, p. 159.

31 CHANG, Tsung-tung 1970, pp. 258, 259. Chang says that there were no moon cults. The cult of the sun was fused with the ancestor cult. The mythical mother deities of ten suns and twelve moons were honoured, because they were regarded as the wives of the Shang ancestors. CHANG, Tsung-tung 1970, pp. 258, 259.

32 CHANG, Tsung-tung 1970, p. 236. Chang says: "In Orakelinschriften kommt zwar der Archetyp des heutigen Zeichens als 𠄎 vor, es wurde aber in der im Shuowen angegebenen ursprünglichen Bedeutung 'Kopf' gebraucht." CHANG, Tsung-tung 1970, p. 236.

Prisoners of war were often used in sacrifices as were slaves. It seems that many wars were waged with the purpose of taking prisoners for human sacrifice. In some regions people were sacrificed to the earth, portions of the flesh of the sacrifice being distributed to the various owners of fields, who then buried the pieces of flesh in the fields.<sup>33</sup>

Deceased rulers and even dead ministers were also worshipped during the Shang period. These rulers and ministers were thought of as mediators between man and the higher deity, Shang-ti. This worship may be regarded as a forerunner of "ancestral worship" which became typical of later China.<sup>34</sup>

The most important method of communication between men and gods was the oracle. The undershells of tortoises, the scapulae or shoulder blades of cattle and other flattish bones produced for the purpose mainly from the Yangtse valley were employed. Since the bones were used in divination, they are often called "oracle bones", and this method of divination is called scapulimancy. Before the bones were used they were flattened and polished. Then a small groove was carved on one side and heat was then applied with a small glowing bronze rod near this thin area producing cracks from which the diviner somehow arrived at "yes" or "no", "favourable" or "unfavourable" answers to his questions.<sup>35</sup>

About a tenth of the "oracle bones" have inscribed on them the questions asked, and a few also have the answer and sometimes even the eventual outcome. Issues of many kinds were decided by the oracle: when field labour and campaigns should begin, what sacrifices should consist of etc. The oracle was also asked things relating to sacrifices to the deities, for instance, the weather, crops, war, hunting expeditions, help from or injury by an ancestor to his living descendants, and the luck of the next ten-day period, which had already been established as the East Asian "week". Every issue of any importance for the Shang people was put to the

33 EBERHARD 1971, p. 19; ERDBERG CONSTEN V. 1958, p. 53; KUO Mo-jo 1976, p. 176.

34 EBERHARD 1971, pp. 23, 24.

35 EBERHARD 1971, p. 22; FAIRBANK & REISCHAUER & CRAIG 1973, pp. 27, 28.

oracle. The Shang king made no decisions himself, these always being left to the ancestors and their chief, Shang-ti. The importance of the divination can also be seen from the fact that the chief ministers of the rulers all seem to have been diviners.<sup>36</sup>

Under the Shangs there were two basic forms of priesthood, Shih 士 and Wu 巫. The Shih were literati, a kind of cultural official. They exercised control over the scapulimancy. Their principal concern was with the written communication with royal ancestors and other gods. These priests had a kind of responsibility for what the oracle said. And those higher priests who gave too many wrong oracles were forced to resign. The Shih wielded great power. If they did not agree with something, nothing could be done about it. These shih were probably from circles which had the royal confidence. Apparently many shih belonged to the royal clan.<sup>37</sup>

Wu priests were summoned to the royal court from among all kinds of people, and were consequently in sympathy with the people. They were usually men, although they numbered several women among their ranks. They possessed a special magical ability that enabled them to have direct access to ancestors and other gods. They performed extatic dances, through which the spirits of the ancestors and other gods were moved to give advice and oracular utterance through the mouths of the Wu. Their contact with gods and ancestors was more direct than that of the Shih. It was also the duty of the Wu to expel evil spirits from the royal premises. Further, the Wu priests prayed for rain by dancing. This dance was accompanied by music and shouts. The task of curing diseases was also the responsibility of

36 FAIRBANK & REISCHAUER & CRAIG, pp. 27, 28; EBERHARD 1971, p. 22.

The very word for divination, chan 占 may be derived from an ancient pictogram of a scapula flattened and heated with a glowing bronze rod. NEEDHAM 1956, p. 347. On oracle bones see also CHOU, Hung-hsiang 1979, pp. 135-149.

37 EICHHORN 1957, pp. 44-50. See also MASPERO & ESCARRA 1942, p. 9; MURAMATSU 1969, p. 249; ERKES 1956, p. 28, 29. Kaizuka says: "That these religious officials who served the gods and transmitted the divine will to human beings came to form a separate class indicated the existence of a theocracy." KAIZUKA 1959, p. 9. See also FEHL 1971, pp. 60, 61.

the Wu who offered rice to the spirits<sup>38</sup> and prayed for the disease to be cured. The Shang king who was originally the highest ranking of the divining priests, was entitled to perform the functions of the Wu.<sup>39</sup>

It is possible that the ideas of the Shang exercised some influence on Confucius, since the ruling house of Sung was later descended from the kings of the Shang dynasty. The family of Confucius, the K'ung family, who were aristocrats in the state of Lu, were themselves descended from a cadet branch of this princely family of Sung.<sup>40</sup> On the other hand, the prevailing culture during the time of Confucius, the Chou culture, was strongly influenced by the civilization of Hsia.<sup>41</sup>

Towards the end of the dynasty, the conquests of Shang added more territory to the realm than could be coped with by the primitive means of communication of the time. When the last ruler of Shang waged a 260 day war on the tribes in the south-east, rebellions broke out and these brought about the fall of the dynasty.<sup>42</sup>

### 3. The Western Chou Dynasty

Wu-wang 武王 was the first Chou king, but he died seven years after the conquest, and his young son Ch'eng-wang succeeded him. Political power at this time actually rested in the hands of his uncle, Chou-kung 周公, the Duke of Chou. The Duke built an eastern capital in Lo-yang, in western

38 During the Shang period it was believed that diseases were caused by evil spirits. The Wu were able to exorcise these evil spirits. EICHHORN 1957, p. 47.

39 EICHHORN 1957, pp. 44-50; YANG Yung-kuo 1973, p. 2; MASPERO ESCARRA 1942, p. 9.

40 CH'IEN Mu 1976, p. 69; FITZGERALD 1961, p. 63.

41 ERKES 1940, p. 209.

42 EBERHARD 1971, pp. 24-26; EICHHORN 1969, pp. 38, 39, 41. See also LI Chi 1957, pp. 44, 45. See also SHAUGHNESSY 1980-81, pp. 57-79. Of special interest is the fact that the earliest Western Chou court inscription found has an inscription stating that Wu-wang had attacked Shang. The vessel was found in 1976. T'ANG Lan 1977, pp. 8, 9. See also YU Hsing-wu 1977, pp. 10-12 and T'ANG Lan 1976, pp. 60-63.

Honan. A large number of Shang people were forced to migrate to help with the construction of the city and to settle there.<sup>1</sup>

Traditional Chinese history takes at face value the legends of Western Chou. The Chou rulers were given the Mandate of Heaven, T'ien ming 天命 to rescue the suffering people from the misrule of the wicked last king of Shang. Because the Chou were virtuous, the Shang armies put up little resistance to them. There was general rejoicing when the dissolute Shang were overthrown.<sup>2</sup>

The dynasty is called Western Chou since the central government was located near Lo-yang, 1122-771 B.C. Because of the aspiration to wield power by the relatives of king Yu-wang 幽王, who ruled from 781 to 771 B.C., the government was moved to the eastern capital. This part of the dynasty is called Eastern Chou, and is divided into two periods, Ch'un-ch'iu 春秋 or the Spring and Autumn period from 770 to 481 B.C. and Chan-kuo 戰國 or the Warring States period from 480 to 222 B.C.<sup>3</sup>

Intermarriages took place between the Chou and Shang ruling houses, a fact which indicates that the Chou were brought into the political sphere of Shang. The power of Chou grew steadily, and the power of Shang diminished due both to the disloyalty of its feudatories and to wars in the east. The Chou brought to the Shang culture elements of Turkish and Tibetan

1 CHENG Te-k'un 1963, pp. xxiv, xxv; EICHHORN 1969, pp. 43, 44; FAN Wen-lan 1965, pp. 129, 130, 133; ERKES 1956a pp. 31, 32; MASPERO 1978, pp. 34, 49.

2 CREEL 1970, pp. 51, 52. Of the power of the Chou kings Creel says: "The Chou Kings - according to the tradition - kept under their direct rule only a limited domain, while enfeoffing feudal lords to rule over the rest of the country. Many of these lords were close relatives of the king, members of the royal family. Others were rulers of local areas who had submitted and been permitted to continue to rule as vassals of the Chou. The Kings established a highly organized government, described in the *Ritual of Chou*, which exercised power over the whole country but did not interfere in the internal affairs of the feudal states." CREEL 1970, p. 52.

3 CHENG Te-k'un 1963, pp. xxv-xxix. FAN Wen-lan 1965, p. 126; CREEL 1970, p. 491.



cultures. These were needed in order to release forces that could create a new empire and maintain it for thousands of years both as a cultural and as a political unit.<sup>4</sup>

The Chou people relied on special principles of their own to govern the state. The doctrine of the Mandate of Heaven, T'ien Ming 天命, was rooted in religious concepts introduced by the Chou people. According to this doctrine or ideology,<sup>5</sup> the cosmos is dominated by an all-powerful Heaven, T'ien 天. No man is the ruler except by the Mandate of Heaven, and the ruler is entrusted with responsibility for "all under Heaven" T'ien-hsia 天下 which means the country as a whole. The Chou king was the Son of Heaven, but there was no implication that he was considered a living deity.<sup>6</sup>

The Duke of Chou told the Shang people about the Mandate of Heaven, that the Chou leaders did not seek self-aggrandizement by attacking Shang. According to the Duke of Chou, the Chou leaders had no other choice in the matter once Heaven had commanded them to punish Shang. He asked the Shang people to abide by Heaven's decision and pointed out to them that he was prepared to force them to do so if need be. He emphasized the twofold implications to the young king on whose behalf he acted as regent and warned him that Chou could not retain its primacy unless its kings ruled fairly and benevolently and thus remained in Heaven's good graces.

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4 EBERHARD 1977, pp. 23, 24. Eberhard says: "There are some indications that the ruling House of Chou may have been related to the Turkish ethnic group, while their population consisted mainly of Tibetan tribes. Whether the Chou language contained elements of these languages is not yet clear. Certainly the language of the Chou is the ancestor of what we now call the Chinese language." EBERHARD 1977, p. 23.

Hsu says of Eberhard's opinion: "His assumption that the Chou were Turkic people who conquered China, however, is not accepted by other scholars." HSU, Cho-yun 1979, p. 456. Cf. Fehl 1971, p. 59.

5 "Ideology" here refers to "a manner or the content of thinking characteristic of an individual, group or culture". See WEBSTER'S third New International Dictionary of the English Language 1976, p. 1123.

6 HUCKER 1975, p. 55. See also DOBSON 1968, p. 269, and YANG 1961, pp. 127-143. On the position of the king, see: WILHEM 1928, p. 95.

As a result, the Chinese rulers were open to challenge. The challengers could prove the validity of their claim merely by establishing it. The doctrine of the Mandate of Heaven was established during Chou and it remained the cornerstone of all Chinese political theory.<sup>7</sup>

The following principles were laid down by the beginning of Ch'in:

- One Son of Heaven should govern the whole Chinese world. His power should be centralized.
- Rulers should heed the counsel of their wise and capable ministers. The Duke of Chou emphasized this doctrine. One of the offences of the Shang king was his failure to heed the advice of his ministers.
- The task of government is to provide peace and order. From early Chou the concept existed that Heaven wished mankind to live together in harmony with each other and with the cosmic universe. The responsibility of the Son of Heaven was to ensure that such a condition was achieved.
- The government should give high priority to the task of fostering the welfare of the people; it should be humane and paternalistic. This paternalistic aspect was emphasized by the Confucians, but the idea was already prevalent at the beginning of Chou.
- The rulers were considered responsible for whatever happened in the state. The Son of Heaven was responsible for peace and order, for ensuring morality in the state, for the well-being of the people. His responsibility was total, and on the other hand, his authority was unlimited as well. In principle he could control every aspect of life.<sup>8</sup>

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7 HUCKER 1975, p. 55. Hwang says: From the time of the Duke of Chou "it has been a normal pattern for many political leaders and even rebels to claim possession of Heaven's decree whenever they felt it was necessary. It is like blank paper which remains blank until somebody writes his own language. Even the revolutionary party led by Sun Yat-sen in this century was once called 'The Association for Changing the Decree'." HWANG, Philip Ho 1980, pp. 48, 49.

8 HUCKER 1975, pp. 55-57.

Eberhard defines feudalism "as a system of government of agrarian societies in which we find a hereditary upper class which in itself is stratified, and in which some sovereign rights are given to lower members of the upper class, the nobility, in exchange for services to the highest members of that class. These services are mainly military services, but also can be others. The relation between the 'vassals' and the 'lord' are contractual and renewable each time at the time of the death of either partner."<sup>9</sup>

The feudal lords were given fiefs called kuo 國, a character depicting a walled and guarded area. This term refers to the fortified town where the lord lived and to the surrounding territory that the town dominated. The small central states, called Chung-kuo 中國, of the Chou heartland were the most cultured and prestigious.<sup>10</sup>

9 EBERHARD 1977, p. 24. Eberhard says that Marxist scholars tend to call feudal any society in which a class of landowners, who at the same time also exercised political power, controlled a class of farmers and often a class of slaves. EBERHARD 1977, p. 24. On feudalism during the early Chou period, Eberhard states: "We find in the early Chou time the typical signs of true feudalism: fiefs were given in a ceremony in which symbolically a piece of earth was handed over to the new fiefholder, and his instalment, his rights and obligations were inscribed in a 'charter'. Most of the fiefholders were members of the Chou ruling family or members of the clan to which this family belonged; other fiefs were given to heads of the allied tribes. The fiefholder (feudal lord) regarded the land of his fief, as far as he and his clan actually used it, as 'clan' land; parts of this land he gave to members of his own branch-clan for their use without transferring rights of property, thus creating new sub fiefs and sub-lords" EBERHARD 1977, p. 25.

To define Chou institutions a "feudal" is not without its problems. To describe Chou as "feudal" is according to Blakeley "simplifying a difficult question beyond conscionable limits: "He suggests re-examining and re-evaluating the Chou institutions, forms of social interaction and even ideology. He notes that this re-evaluation is taking place. BLAKELEY 1976, p. 37.

10 HUCKER 1975, p. 51. This system of feudalism has sometimes been compared with western feudalism during the Middle Ages. There are some similarities, but great differences as well. In China, effective control depended more on bonds of blood or pseudo-blood relationships than on feudal legal principles. Chou feudalism was probably closer to the system of satraps in western Asia of the same period than to the feudalism of Europe two millennia later. FAIRBANK & REISCHAUER & GRAIG 1973, pp. 31, 32. Kuo, 國, fief. VANDERMEERSCH 1977, p. 158.

Granet says about Chung-kuo: "L'expression 中國 Tchong kouo (=Chung Kuo), qui a fini par désigner la Chine, est en gros équivalente

Under the Chinese feudal system, blood kinship was of supreme importance. Feudalism was based on clan rules, so that the whole country was like an enlarged clan. The clan, or a common descent group which was larger than a family, was especially important for the nobility. During the Chou dynasty the basic organizational unit among commoners was the nuclear family.<sup>11</sup>

The aristocrats under Chou were known as Chün-tzu 君子. This has been translated as "superior man" or "aristocratic man" meaning "sons of the lords". During the feudal period it referred to an aristocrat who was a member of a hereditary noble clan for whom power and privilege were exclusively reserved. Chün-tzu was used by Confucius and other philosophers to denote the man of virtue and education, the very personification of their doctrine.<sup>12</sup>

The nobility of the feudal period owed their position to heredity, and not to education. They belonged to a clan system, and had to abide by the rules of this system, a system which was strictly defined and segregated from the mass of people, the Min 民 or the Hsiao-jen 小人, "lesser men" of the classics. These noble clans, to which the ownership of land and all political power was reserved, were quite few in number, only twenty two being mentioned in the Ch'un Ch'iu. They occupied all official posts at the feudal courts, commanded the armies in time of war and were responsible for the elaborate ancestor worship and the higher sacrificial rites to

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à l'expression Chan kouo (=Shang kuo) '*les seigneuries supérieures*', c'est-à-dire les seigneuries les plus anciennement unies par traités. KOUO (=Kuo) a le sens de *seigneuries*. Tchong (=Chung) peut être rend par *centrales*: les seigneuries centrales s'opposent aux seigneuries des Marches et aux pays barbares de la périphérie... 中 Tchong (=chung) et 外 wai (extérieur) s'opposent normalement. - Mais tchong (=chung) a, en outre, la valeur de: *union, conforme*, et l'expression 中人 signifie: *mediateur*. Tchong kouo (=chung kuo) 中國 ou Chang kouo (=Shang kuo) désigne les seigneuries anciennement confédérées et doit être traduit soit par *seigneuries confédérées* quand est sensible l'idée de pluralité, soit par *Confédération chinoise* lorsque l'idée est de marquer l'unité et qu'on oppose le cœur de la Chine aux marches considérées comme barbares." GRANET 1926, p. 73.

11 HUCKER 1975, p. 57; CH'IEN Mu 1977, p. 66.

12 FITZGERALD 1961, p. 60. See also BOODBERG 1953, p. 321.

the gods of the soil and crops. The prince who presided over these sacrifices and forms of worship exercised absolute power over his territory, however small. The saying "the sacrifices were discontinued" meant that the prince had been deprived of his last territory.<sup>13</sup>

Although the aristocracy was hereditary, education was highly esteemed and was almost totally confined to the nobility. The Chün-tzu were not unlettered as was frequently the case with the feudal barons of medieval Europe. The Chün-tzu served as counsellors, officials and governors in times of peace, and as generals and warriors in times of war. They practised the noble sport of archery, which was organized in ceremonial contests. Their education also included music, arithmetic and poetry and the strict performance of the rites and ceremonies, Li 禮, which governed all social relations. Li were a code of decorum, which was related to religious observances by which the security of the state and the harmony of Heaven and Earth was maintained. Chivalry was more than a mere form of courtesy. It was an expression of the moral order approved by Heaven. One should not treat the vanquished with great severity. Extreme measures were disapproved by Heaven.<sup>14</sup>

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13 FITZGERALD 1961, pp. 60, 61.

14 FITZGERALD 1961, p. 61. Fitzgerald says that it was "wicked to treat a conquered foe with the last severity." This probably means that it was wicked to put one's captivities to death. See, FITZGERALD 1961, p. 61.

Apparently the Chün-tzu at the beginning of Western Chou were all close relatives of rulers, and at first they were sons of the rulers. Their descendants continued to be called Chün-tzu. The rulers, who practised polygamy, often had many sons. Hence, Chün-tzu was now a name for members of a clearly defined aristocratic class. CREEL 1970, pp. 333-335.

Kinship was important under the Chou feudal system. The aristocrats belonged to a small number of groups called "Hsing" 姓. All the members of a "Shih" 氏, except for its founder, were descended from a common ancestor. The "Shih" usually comprised several generations living together under the leadership of its chief member. One occasion for the founding of a new "Shih" was an enfeoffment. The first holder of a fief became the ancestor of a new "Shih".

"Late in the twelfth century B.C. the Chou conquerors organized the government of their territories by giving fiefs to relatives of their own 'hsing' and to allied and conquered chiefs belonging to other 'hsing'". Intermarriage within a "Hsing" was very common. "Vassals

According to Eberhard, under Western Chou the imperial central power was established allegedly over a thousand feudal states. These states often consisted of a small garrison only, sometimes a larger one, with the former chieftain acting as feudal lord over it. Eberhard continues: "Around these garrisons the old population lived on, in the north the Shang population, farther east and south various other peoples and cultures. The conquerors' garrisons were like islands in a sea. Most of them formed new towns, walled, with a rectangular plan and central crossroads, similar to the European towns subsequently formed out of Roman encampments... This upper class in the garrisons formed the nobility; it was sharply divided from the indigenous population around the towns. The conquerors called the population 'the black-haired people', and themselves 'the hundred families'. The rest of the town populations consisted often of urban Shang people: Shang noble families together with their bondsmen and serfs had been given to Chou fiefholders."<sup>15</sup>

Under Chou, as under Shang, society had a strong class character. The hereditary lord supported by his aristocratic warriors ruled over the peasants and slaves. This aristocracy was subordinate to the king. Next to the aristocracy were the "men of the country" who were free citizens of the state and formed one class of society. Then there were the commoners who worked on the land and were sometimes employed as labourers by the nobility. Next were the serfs and slaves. The last group, the slaves, were largely used as domestic servants.<sup>16</sup>

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practised subinfeudation on the same pattern. Thus China became covered by a vast network of relationship ties, of blood and of marriage, linking all of the aristocrats who ruled it, both high and low. The political pattern was almost wholly assimilated to that of the kinship system." Ssu-ma Ch'ien, writing around 100 B.C., seem to have confused the "Hsing" and "Shih". There are no established translations for the terms. CREEL 1964, pp. 166, 167; CREEL 1970, pp. 334, 378-380.

15 EBERHARD 1977, p. 25.

16 FAIRBANK & REISCHAUER & CRAIG 1973, p. 32. "Later writers have claimed that in the early Chou eight peasant families, each with its own field, would cultivate among them a central field for the support of the lord. This system has been called the 'well field' system, because the character for 'well' 井 depicts the pattern of nine fields" that made up a unit. "This is obviously a later idealization, but it may reflect a period when agricultural property and its produce were communally

During the Chou period the head of the family himself performed the religious rites, which meant that there were no priests. Consequently the Shang priesthood had to change profession. And since they could read and write, and because under Chou an administrative system was necessary, some Shang priests worked as scribes. Others worked as village priests organizing religious festivals, carrying out the ceremonies connected with family events. They even conducted the exorcisms of evil spirits with shamanistic dances. They took charge of everything connected with the customary observances of ceremonies, Li 禮, and the teaching of morality. In this way a new social group, later called "scholars", came into existence in the early Chou empire. They were not regarded as belonging to lower class people, but were not included in the nobility either. They had an independent profession, but were not employed in a productive capacity. In later centuries they became immensely important figures.<sup>17</sup>

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shared." FAIRBANK & REISCHAUER & CRAIG 1973, p. 32. See also CHANG Chi-yun 1957, p. 12.

YANG K'uan 1965, pp. 66-68. Chinese scholarship tends to emphasize the importance of slaves in the Chou feudal system. Serfs are regarded as slaves. Other kinds of slaves were the craftsman or artisan slaves, slaves who cultivated the mountains and rivers and family slaves. Occasionally, usually in war time a whole tribe could become slaves. YANG K'uan 1965, pp. 68, 71-73. According to Kuo Mo-jo, the slave society prospered during the Western Chou. During this time slavery economics compared with the Shang period developed greatly. The class structure of Western Chou was in most respects similar to that of the Shang dynasty. Slaves and slave lords were the two basic classes of society. Between these two classes was the ordinary people's class. KUO Mo-jo 1976, pp. 236, 237. See also YANG K'uan 1965, p. 92. Hucker says that slavery was less prominent during Chou than it had been in Shang times. HUCKER 1975, p. 61. Hsü Fu-kuan considered that the Chou slaves did not constitute the foundation of political power, or the main element of the productive power of Chou society. However, it is in keeping with historical fact to refer to Chou society as a slave society. HSÜ Fu-kuan 1975, p. 13.

For a review of opinions and works on this question, see LEVENSON 1969, pp. 368, 369, and JIH Chih 1957, pp. 83-94, and HSU Cho-yun 1979, pp. 454-456.

- 17 EBERHARD 1977, pp. 28, 29. See also, CREEL 1970, pp. 34-40, 76. Later Confucius was one of these "scholars". EBERHARD 1977, p. 35. Although a certain development took place from Wu-priest or shaman to "scholar", this did not mean that all the Wu became scholars. Later on there were scholars as well as Wu. On the other hand, the division of duties between the different occupations was not clear either. Needham says that the tradition of Wu dancing within a ring of fire under the blazing sun

Agricultural techniques during the Western Chou period were quite sophisticated. There were irrigation systems; tillage systems of the soil were developed; there were many kinds of grain, the best grain being selected for seed. Insect control was carried out by means of fire. Even compost, it seems, was used as a fertilizer.<sup>18</sup>

According to Yang K'uan, the well field system was an ancient land system. In the ancient rural club, the arable land belonged to the people collectively. Collective income was used primarily to finance public needs, although later on the nobility confiscated the income. The forests, mountains and lakes could not be divided by the well field system. In these areas the members of the rural club became the traditional owners of the land.<sup>19</sup>

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and producing drops of sweat which, it was hoped, would induce drops of rain, was so strong that in later centuries these rites were followed by Confucian officials themselves when necessary. Later the *wu* were more or less incorporated in the Taoist system. In 472 A.D. they had been excluded from the state sacrifices, "and though the process of gradual severance which ended their employment by the emperors and the orthodox Confucian bureaucrats was rather slow, it was nearly complete by the end of the Thang (=T'ang). In the Sung they were definitely persecuted by governors and prefects, and down to the end of the Chhing (=Ch'ing) provisions against sorcerers and wizards remained in the Penal Code." "More and more, then, the *wu* aspect of Taoism was driven underground, and tended to take the form of those secret societies among the people which in later centuries played such an important part in Chinese life." NEEDHAM 1956, pp. 134-138.

Muramatsu says: "The Chou, too, in spite of their ethnic difference from Shang, believed in spirits and spirit intermediaries. Kaizuka regards the *Ta-kaio* section of the *Book of History* as a record of divination sentences, which should be read to mean that the Chou treasured a great sacred tortoise shell inherited from Chou Wen-wang; that they also had ten diviners or *wu*, who originally belonged to the Shang state; and that their reading of the tortoise shell showed that Heaven's mandate had been bestowed on the Chou and that Heaven specifically supported the Chou king against the Shang rebels, who rose up against the Chou rulers not long after the Chou conquest." MURAMATSU 1969, pp. 249, 355.

18 YANG K'uan 1965, pp. 15-21.

19 YANG K'uan 1965, pp. 114, 119. Yang K'uan says that, due to the decimal system in force in China, ten families constituted one well. In the well field system there were private and public fields. The income from the public field accrued to the lord. The produce from the private field could be used by the farmer himself. However, the private land also belonged to the lord. YANG K'uan 1965, pp. 124, 52.



Commerce was usually carried on only among the nobility. Trade among the common people was on a minor scale, being resorted to merely to exchange things needed in everyday life. Among the nobility, brass, most of which came from southern China, was an important article of trade. Some jewellery was also traded. Cowrie was used as a standard to indicate value, and pieces of metal may have been used as legal tender. Silk was also used as a medium of exchange.<sup>20</sup>

Compared with Shang, the Chou conquerors were more backward culturally. This is attested by the fact that much of the Shang culture continued almost without a break when the dynasty was changed. The designs of the bronze vessels were sometimes cruder than those of the Shang, and later the details became weaker and plainer. It may well be that the designs had lost their original religious significance and had become merely traditional. Scapulimancy was still practised, although this was later replaced by other forms of divination. The development of writing continued.<sup>21</sup>

In religious thought the concept of the supreme deity underwent a change. Under Shang, as mentioned above, the supreme deity was Ti 帝. Towards the end of the Shang dynasty, Ti also appeared in the combinations Shang Ti 上帝 and T'ien Ti 天帝. However, under Shang T'ien was not known as the supreme deity. T'ien made his appearance only with the Chou, and was a Chou deity.<sup>22</sup>

The kings of Shang and before Shang have the title Ti in Shih Chi, but the kings of Chou that of Wang 王. Under Chou, Wang was generally referred to as "Son of Heaven" 天子. In this way, too, the kings of different dynasties were related to the respective supreme gods.<sup>23</sup>

<sup>20</sup> CREEL 1970, pp. 140, 144.

<sup>21</sup> FAIRBANK & REISCHAUER & CRAIG 1973, p. 32. Scapulimancy and plastomancy, bone and turtle shell divination, were continued by the Chou although greatly diminished interest. Shang culture continued under Chou. CHANG Kwang-chih 1971, pp. 187, 188, 348.

<sup>22</sup> CHAO Ch'en-ching 1971, p. 158; CHANG Tsung-tung 1970, p. 236; Creel 1970, p. 493.

<sup>23</sup> CHANG Tsung-tung 1970, p. 237. Creel says "There seems to be no evidence that the Shang King was ever called the 'son of Ti'." CREEL 1970, p. 503.

Under Chou, Ti was superseded by T'ien partly because of the alleged affinity of Ti to the Shang royal house. However, Ti retained his function as a fertility god and as such continued to receive the sacrifice in the spring and was honoured by the people. The continued existence of the Shang-ti under Chou was due to the unevenness of the cultural change. Neither the Shang-ti nor T'ien could cope with the religious consciousness of the Chou society as a whole. Each god was relevant only to a part of the Chou population. Neither god adequately satisfied the notion of God.<sup>24</sup>

T'ien together with the doctrine of T'ien ming 天命, Heavenly mandate, also had a propagandist function, but this did not prevent it from deriving its significance from a genuine religious experience. It was taught that T'ien was not bound to any particular family. He could give the mandate to any family which pleased him by its virtue, and could also remove the mandate from the same family whenever it incurred his displeasure. This doctrine is based on the absolute power of the supreme deity.<sup>25</sup>

Under Chou there was also the spirit of the so-called She 社. He was a god of territorial groups and comparable to a local magistrate in the Chou administration.

In the spirit world there were two Spirits of the Soil with the rank of a king. Ranks below this were those of feudal princes, officials and spirits in charge of the territories of twenty five households. Apart from the Spirits of the Soil there were other spirits as well, such as Superintendents of the plot of land, Spirits of the central hall etc. The spirits had altars of their own, at which sacrifices were made to them.<sup>26</sup>

Under Chou the techniques of divination were developed further. Another process of divination came to acquire an importance almost equal to that of scapulimancy. This was the "drawing of lots" by means of the dried stalks of a Siberian milfoil or yarrow-plant, (*Achillea sibirica*), called Shih 蓍.

24 SHIH, JOSEPH 1969, p. 138.

25 SHIH, JOSEPH 1969, p. 135.

26 SHIH, JOSEPH 1969, pp. 116, 117.

The tortoise shell was used for more important matters, although both methods were often used together. Sometimes the results of the two methods conflicted with each other.<sup>27</sup>

In general, it should be noted that the Chou conception was that the cosmos is one entity, without beginning or end. This universe cannot be divided into natural and supernatural realms. It has three principal elements or forces: Heaven, Earth and Man. Heaven is all-powerful and can be worshipped but is not anthropomorphic, as was Shang-ti during the Shang dynasty.<sup>28</sup>

It was of utmost importance that the harmony and balance of the whole universe be maintained, and the maintenance of this harmony was the responsibility of the king, Son of Heaven 天子. He alone could perform the sacrifices which guaranteed the harmony of the divine powers. Only he could sacrifice to Heaven and Earth. The feudal prince, on the other hand, could only sacrifice to the mountains and streams in his own domain. Moreover, the Son of Heaven must be morally spotless. Heaven could not be served by a tyrant or debauchee. The sacrifices of such a ruler would be worse than useless, since they would incur the wrath of Heaven, in the form of catastrophes. The primary function of the Chou king, Son of Heaven, was that of priest king, a sacred being who had the power to conciliate the forces of nature and in this way make the sacrifices effective.<sup>29</sup>

#### 4. The Eastern Chou Dynasty

Under the Western Chou the original bonds of loyalty between the kings and their vassals apparently weakened with time. 841 B.C. saw the first popular uprising in Chinese history when the tenth Chou king was expelled from his capital by its citizens. This was followed by an interregnum of thirteen years, a period which was marked by considerable disruption.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>27</sup> NEEDHAM 1956, pp. 347, 349.

<sup>28</sup> HUCKER 1975, p. 70.

<sup>29</sup> FITZGERALD 1961, pp. 40, 41, 59.

<sup>1</sup> FAIRBANK & REISCHAUER & CRAIG 1973, p. 33.

According to tradition, the thirteenth king, king Yu often lit beacon fires signifying distress. This was because his concubine liked to see the royal armies assemble in full array. When the invaders eventually arrived, the beacon signals were ignored. The royal line was re-established in the east, in 770 B.C., but the Chou kings never again exercised any real political or military power. They merely retained certain religious and ceremonial functions until the end of the dynasty in 256 B.C.<sup>2</sup>

The situation under the Eastern Chou dynasty, especially that of Ch'un Ch'iu 春秋 (770-481 B.C.) is important for the present work, since it was at the end of this period that Confucius lived (551-479 B.C.)<sup>3</sup>

The most important states of Ch'un Ch'iu constituted the confederation of Chou states. This was composed of overlordships of varying degree of importance, of people who lived in walled cities and who felt they were united by a cultural heritage rather than by political relationships. This unity rested basically on genealogical ties, implying identity of surname, and on the practice of intermarriage between those of different surnames in the various states. These states were called collectively "the central Kingdom" Chung-kuo 中國. The second group comprised states which were not necessarily of Chou origin and tradition, but which gradually grew in power, began to follow the Chou system and to practise Chou culture. These were eventually regarded as part of the central group. The third group consisted of non-Chou peoples who did not live in walled cities, but were nomadic in character. In the beginning there were large tracts of grassland in the Huangho basin and jungles in the Yangtse valley where these tribes flourished, following traditions that were different from those of the dominating group. The states of the Yangtse region expanded at the expense of these non-Chou peoples.<sup>4</sup>

2 FAIRBANK & REISCHAUER & CRAIG 1973, p. 33; HUCKER 1975, p. 34.

3 Ch'un Ch'iu was the first book of chronical history in China. Later the period which was recorded in this book was called Ch'un Ch'iu after the name of the book. The chronicles mentioned were kept in the state of Lu. See HUCKER 1975, p. 35; CH'IEN Mu 1977, p. 35. Erkes gives the dates 771-480 B.C. for the Ch'un Ch'iu period. ERKES 1956a, p. 38.

4 CHENG, Te-k'un 1963, pp. xxvii, xxviii; CREEL 1951, p. 16.

It was essential, however, that there was a supreme ruler, because in the worship of Heaven which was recognized by all the feudal lords, supreme sacrifices could only be offered by the Son of Heaven in person. The imperial sacrifices ensured that everything in the country was harmonious and the necessary equilibrium between Heaven and Earth was maintained. In the religion of Heaven there was a close parallelism between Heaven and Earth. For every omission of a sacrifice, or failure to offer it in due form, there was a reaction from Heaven.<sup>5</sup>

At the beginning of the Ch'un Ch'iu period the focal point of a political capital was the ancestral temple of its ruler. This temple was normally the centre of the most important activities, whether religious, familial, political, diplomatic or even military. A comprehensive code, based primarily upon the kinship system, made it possible for an individual to determine his duty with a minimum of conflict between the demands of religion, those of kinship, and those of the state. One's moral duty might be difficult to carry out, but it was relatively easy to see where one's duty lay.<sup>6</sup>

When a king enfeoffed his relatives and other loyal retainers, he did so in order to create powerful supporters of his rule. In theory, the fiefs were not hereditary. But every vassal thus enfeoffed automatically became the founder of a new clan, Shih, and the object of a cult carried on by his descendants. The conservation and acquisition of prestige, power and wealth for the Shih became the sacred duty of all its members and retainers.<sup>7</sup>

Once a fief or even an official post was held by a clan it was difficult and often impossible for the ruler to transfer it to another clan. Although many clans were not belligerent as such, the tendency was to expand at the expense of their overlords and their less bellicose neighbours. Only the fear of warlike "barbarians" on the borders compelled them to unite, but this was sporadic and uncertain.<sup>8</sup>

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5 EBERHARD 1971, p. 37.

6 CREEL 1964, p. 168.

7 CREEL 1964, p. 168, 169.

8 CREEL 1964, p. 170.

Hsu says that a Ch'un Ch'iu state was not a purely political institution. The state resembled a household but on a larger scale; the sovereign reigned, but did not rule; ministers were not important because they occupied official posts, but because they were kin to the ruler or because they were heads of prominent families. In the state of Lu, for example, each of the three most important houses was entitled to fill one of three ministerial posts. In a familialistic government the closest relative of the ruler played the most important political role. Since the monarchy was hereditary, rulers could exercise a certain amount of control within the ruling house, but the ruler was inseparable from his assistants, who were members of his own family, and he had no power to discharge his ministers, since they were not appointed by him but were born to help him rule. Under such conditions the ruler had at best imperfect control over his ministers.<sup>9</sup>

During Ch'un Ch'iu, some of the barbarian states were more powerful than the central states. Strong states conquered weaker ones and small states were absorbed by big ones. Thus the development was from many small feudal states towards only a few large military states, in which the central government was powerful, and in which it exercised direct control over the cities and towns. The ruling of these areas was no longer hereditary. Officials were appointed and dismissed according to merit, an entirely different state of affairs from the clan ruled feudalistic system. An aristocratic feudalism was gradually being taken over by a bureaucratic system.<sup>10</sup>

The feudal system in the Ch'un Ch'iu period underwent a process of change. Earlier all income from the public field was public and income from the private field was private. All land belonged to the feudal lord. It was a system which encouraged laziness in the nobility and which strengthened the position of the farmers. Even at the beginning of Ch'un Ch'iu the

9 HSU Cho-yun 1965, pp. 78-80.

10 KUO Mo-jo 1976, p. 294; LATOURETTE 1964, p. 36. Ch'i was typical of the border states. It controlled an area comparable to a modern Chinese province. FAIRBANK & REISCHAUER & CRAIG 1973, p. 35.

For the "Chinese and barbarians", see GRANET 1930, pp. 75-84, 219-223; GRANET 1929, pp. 85-100, 258-263; CH'IEN Mu 1977, pp. 65, 57.

amount of private field had increased, and farming tools and methods had improved. This naturally contributed to the prosperity of the farmer or serfs. Later, however, taxes were imposed on the private field as well. The trend was from collective production towards private enterprise, where only one family constituted the productive unit.<sup>11</sup>

As earlier, different kinds of social groups or classes existed within Ch'un Ch'iu society. The ruling group comprised heads of state, their ministers and Shih 士. The authority of nominal rulers was often usurped by the ministers, who, assisted by the nobility, deposed the rulers. Near the end of the period, when Confucius was living, the Shih class began to take an active part in the moulding of history.<sup>12</sup>

Below the power group of the ruler and his various ministers were the Shih, who occupied a position somewhere between the power group and those they ruled over. The Shih received training as warriors, participated in religious sacrifices and other rituals, and as literati, were conversant with basic learning and history. As mentioned above, this class apparently developed from the Shang priests' class. A Shih might be a small landlord himself with tenants to till his lands, or merely an employee either in government service or in a noble household. Some Shih were stewards, some officials in charge of fief-towns, manors or estates, and some minor government officials. A moral code developed among the Shih which may have constituted the basic code of the entire feudal system. One of its tenets was loyalty to one's master; after a Shih had submitted to a master, neither father nor ruler could force him to renounce the relationship. A Shih was

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11 CH'IEN Mu 1977, pp. 58, 59; KUO Mo-jo 1976, p. 316. Kuo says that Ch'un Ch'iu was a period when a slave society developed in the direction of a feudal society. According to Ch'ien and others, the social system during Western Chou was feudalistic. The change during Ch'un Ch'iu was towards the liberalization of members of the farmer ("slave") class, who, as a result of the liberalization during the Warring States period, were even free to follow the occupation of their choice and who could also use what had been forbidden land. See KUO Mo-jo 1976, p. 293, and CH'IEN Mu 1977, pp. 64, 65. The attitude of Kuo is understandable if the term 封建, as he uses it, means "imperialistic" or "imperialism".

12 HSU Cho-yun 1965, pp. 24, 26.

proud of his status and derived a strong sense of self-respect from it. Improper favours were not to be accepted by the shih even in matters of life and death. The code of the Shih was adapted and given new moral content by Confucius and his disciples. The new Confucian code became the standard of conduct of the new Shih class.<sup>13</sup>

The term which Confucius uses in this context and to which he relates many of his ethical key-terms is Chün-tzu 君子. In the early literature, Chün-tzu, gentleman, often refers to a hereditary noble. Confucius sometimes uses it in this older sense, but for him this is exceptional. Usually, when he speaks of Chün-tzu he is referring to a man who has those qualities that an aristocrat ideally ought to possess, a man of true nobility. Chün-tzu is contrasted with Hsiao Jen 小人 "little man" or "small man". To this "small man" Confucius does not attribute recommendable ethical qualities.<sup>14</sup>

Of the relation between knight, Shih 士 and gentleman in Confucius Creel says: "it is probable that originally this term merely denoted a young man; it also came to mean 'soldier' and, by a process that is very common in history, 'aristocrat'. In this sense shih was quite similar to the European term 'knight'; both denoted a member of the lowest order of the nobility, usually a military man. But here again Confucius gives a different sense to the term." Confucius "declared that no man was worthy to be called a shih who did not act as a true gentleman should act, and that any man (regardless of birth) who exemplified the Confucian virtues was a shih in the highest sense."<sup>15</sup>

Later the power of the high class nobility disappeared. It also became possible for the ordinary people to receive an education. Certain educated people, some of whom were from the upper class of society, wished to retire

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13 HSU, Cho-yun 1965, pp. 3-9. See also, HUCKER 1975, p. 64. and LIU Wu-chi 1955, pp. 14, 15.

14 CREEL 1951, pp. 86, 87.

15 CREEL 1951, p. 100.



and lead the life of hermits. They wished to avoid the many changes which were taking place during Ch'un Ch'iu. Their purpose was to find a life of peace and security, and one not subject to change. The main motive behind the thinking of Lao-tzu is concerned with how man and society can create conditions of peace and stability that correspond to the attitudes of these hermits.<sup>16</sup>

The above-mentioned classes, which are higher in rank than the peasant class, may be grouped together under the common name of "nobility". The king, of course, was above the nobility.

Although the Ch'un Ch'iu epoch was politically tense and often chaotic, it was a time when the culture of the nobility reached its highest point. Although there were wars, peace and righteousness, Yi 義, were always desirable objectives. Even in times of war, morality, courtesy and loyalty could not be neglected, since such qualities were considered as important as the war itself. It can be said of the Ch'un Ch'iu period that for the nobility it developed into an age of supreme and exclusive culture.<sup>17</sup>

As the nobility began to decay, the lower classes began to come into their own. During the Warring States period, killing, aggression and war came to be identified with a decaying nobility.<sup>18</sup>

The first social class under the nobility were the peasants. When the Chou king invested his dukes with fiefs, the dukes enfeoffed their ministers, who in turn enfeoffed their subordinates. The only real producers were the peasants and the Shih who tilled the land. The peasant was obliged to work in the fields to support his superiors.<sup>19</sup>

16 HSÜ Fu-kuan 1975, p. 327

17 CH'IEN Mu 1977, pp. 49, 50.

18 CH'IEN Mu 1977, pp. 49, 50.

19 CREEL 1951, pp. 8, 9; FEHL 1971, p. 71. The traditional well field, Ching T'ien 井田 system has already been referred to above (pp. 52, 54). It was a system that was apparently never implemented systematically and under it the arable land was assigned in sections to eight peasant families each. Each section was plotted in a form

The peasant provided his lord with food and clothing and worked in both

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resembling the Chinese character for well, Ching 井, each of the eight outer plots being cultivated by one of the eight families, and the central plot being cultivated by everyone in common to raise the produce which went to the lord. Permanent peasant ownership appears not to have been thought of; new land was cleared as the old was exhausted, and periodical reassignment was the rule. LATOURETTE 1964, p. 44; LEVENSON 1969, p. 269.

Of Mencius' conception of the well field system Needham says: "Although co-operative work by the peasants on the lord's land is not in doubt, most scholars now regard the details of Mencius' nine-lot system as a schematic 'Utopian' policy rather than a description of a form of land allocation which ever had any real existence. It was of course Utopian only from the point of view of the feudal lords, since one ninth of the produce was due instead of a tithe. Although no doubt rectangular plots were used when possible for convenience of mensuration, in general the division of the land must have followed the contours of the terrain. There is also no reason for thinking that the lord's land was generally central to the village land as a whole. Why Mencius wanted it there may perhaps be explained by a concern, probably very ancient, that the lord's land should get the best water-supply. And as he was not at all the only ancient person to apply the term *ching* to land settlement, it must have been an ideal conception current in the Warring States period if not before." NEEDHAM 1971, p. 258. See also, Mencius, III.i.3. 13, 18, 19, in LEGGE vol. 2, 1969, pp. 243-245. Duyvendak thinks that we have no right to regard the well field system as a utopianism which was never implemented. DUYVENDAK 1928, p. 42.

Forke says that the graph 田 refers to the system of nine fields "Ein: Feld wurde in neun gleiche Parzellen geteilt und an acht Familien verteilt. Das mittlere Feld, auf welchem sich der Feldbrunnen befand, wurde von allen acht Familien gemeinsam bewirtschaftet und der Ernteertrag fiel dem Staate oder der Gemeinde zu. Wir sehen diesen Feldbrunnen in dem alten Zeichen für 井 = 井: *tching*, noch deutlicher in der *ku-wen* Form 井. Er diente natürlich zur Berieselung der Felder. Heute bedeutet 井 einfach einen Brunnen." FORKE 1925, p. 8.

Swann says of Mencius' traditional conception of the well field system that it "could have been true only on the flat lands which might have been too far removed for workers to have returned to sleep in the settlements." SWANN 1950, pp. 117-122, 162. According to Hu Shih, the ancient Chinese feudal system was not what Mencius and the Chou Li described. "He feels that to a scientific, modern mentality the burden of proof is on the ancients; he does not so much prove the *ching-t'ien* account false as reject as too slight such affirmative proofs as the *Shih-ching* offers. Mencius himself offers no proof." LEVENSON 1969, p. 363. See also HU Shih 1927, pp. 247-284, especially p. 281.

For different opinions regarding the Well Field system, see also YANG Lien-sheng 1961, pp. 92-104.

field and house. He was heavily burdened not only with field work all the year round but also with occasional compulsory labour such as building a new wall or repairing a palace. There was no clear distinction between the public affairs of a state and the private business of a lord. The peasant occupied a status almost at the bottom of the social scale.<sup>20</sup>

Another distinct group is that of merchants and artisans. Until late in the Ch'un Ch'iu period, trade amounted to little more than the exchange of local materials for materials from other areas. In these circumstances there was little demand for the services of a merchant. In time demand increased, and merchants and artisans came to be maintained in manorial communities as a group distinct from the rest of the rural population, and also distinct from urban businessmen. Apparently the newly established merchants became a professional class whose members belonged neither to the commoner class nor to the nobility but who remained under the full control of the state and the feudal lords, the relation being that of retainer to master. This class, however, proved disruptive to the old aristocratic order. It was regarded as the lowest class in the social scale by the nobility and was thus appreciated least by them.<sup>21</sup>

The artisan and merchant classes assumed increasing importance during Ch'un Ch'iu as compared with the decaying nobility, many representatives of the new social classes being *nouveaux riches*.<sup>22</sup>

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20 HSU Cho-yun 1965, p. 11; LATOURETTE 1964, p. 44.

21 HSU Cho-yun 1965, pp. 11, 12; FAIRBANK & REISCHAUER & CRAIG 1973, p. 34.

22 KUO Mo-jo 1976, pp. 322, 323. Hsu does not recognize the importance of the merchants during Ch'un Ch'iu. He says that the prerequisites for a prosperous merchant class are active commerce, a good market, abundant commodities and a widely accepted monetary system. These seem to have been absent before the later part of the Ch'un Ch'iu period. During Ch'un Ch'iu neither merchants nor artisans could as yet improve their low position in feudal society. HSU Cho-yun 1965, pp. 12, 13. The opinion of Hsu presumably related primarily to early Ch'un Ch'iu. Later the situation changed. The end of the period is more important for this study, in that it was during this time that Confucius lived. See also HSU Cho-yün 1976, pp. 314-316.

At the bottom of the social scale were the servants and the slaves. A slave, who could be bought, may have been valued by his owner about as much as a dog. It is not known whether the slaves and servants played any major role in productive work or whether they were employed mainly as house servants. There is no evidence that the economy of ancient China was based on slavery, as was that of ancient Greece, for example. Although slavery was apparently not a major social factor, there are many indications that the common people lived under conditions that greatly resembled serfdom. There was almost no check on the control over their subjects by powerful rulers, who, it seems, kept a tight rein on many aspects of the lives of their subjects. It appears that, in some cases at least, even important ministers did not own the houses they occupied in the capital but could be moved at the ruler's will; the common people were told where to live and what work to do and were punished if they did not comply.<sup>23</sup>

The different classes of the Ch'un Ch'iu period were not the only social units during that time. There were also many clans which exercised great political influence. These were well organized groups with rules of their own. Their functions were controlled by the heads of the clan, who were its spokesmen, and who inherited clan properties and official privileges. On occasions the power of the clans rivaled that of the great regional lords. For example, when the state of Chin was divided in 453 B.C., the clan heads either deposed the regional lords or assumed dictatorial regencies over them. During the Warring States period, the family as a social unit became more important. The Chin state was encouraged by the

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23 HSU Cho-yun 1965, pp. 12-14. This statement is based on later sources which claim perhaps that the supervision of the people was more systematically planned and implemented than was in fact the case. CREEL 1951, p. 167; CH'IEN Mu 1977, pp. 64, 65. The interpretation in the Peoples' Republic of China stresses the importance of slavery during the Ch'un Ch'iu period. See, STAIGER 1969, pp. 34, 35, 40, 57-64, 68-76, 80-85, 90, 92-95, 97, 99. YANG Jung-kuo 1974, pp. 1-8, Yang, Jung-kuo 1974a, pp. 1-23. Kao Heng 1974, pp. 24-34, 40-42. These interpretations, especially during the "anti-Confucius campaign", seem to have served the purpose of political expediency during that campaign rather than constituting an attempt to arrive at objective truth.

tax system to fragment society into nuclear family units.<sup>24</sup>

As mentioned above, the trend during the Ch'un Ch'iu period was towards large centralized military states. Despite peace treaties such changes were actually the result of the many wars waged at this time. Between the years 722 and 464 there were only 38 years of peace.<sup>25</sup>

Creel describes the major states of the Ch'un Ch'iu period: The most important repositories of the traditional Chinese culture were the royal domain of the Chou-kings, the state of Sung, which was ruled by descendants of the Shang kings, and Lu, the native state of Confucius. The central states produced thinkers who tended to emphasize peace and happiness, whereas many of those who stressed force and "discipline" were from the peripheral states.

Ch'u, the great southern state was "barbarian", but was gradually absorbed into the fold of Chinese culture. The western state of Ch'in was the ancient seat of the Chou, with a culture that differed from that of the central states. The two other powerful states were Chin and Ch'i. Duke Huan of Ch'i succeeded in usurping the position of First Noble, and as such outranked the Chou king in almost everything but name and religious functions. After the death of Duke Huan, his sons contended for the throne in a series of civil wars, and Ch'i was so weakened it never again held a position of pre eminent power.

Confucius' state, Lu, was relatively small and weak. During Confucius' time, actual power in Lu was wielded by "the three families" Meng, Shu, and Chi. Little was left to the Duke of Lu but his ceremonial prerogatives. Naturally conflicts of various kinds arose between these families and also between other powerful noble clans. Nevertheless, Lu survived until

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24 HUCKER 1975, pp. 57, 58; HSÜ Fu-kuan 1975, pp. 13, 18. The division of the state of Chin took place in 453 B.C., and was officially recognized by the Chou king in 403 B.C. Both dates have been used to indicate the beginning of the "Warring States" period. FAIRBANK & REISCHAUER & CRAIG 1973, p. 36.

25 FAIRBANK & REISCHAUER & CRAIG 1973, p. 39; TWITCHETT 1973, p. 57.

the end of the Chou dynasty partly due to the fact that it was founded by the famous Duke of Chou, a brother of the founder of the dynasty, and was considered a repository of ancient culture and ceremonies. However, Lu suffered from constant internal and external disturbances.

Not only were the Chinese states always fighting with each other, and with the semi-barbarian state of Ch'u, but the northern barbarians were also an active menace at this time. There was almost continuous warfare between the great peripheral states. The smaller states of the centre were compelled to ally themselves with on side or the other and to change sides as new pressure was exerted. The small state constituted a field of combat in which their powerful neighbours met to fight a battle, sometimes every year. Thus, although the great peripheral states were spared many of the horrors of war, the central states got far more than their share. This is undoubtedly one reason why the philosophers of the central states were, on the whole, advocates of peace while those of the peripheral areas tended to extol the glories of war.<sup>26</sup>

Although there were a large number of wars during the Ch'un Ch'iu period, many of them were on a rather small scale. Warfare was not notably destructive, and casualties were few. In fact, interstate warfare sometimes resembled a form of polite gamesmanship and acts of diplomacy reigned supreme. The outmanoeuvred lords lost face, but their status was not much altered. During the fifth century B.C., however, the political climate changed. Wars were no longer forms of polite gamesmanship; the predominant concern was expressed in raw military power. Casualties were heavy, and defeated lords lost their territories and often their lives as well.<sup>27</sup>

Technological and other innovations were introduced into the science of warfare. Cheap iron weapons led to a great increase in the size of fighting forces. Chariots were replaced by cavalry in Chinese armies. The crossbow was also introduced, a factor which probably hastened the change from

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26 CREEL 1951, pp. 16-23.

27 HUCKER 1975, p. 37.

chariot to horseback fighting. The use of the horse made the northern neighbours of China a greater military threat than they had been hitherto. It was for this reason that the northern states erected long walls, which, when joined together at a later date, became the Great Wall of China.<sup>28</sup>

Relations between states were characterized by as great an absence of ethics as those between individuals. An envoy had to be a brave man, for if the state to which he was accredited became annoyed with his state, there was a good chance he could be killed. Even rulers were not immune from detention when they made friendly visits to other states.<sup>29</sup>

The above-mentioned centralization, and the fact that the old feudal limits were no longer so strict, led to improvements in communications between the different states in China. For the same reason commerce and business also improved. This was during the period between Ch'un Ch'iu and the Warring States period or just at the end of the former and at the beginning of the latter. For example Tzu Kung 子貢, the disciple of Confucius, was not subject to the authority of the nobility; at that time free enterprise already existed. Earlier, during Ch'un Ch'iu, only the nobility could do business, and to do business was also hereditary. Since the

28 FAIRBANK & REISCHAUER & CRAIG 1973, p. 38.

29 CREEL 1951, p. 23. Ch'ien Mu says that the nobility was fond of a life of feasting and banqueting, but as the military grew in importance, a new demand was created and farmers were enlisted as soldiers. In this way the armies of the nobility came to be largely composed of farmers. CH'IEN Mu 1977, p. 62.

Creel describes the behaviour of the nobles: "When a ruler of Wu did not wish the bad news which he had received to spread, he cut the throats of seven men who happened to be in his tent. Food suspected of being poisoned was tested on a dog and a servant." Duke Ling of Ch'in enjoyed shooting at passers-by from a tower. Hired assassins were sometimes used. Punishments were severe and common; in Ch'i mutilation of the feet was so widespread a practice that special footgear was sold in the shops for those who had suffered it. Bribery at all levels was common. Even relatives could not trust each other. Adultery and even incest were quite common among the nobles. There were some cases of great fidelity and chivalry, of men dying for their lords and for their principles, and of men refusing unjust gain. But they are far less numerous in the records and many of them are less convincing as history. CREEL 1951, pp. 22, 23.

nobility was corrupt, the time was ripe and opportunities favourable for the practice of free enterprise. The acquisition by business life of a greater degree of freedom helped to create the big cities of industry and commerce. Moreover, copper cash was probably introduced at the end of Ch'un Ch'iu.<sup>30</sup>

In the fifth century B.C. iron became common in China. Iron weapons replaced bronze in China and iron farming tools together with the ox-drawn plough were instrumental in bringing about an agricultural revolution. Unfarmed areas in northern China were brought under the plough, and the remaining "barbarian" peoples were brought into the orbit of the dominant culture. Large-scale irrigation and the water-control system increased the grain yields. New canals were constructed to transport large quantities of tax grain and other commodities over long distances.<sup>31</sup>

A kind of liberation of the farmers also took place. Previously the farmers were restricted to the farm land, all other areas, such as mountains, forests and lakes, were forbidden to them. When the farmers started to trespass on forbidden land, they were at first regarded as thieves, and the nobility hired soldiers to deal with them. The farmers, however, stood firm and were later granted the right to use this land, taxes being levied on such use. This right meant that now several new occupations were possible, such as fishing and the production of salt, charcoal, iron and cut wood.<sup>32</sup>

At the end of Ch'n Ch'iu, China was the most populous land on earth. The seven largest states of China may have had a total population of about twenty millions, comparable to the whole of western Asian and the Mediterranean area together.<sup>33</sup>

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30 CH'IEN Mu 1977, p. 63; FAIRBANK & REISCHAUER & CRAIG 1973, pp. 34, 35. Hucker says that cast metal coins came into use not later than the fifth century B.C. and were apparently first produced by private merchants to simplify their interregional dealings. HUCKER 1975, p. 67.

31 FAIRBANK & REISCHAUER & CRAIG 1973, p. 34; HUCKER 1975, pp. 64, 65.

32 CH'IEN Mu 1977, p. 64.

33 FAIRBANK & REISCHAUER & CRAIG 1973, p. 34.



D.H. Smith describes everyday life during Confucius' time as follows: "In the days of Confucius life in the cities was lively and interesting. A high standard of civilisation had been reached. Craftsmen were skilled in the working of jade, semi-precious stones, ivory, bamboo, and wood, and also metals such as bronze and brass. The nobility vied with each other in the construction of palatial dwellings. They delighted to strut about clothed in embroidered or brocaded garments, dyed silk or a coarse linen in summer, lambswool, fox-fur or exotic skins in winter. Gems of ivory, jade or semi-precious stones dangled from their waists and tinkled as they walked. They loved to ride in carriages drawn by teams of wellmatched horses and furnished with fittings of highly polished bronze or brass. They enjoyed hunting and archery, and at their archery contests everything was conducted in accordance with a strictly organised ritual. At their numerous feasts and festivals they enjoyed a rich variety of food and drink, and were entertained by blind musicians and teams of dancers. Education for their children consisted of poetry, history, music, arithmetic and the rites and ceremonies governing all social and religious relationships. The scholars who crowded the courts of princes not only gave instruction to the younger generation, but were available for counsel and advice on matters of state.

In contrast to the life of the nobility was that of the peasantry. However, it is easy to over-emphasise the evils of their state. They lived a strenuous life with little rest from dawn till dusk and at the beck and call of their masters. They lived for mutual protection in mud- or stone-walled villages, and cultivated the land for their overlords under the supervision of stewards. They grew barley, millet, wheat and vegetables, domesticated numerous animals, especially the pig. Their women-folk engaged in spinning and weaving flax and in the cultivation of silkworm and the making of silk. Round these communal homesteads were planted mulberry, willow and fruit trees, the favourite fruit being the apricot. Fish and wild game were plentiful. Wine was made from fermented grain flavoured with aromatic herbs. Indigo and various pigments were used as dyes. For variety of food, conditions of labour and general standard of living the peasants of China were probably better off at the time of Confucius than

in the closing decades of the nineteenth century of our era."<sup>34</sup>

We have seen that the priests of Shang developed into a group of so-called scholars. On moving to the second capital, the Chou ruler lost virtually all but his religious authority, whereas the influence of these "scholars" grew in importance. They were specialists in morals, in sacrifices and in the organization of festivals. These men were in ever greater demand as the ritualism of the Chou court increased. Moreover, the feudal lords employed them to act as tutors for their children and to perform sacrifices and organize festivals. Confucius, K'ung Fu Tzu 孔夫子<sup>35</sup> was one of these scholars.<sup>36</sup> Born in 551 B.C. in Lu, Confucius could trace his

<sup>34</sup> SMITH 1973, pp. 39, 40.

<sup>35</sup> His family name was K'ung 孔, his given name was Ch'iu 丘 and his cognomen was Chung-ni 仲尼. He was referred to by his title of honour K'ung Fu Tzu 孔夫子, Master K'ung. The latinised form is Confucius. NEEDHAM 1956, p. 3; Ch'iu 丘 was pronounced Mou 某 out of respect for Confucius. Ch'iu means "a hillock or mound". MATHEWS 1969, p. 174.

The various biographies of Confucius are mainly based on Szu Ma Ch'ien, Records of the Historian, Szu Ma Ch'ien, Shih Chi, 司馬遷史記. See, for example, the edition translated by YANG Hsien-yi and GLADYS YANG, Records of the Historian, Hong Kong 1975, pp. 1-27, or CHAVANNES, Édouard, Les Mémoires Historiques de Se-ma Ts'ien Traduits et Annotés, vol. 5, Paris 1905, pp. 283-445. This source is considered only partly reliable. Needham says of it: "The long chapter devoted to Confucius by Ssuma Chhien and his father in the Shih Chi is, on the contrary, suspect, since some find grounds for thinking that parts of it may have been intended satirically. Both great historians were Taoist in sympathy, and as they had to include a chapter of biography, they used it to damn with faint praise the hypocritical Confucianism of their own time." NEEDHAM 1956, p. 5. See also CREEL 1951, pp. 9, 266. Lau finds only very few reliable facts about Confucius' life. He bases his account on sources other than Szu Ma Ch'ien. LAU 1979, pp. 9, 10.

The present work uses the following presentations of Confucius' life: SMITH 1973, pp. 41-59; EBERHARD 1977, p. 35; LEGGE, vol. 1. 1969, pp. 56-89; RYGALOFF 1946, pp. 34-65; THIEL 1950, pp. 13-31; WILHELM 1950, pp. 1-63; CH' IEN Mu 1977, p. 69; KRAMERS 1979, pp. 22-50; CREEL 1951, pp. 29-65.

<sup>36</sup> Needham says: "Among them there may have been some before Confucius who taught doctrines similar to his, but none who, by force of character and originality of mind, succeeded as he did in impressing their conceptions and personality upon all following generations." NEEDHAM 1956, p. 3.

descent from the imperial house of Yin. His ancestors were from Sung,<sup>37</sup> but had moved to the state of Lu as refugees. Lu, which was the most culturally advanced of the Chou states, had preserved the rites of Chou and also more old literary records than other states. It was also a state in which Shang institutions were strong.

Confucius' father was Shu Liang Ho 叔梁紇 who served the Meng family in an official capacity and who enjoyed a reputation for bravery and military skill. The Meng family was one of the three families who controlled the state of Lu. Confucius' mother was Cheng Tsai 徵在, from a poor and little-known family by the name of Yen 顏. When Confucius was in his third year his father died. Together with the Meng children Confucius probably received a good education. He studied thoroughly the Odes, Book of History and the ritual code which was important for the regulation of social life and relationships, and was interested in music, archery and fishing. Confucius, who married at the age of nineteen, had one son and one daughter. When his son Li 鯉 was born, the duke of Lu sent him a gift, an indication that he was not entirely unknown. About this time he entered the service of the state as the keeper of a granary. One year later he was placed in charge of the public fields. It is not clear whether these posts were under the direct control of the state or whether he was dependent on the Chi family in whose area of jurisdiction he lived.

In 527 his mother died and in keeping with custom, Confucius retired from public service. After 27 months of mourning he did not take up his post again, but devoted himself to study and teaching. As a result of the anarchy that prevailed in Lu, Confucius moved to Ch'i, a neighbouring state. Here he had several interviews with the reigning duke, but meeting with little encouragement he returned to his native state and for fifteen years devoted his time to studying and teaching. From this period dates the commencement of his alienation from his son Li.

It was while teaching in Lu that he began to attract a growing number of

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37 The ancestors of Confucius came from Sung, and the Sung people were descendants of Shang. WALEY 1939, p. 95.

of disciples. Some of his pupils were youths from noble families, but the majority of them were from the high class. What these disciples mainly wanted was to acquire sufficient education and training to ensure admission to government service. The disciples from this period in Lu are the older group, of whom Tzu Lu 子路, Yen Hui 顏回, Tzu Kung 子貢 and Jan Ch'iu 冉求 were the most famous. Tzu Lu and Yen Hui died. Confucius grieved especially over the loss of Yen Hui.

This period also saw a good deal of conflict between the three leading families of Lu. These families could hardly hold their own even against their own officials, two of the most outstanding of whom were Yang Huo 陽貨 and Kun-shan Fu-jao. 公山弗擾. On the defeat of Yang Huo and his subsequent flight to Ch'i, Confucius was made chief magistrate of the town of Chung-tu in Lu. This was probably about the year 501 B.C., when Confucius was fifty years old. At that age he entered the class known as Ai 艾 or "elders", and was given the rank of "senior officer". He was then promoted to assistant superintendent of works. Later still he took office under the Minister of Crime, or was the Minister of Crime himself. In this position Confucius saved his prince by a clever piece of diplomacy from seduction by ritual Pyrrhic dancers at an interview with the Duke of Ch'i.<sup>38</sup> To sow dissension between duke and minister, the men of Ch'i sent the duke a gift of eighty beautiful girls, highly accomplished in music and dancing together with a hundred and twenty of the finest horses that could be found. The Duke was so delighted that for three days no court was held. As a result of this, Confucius left Lu in 597 B.C. This account may be true, but the real reason for his leaving probably lay in the conviction that his political ideals and political wisdom would, if acted upon, lead to the restoration of a united China under one head. Consequently, he felt he had a duty to disseminate his ideals as widely as possible.

For the next thirteen years after leaving Lu, Confucius, followed by his disciples, travelled widely by horse and chariot. He sought in vain for a ruler who would be willing to employ him. At times he was exposed

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<sup>38</sup> NEEDHAM 1956, p. 4; COUVREUR 1951, p. 558.

to danger, at times to want. However, as a rule he was treated with consideration, although his teachings were ignored. When he left office he was fifty five years old, and his life seemed doomed to failure. At times he might well have been tempted to take office under an unworthy ruler, but knowing that no good could come of it, he refrained and probably never seriously thought of doing so.

In 484 B.C. at the age of sixty eight, Confucius was invited back to Lu. Several of his disciples were at this time prominent in the service of the state. At this time Confucius held rank immediately below that of the Great Officers. He had access both to the Duke and to the heads of the three families in whose hands the real power lay.

During the final years of his life, he gathered round him a new group of disciples, who were primarily responsible for the dissemination of his teachings throughout the Chinese states, with the consequent creation of different schools of Confucianism. The disciples Tzu Yu 子游 Tzu Chang 子張 Tzu Hsia 子夏 and Tzu Yü 子輿 were those most responsible for preserving and spreading his teaching after his death.

As an old man, Confucius seems to have spent much time in the study of the ancient texts, collating material and information which he had probably collected during his travels. It was a time of much sorrow and disappointment. After his return to Lu his only son died, and this was soon followed by the death of his favourite disciple Yen Hui. In 481 Szu-ma Niu 司馬牛 died and in the following year Confucius lost his oldest disciple Tzu-lu. At court, the head of the powerful Shu 叔 family did not appreciate his true worth and he was hated by many mean-spirited people.

The most reliable account of Confucius' death can be found briefly in the Ch'un Ch'iu saying: "Summer, one day in the fourth month, Confucius died."<sup>39</sup>

<sup>39</sup> 夏四月己丑孔丘卒。LEGGE vol. 5, 1969, pp. 843, 846; SMITH 1973, p. 54. By the third century B.C. the term "Ju" 儒 was widely applied to the followers of Confucius. It connoted in some sense "weakling". NEEDHAM 1956, p. 3; CREEL 1951, pp. 41, 56.

Another important figure for the present study is Lao Tzu 老子 or Lao Tan 老聃. Traditionally he has been regarded as a contemporary of Confucius. It has also been suggested that he was a historical figure, who lived during the fourth century B.C.<sup>40</sup> On the other hand, it has been suggested that Lao Tzu was not a historical figure at all.<sup>41</sup>

The name Lao Tzu means Old Boy, deriving from the legend that he was born with white hair. His native state was Ch'u. Apart from this, there are two other purported facts in his biography. The first is the meeting with Confucius. According to Szu Ma Ch'ien, Lao Tzu was a curator of the royal library in the capital of Lo Yang, where Confucius visited him in 517 B.C. asking to be instructed in the rites. The second biographical fact is Lao Tzu's journey to the north-west through a barrier-gate, leading out of the country. The gatekeeper requested him to write a book, and he wrote one of more than 5000 characters in two parts. "He then went away, and it is not known where he died."<sup>42</sup>

40 NEEDHAM 1956, p. 35; LAU D.C. 1974, p. 11. T'ang thinks that it is possible that Lao Tzu was a contemporary of Confucius. T'ANG Lan 1963, p. 608. According to another view, Lao Tzu belonged to the time about one hundred years after Confucius. LO Ken-tse 1963, p. 644. Needham refers to Dubs, who has tentatively indentified the son of Lao Tzu as a certain general 殷干宗 273 B.C. "Lao Tzu would thus have been of a noble Honan family, the hereditary position of which he refused to accept." NEEDHAM 1956, p. 35.

41 According to Lau, "there is no certain evidence that he was a historical figure." LAU D.C. 1974, pp. 147, 162; KALTENMARK 1975, p. 5.

42 WATTS 1975, pp. xxii, xxiii. The name Lao Tzu 老子 can also be translated "Old Master". Lau says of these two traditions: "Neither of these two purported facts is recorded in any extant work whose date is indubitably early. In my view both traditions did not become widely known or accepted until the period between 280 and 240 B.C., and there are no strong reasons to believe that they were founded on fact." LAU D.C. 1974, p. 11. Yu regards the facts as true and finds several reasons to support his assertion. He maintains that the meeting with Confucius took place on at least two occasions. YÜ P'ei-lin 1975, pp. 2, 3.

For a discussion of Lao Tzu, see HSÜ Fu-kuan 1975a, pp. 464-508; HENRICKS 1979, pp. 166-199. See also WILHELM 1925, pp. 15-23; LIN, PAUL J. 1977, pp. ix-xxvii, 147-149.

The third figure whose thoughts are discussed in the second volume of the present study is Mo Tzu 墨子. He lived sometime between the years 496 and 381 B.C. Lin concludes that he lived 496/494 to 404 B.C. dying at the age of 91 at least and 93 at most. Most probably he was a native of the state of Lu, where he was influenced by Confucian thinking. Later he became an official in Sung, where he adopted the Sung ideals of universal love and anti-militarism. He combined these two influences to form the Mohist philosophy.<sup>43</sup>

Apparently Mo Tzu, like Confucius, established a school for those who wished to become officials of the feudal lords.<sup>44</sup>

This historical review shows that this society recognized certain distinct classes. The main groups were the nobility and the others. This chief distinction remained valid throughout the period, although certain developments occurred. Between these two main groups there developed a third group, that of the scholars, which was forced to adapt itself to prevailing situations. It is noteworthy that it was from this flexible group, which apparently had good contacts both with the people and the nobility, that there arose the first philosopher of China, Confucius. This group constituted a kind of bridge between the people and the nobility. It may be for this very reason that the doctrines and questions of Confucius were formulated in such a way that during later millennia they were used among both the higher and the lower classes of the society.

The following contains a discussion of the key terms of Confucian doctrine prior to the time when this philosophical doctrine was formulated. The historical background points in two directions, namely those of the two main classes, the nobility and the common people. Shu Ching contains the traditional doctrines of the nobility and the Chou government, but the Shih Ching tradition also includes references to the thoughts of the ruled, of the people.

43 NEEDHAM 1956, p. 165; LIN Chün-che 1976, pp. 373, 378-380. See also FUNG, Yu-lan 1967, pp. 77-80.

44 Hsü Fu-kuan rejects the view that Mo Tzu was a Sung official, because this is not recorded in Mo Tzu's works. HSÜ Fu-kuan 1975a, p. 315.