

RANDOM HOUSE  BOOKS



East Asia

Arthur Cotterell

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About the Author

Arthur Cotterell now combines a career in education and training after school with an extensive interest in other civilizations. His books include *The Minoan World*, *A Dictionary of World Mythology*, *The Penguin Encyclopedia of Ancient Civilizations*, *The First Emperor of China*, *China: A History* (also available from Pimlico), *Origins of European Civilization*, *The Penguin Encyclopedia of Classical Civilizations*, *The Pimlico Dictionary of Classical Civilizations* and *The Pimlico Dictionary of Classical Mythologies*.

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For the enlarged edition they also wish to thank Heng and the Cartoonists and Writers Syndicate for permission to reproduce the two cartoons in Chapter 18.

CHRONOLOGY

CHINA

KOREA

Shang dynasty c. 1650-1027

BC

Early Zhou dynasty 1027-771

BC

Spring and Autumn period

770-481 BC

Warring States period 481-

221 BC

Unification, 221 BC

Qin dynasty 221-206 BC

Former Han dynasty 206 BC-

AD 9

Xin dynasty (Wang Mang)

AD 9-23

Later Han dynasty 25-220

The Three Kingdoms 221-65

Western Jin dynasty 265-316

Tartar Partition, 317-589

Tuoba Wei dynasty 386-550

Eastern Jin dynasty 317-420

Liang dynasty 502-57

Reunification, 589

Sui dynasty 589-618

Tang dynasty 618-906

First Korean State

Chosen 194-108 BC

Chinese commanderies

108 BC-AD 317

Koguryo founded AD 12

Three Kingdoms c. 350-688

Destruction of Koguryo

Five dynasties period 907-60
Song dynasty 960-1279

688
Silla 688-918
Unification of Peninsula
Koryo 918-1392

Mongol Conquest, 1279
Yuan dynasty 1279-1368

Chinese Recovery, 1368
Ming dynasty 1368-1644

Yi dynasty 1392-1910

Manchu Conquest, 1644
Qing dynasty 1644-1911

Japanese Annexation 1910

Republic 1912-49

PACIFIC WAR 1941-5

People's Republic 1949

North and South Korea

JAPAN

SOUTH-EAST ASIA

Vietnam annexed to
China 111 BC

Adoption of Chinese

Srivijaya (Sumatra) c.

Model

Taika reforms 646

Nara period 710-84

Heian period 794-1184

Shogunate Begins

Kamakura period 1185-1333

Ashikaga period 1338-1568

Warlord Era 1568-98

Oda Nobunaga (died 1582)

Toyotomi Hideyoshi (died 1598)

Late Shogunate

Tokugawa period 1603-1868

Imperial Period 1868-1945

Meiji restoration 1868

650-c. 1300

Khmer empire (Cambodia)

802-1440

Pagan (Burma) 849-1287

Vietnamese independence 939

Majapahit (Java) c. 1350

Ayudhya (Thailand) 1351-1767

Malacca founded 1402

Later Le dynasty (Vietnam)

1418-1789

Toungoo dynasty (Burma)

1486-1752

Arrival of Europeans

Portuguese seize

Malacca 1511

Chakri dynasty (Thailand)

1782 onwards

Franco-Thai War 1940-1

PACIFIC WAR 1941-5

Post-war
Japan

Independence
movement

*In memory of
Len Kelly
friend and colleague
who was there too*



East Asia today

EAST ASIA

From Chinese Predominance to the Rise of the Pacific
Rim

Arthur Cotterell



PIMLICO

FOREWORD

From Chinese Predominance to the Rise of the Pacific Rim

The events of the past fifty years have more than converted the Far East into East Asia. Besides toppling the antiquated notion in the West that Europe is the centre of the world, the changes set in motion by the Japanese endeavour to conquer the whole area can be seen as the trigger for the resurgence of a third of mankind. Even without the recent realisation that by the next century East Asia will be the workshop of the world, it is obvious that the long struggle against Western colonialism has been decisively won. An irony of this alteration in the balance of power is the role played by Japan, first as a Western-style empire, then as an economic superpower.

The purchase of Hollywood film studios is only one sign of Tokyo's new strength. Future historians are likely to see this transfer of capital as just a single transaction along the Pacific Rim, the global economic pace-setter of the twenty-first century. The fact that shortly Japan will not however have such a favourable balance of payments requires no crystal ball. Its historical advantage will be eroded through the hectic pace of development amongst its neighbours, the greatest of which, the People's Republic of China, has only just started to compete as an exporter.

For the social and economic direction that the Chinese people eventually decide to take must prove as decisive for the future of East Asia as it has for its past. The almost terminal decline of China at the end of the nineteenth

century under the last imperial house, and the chaotic conditions prevalent during the ill-fated republic which followed earlier this century, blinded many Westerners to the resilience of its people. Forgotten were the previous crises through which the world's oldest continuous civilisation had passed since the days when its hegemony was taken for granted in East Asia. It is that persistent lack of a perspective on what is the most dramatic transformation taking place in the contemporary world which this book attempts to remedy. The area covered includes South-East Asia for the good reason that periodically it was very much part of the East Asian sphere of influence, something the advent of Islam and early European colonisation has until recently tended to obscure.

The three parts into which this short history is divided therefore represent distinct periods of East Asian civilisation. The first considers the era of Chinese supremacy; the second the new balance of power inaugurated by the rise of northern peoples such as the Mongols and the Manchus; while the third deals with the impact of modern times. That Japan, the catalyst for so much change, has been the front-runner of the Pacific Rim is hardly surprising. Because Japan was the first East Asian nation to develop an industrialised economy, its ability to shape the area's affairs outside the People's Republic of China can be expected to last for some years before it is overtaken. But ultimately relations between the Chinese and the Japanese are the factor which will determine the future of East Asia.

The author wishes to acknowledge the assistance of Ray Dunning in preparing the line drawings for publication. He is also indebted to his wife, Yong Yap Cotterell, for her help with translation.

A NOTE ON THE ENLARGED EDITION

The invitation to bring the story of East Asia into the new millennium is opportune because the effect of the 1990s financial crisis there has been to thrust China once again to centre stage. Even the United States has come to realise how it needs to engage in an effective partnership with the People's Republic if peace and prosperity are to flourish all round the Pacific Rim. Notwithstanding the spy-plane incident of April 2001, it now falls to President George W. Bush to renew his father's warm relationship with the Chinese leadership in Beijing.

PART I

Chinese Predominance

The determining influence on China, the cradle of East Asian civilisation, was its isolation from the other great civilisations, notably India, West Asia, Egypt and Europe. Arising first in the second millennium BC, early China was, during its formative stage, a world apart, cut off by mountains and deserts from India, Mesopotamia and Egypt. Over a millennium had passed before, in 126 BC, the Chinese learned from an envoy of the existence of other civilisations. Even then the difficult journey via the oasis towns of Central Asia kept contact to a minimum, though foreign merchants carried along the Silk Road, as this caravan route became known, the greatest Chinese import before modern times - Buddhism. The fact that this Indian belief arrived so late in China, penetrating all parts of the country only towards the end of the fourth century AD, helps explain why it failed to dislodge Confucianism - with its stress on filial piety, reverence for ancestors and on moderation and harmony in all things - as the state ideology.

A struggle between the classical legacy of China, as expressed in Confucian support for a centralised state under the rule of an enlightened emperor, and the spiritual individualism of the Buddhist faith, after the ninth century AD marked the closing phase of early East Asian history. Nowhere was this clearer than in the Japanese attempt to adopt a Chinese-style bureaucracy, which foundered through the rivalry of Buddhist sects as well as the combativeness of feudal lords. In both Korea and Japan,

nevertheless, Buddhism did much during the seventh and eighth centuries to contribute to the process of building a national state. Similarly, in ninth-century South-East Asia, Hindu and Buddhist beliefs, imported from India, assisted the rise of kingdoms in Burma, Cambodia and Indonesia. Only in Vietnam was the Confucian-Buddhist conflict evident, as this country was then incorporated into the southern defences of the Chinese empire.

Even within China there was a phenomenal growth of Buddhism; the government's response was laicisation. In 845 the Tang emperor Wu Zong sent monks and nuns home 'with their heads wrapped up' as a sign of returning to ordinary life. The Japanese monk Ennin, an eyewitness of the event, was surprised at the official thoroughness, noting that 'every action is reported to the throne'. By contrast, in Japan Oda Nobunaga slaughtered, on a single day in 1571, 4000 residents at the Enrakuji monastery at Mt Hiei, north of Kyoto. Afterwards he ordered his troops to fire the buildings.

That China could successfully employ less violent tactics to suppress a rich and powerful Buddhist church demonstrates the strength of the rational, sceptical mould of the Confucian outlook. A Chinese political tradition which took for granted strong central authority, embodied in the emperor as the Son of Heaven, was too firmly rooted for Buddhism to alter permanently either the social or the spiritual landscape. But though the Buddhist church was brought within the scope of the state in China, there, as throughout East Asia, its metaphysical speculation was to have a lasting influence by integration with Neo-Confucianism, the dominant philosophy in the region until modern times. Neo-Confucianism's great exponent was Zhu Xi (1130-1200), who advocated above all else the pursuit of moral perfection through harmonious social relations.

The Chinese cultural and political hegemony in East Asia was interrupted temporarily in the early fourth century by the Tartar occupation of north China. Japanese principalities,

for instance, sent envoys to China in 57, 107, 239, 249, 245, 247, 265 and 266, but tribute failed to arrive regularly again until 413. Three years later the Chinese dynasty to which the Japanese envoys again travelled in Nanjing dispatched an expedition northwards, but nearly two more centuries had to pass before the country was reunited, a process abetted by the sinisation of the Tartars. The absorptive power of Chinese culture undoubtedly sustained the country during such periods of crisis, making it an exception to the general rule that large states did not long endure in the pre-modern age.

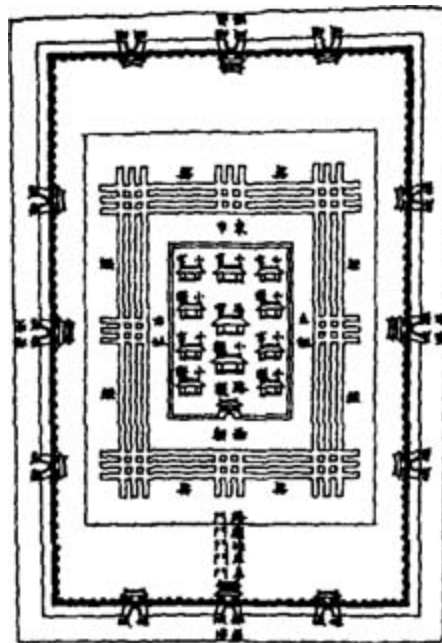


Fig. 1. Idealised plan of Luoyang, the Zhou kings' residence from the late eighth century BC. It reveals the deep-rooted Chinese veneration of encircling walls

As a result China was both the Greece and Rome of early East Asia: the imperial boundaries enclosed the civilised world; the Chinese writing system passed to neighbouring peoples no matter how unsuited to their own languages. Superior Chinese technology was also a welcome import, especially as an essentially defensive posture belied the fact that Chinese arms were in advance of all others until around 1500. The nation that built the Great Wall also invented the

crossbow before 450 BC and the gun in the thirteenth century, two weapons put to lethal use elsewhere. The Lateran council of 1139 felt obliged to anathematize all those who used the diabolical crossbow against Christians. China's own decline as a great power in East Asia was relative to the extent to which its northern enemies borrowed the military equipment developed for its own imperial armies. Not until the Mongols enrolled in their force subject allies with up-to-date weaponry were they in 1279 able to conquer China and, afterwards, the greater part of East Asia.

1

CLASSICAL CHINA

From the Shang to the Qin Dynasty (1650–206 BC)

THE SHANG AND EARLY ZHOU DYNASTIES (c. 1650–771 BC)

More than a prelude to the classical age of China (which spanned the six centuries until the foundation of the Han empire in 206 BC) were the first two dynasties from which written records survive. These dynasties of Shang and Early Zhou witnessed the earliest civilisation in East Asia, and with it the emergence of values that the Chinese later were to refine before passing them on to the Koreans, Vietnamese and Japanese. In Shang oracle inscriptions are found an emphasis on reverence, filial piety, kingly virtue, and propriety in the performance of ritual. In the recorded actions of the Early Zhou there is a courtesy and uprightness that, later, seemed to the philosopher Confucius (551–479 BC) almost a lost ideal; he claimed that his own teachings sought to 'follow Zhou' in establishing a moral code for 'all under Heaven', and insisted: 'I am a transmitter, not a creator. I believe in things old and love them.' Society's rootedness in the past was always taken for granted by the early Chinese.

Tradition credits Tang, the founder of Shang rule, with ending the cruel tyranny of Jie, the king of the previous dynasty, the Xia. The *Book of History (Shujing)*, a collection of documents edited in the fourth century BC, calls the Xia

the first Chinese dynasty of all. Before that, rulers were chosen by merit. The first Xia king was Yu, and it was because of his achievement in containing the Flood through an extensive scheme of water-control works that he was permitted to found a dynasty. That the early Chinese associated this privilege with hydraulic conservancy (though the major schemes actually only appear from the fifth century BC onwards) must mean that the throne was always held responsible for natural calamities and their amelioration. King Yu had spent thirteen years 'mastering the waters' without once returning home to see wife and children.

The *Book of History* pointedly contrasts the wisdom of Yu in his respect for the five elements with the indifference of the king before him. Yu received the Mandate of Heaven (*tianming*) to rule over the north China plain in accordance with 'the nine divisions and unvarying principles', which illustrate many facets of early Chinese thought. The first of the nine divisions comprised the five elements: water, fire, wood, metal and earth. The second division concerned personal behaviour, and included respectful demeanour, careful speech, clear vision, attentive listening as well as balanced ideas. The third listed the objects of government as food, wealth and articles of convenience, sacrifices, public works, instruction, punishment of crime, courtesy to guests, and finally, the army. In the fourth were the dividers of time, the calendar being a prerequisite of established rule.

The fifth division treated the ethics of sovereignty; the sage-king concentrated happiness in his own person, then diffused it for the benefit of the people, who responded positively to royal benevolence. This doctrine later formed the core of Confucius' own ethical system: hereditary privilege did not entitle the gentleman or nobleman to a position of social superiority, but only qualities of personal virtue that commanded respect.

Royal righteousness was also the subject of the sixth division, on the need for flexibility in dealing with subjects. Guidance could be sought from Heaven by means of, divination, reminded the seventh division: 'When the king uses the tortoise shell, or the divining stalks, to consult the ancestral spirits, the ministers and the officials, as well as the common people, all agree about a course of action. This is called the Great Accord.'

The eighth of the nine divisions dealt with correspondences. Just as rain, sunshine, heat, cold, wind and seasonableness in their proper order caused vegetation to grow abundantly, so ceremony, orderliness, wisdom and knowledge contributed to the salvation of the kingdom. The last division, the ninth, sets the five sources of happiness: longevity, wealth, soundness of body and serenity of mind, love of virtue, and a good death, against the seven extreme evils: misfortune, a short life, illness, distress of mind, poverty, wickedness and weakness.

As the ruler was styled the Son of Heaven, it is hardly surprising that he interceded with the chief deities in person. Should his entreaties and sacrifices fail, then responsibility for whatever was amiss rested squarely on his shoulders. Tang himself narrowly averted such a crisis. The problem was a drought, which, according to traditional chronology.

began a year after his accession, and lasted for seven years, bringing great hardship to the people. During this time rain almost ceased to fall, and sorrow and distress stalked the country. Many of Tang's poorest subjects were reduced to such straits that they were compelled to sell their children as slaves in order to fend off starvation. Relief measures failed to alleviate the suffering, with the result that a general conviction arose that a human sacrifice would have to be offered to Heaven. Without a second thought Tang expressed his willingness to die for the sake of the kingdom.

Having fasted and prepared himself spiritually for the sacrifice, the king cut his hair, clipped his nails, and donned a robe of white rushes, before riding to a mulberry grove in a simple carriage drawn by a team of white horses. There, as Tang offered himself as a divine victim, the drought ended in a heavy downpour.

The rain-making dragons sent by Shang Di, the high god of heaven, refreshed the land and saved Tang, and indeed the newly founded Shang dynasty. Now demonstrably blessed by Heaven, Tang had confidence to demote the untrustworthy lesser deity responsible for the drought. The divine and natural worlds were held to mirror feudalism (mountains and rivers were styled duke or count). That Tang, with the agreement of Heaven, should remove a laggard deity from his fief seemed perfectly reasonable.

On the terrestrial level Tang was just as energetic. To support campaigns needed to defend his kingdom, he promoted efficient government and encouraged agriculture, the cornerstone of the Chinese state. Although in the People's Republic today Shang society is held to have depended upon slaves, solicitude for the welfare of the peasantry is evident in the oldest surviving texts. The *zhong*, the 'multitudes', were strictly supervised but they remained distinct from war captives and debt-slaves. Oracle inscriptions reveal that peasant-farmers cultivated fields belonging to the king and the nobility, participated in royal hunts, formed a sizeable part of the army, and undertook garrison duties.

Shang slaves were largely non-Chinese war captives from beyond the northern and western frontiers of the kingdom. They worked alongside the *zhong* in the fields and as servants and grooms within noble households. Doubtless from their ranks were drawn those destined for sacrifice. During the laying of foundations both human beings and animals were ritually killed and interred. In the second

Shang capital of Ao, sited at modern Zhengzhou, a ditch below one palatial floor contains about 100 sawn-off human skulls. Human sacrifice lingered on after the fall of the Shang dynasty in 1027 BC, but declined before the humanist teaching of Confucius and his followers.

The Shang used human sacrifice most in the grave pits of the eleven royal tombs at Anyang. But the last Shang king, Di Xin, had no place in this cemetery since he was burned to death when the city fell to Zhou attackers. In the decisive battle which preceded the fall, 'those in the front ranks of the royal army turned their spears and fought those behind until they fled'. The strategem would have been the work of dissident nobles secretly in contact with Wu, the Zhou leader, and their defection would have been seen as a public declaration that the heavenly mandate no longer resided with the Shang house.

The reader should guard against a tendency among Chinese chroniclers to explain changes of dynasty in terms of virtue sweeping aside cruelty and corruption. Ancient historians perceived events as moving in cycles: a new cycle began when a hero-sage toppled the worthless tyrant of the old house and set up a new rule.

Though the usurpation of Wu is always credited with the overthrow of a tyrant and the restoration of feudal order, the Zhou house was not effectively founded until after his death. The man responsible was Wu's younger brother Tan, who acted as regent during the minority of the second Zhou king. Well acquainted with Shang ways from his many years as a young man at the Shang court, this elder statesman was able to unite the nobility, draw up new laws, establish a central bureaucracy, organise schools throughout the realm, and show proper respect for the fallen house by arranging for the continuation of ancestral sacrifices. His most conciliatory gesture was finding employment for Shang officials, a precedent that during subsequent changes of

dynasty freed scholar-bureaucrats from slavish devotion to any particular royal lineage.

The Zhou claimed descent from the deity Houji, 'he who rules the millet', while another leading clan traced its first ancestor to Houji's mother, Jiang Yuan. Both these clans, which intermarried, derived their names from tributaries of the Wei river, on the banks of which the new capital of Hao was founded. Hao's natural defences should have aided the Zhou dynasty, but in 771 BC it was sacked by an alliance of barbarian tribesmen and relations of the queen, who had been set aside because of the king's preference for a concubine. The great vassals rallied to the throne, and the dynasty survived the catastrophe of the king's death, though a new capital had to be established at Luoyang some distance down the Yellow river. Royal prestige was shattered and real power allowed to shift to the nobles who held the largest fiefs, and were independent in all but name.

With the advantage of hindsight, a chronicler noted that

Another unwise act was the ennoblement of the chief of the Qin people. Out of gratitude for sending soldiers to guard him on his way to the new capital, Ping not only raised the chief to noble rank but also gave him sufficient land to sustain his new position, the chief city of which was the old capital which he had just abandoned . . . The very duties ennobled Qin would be called upon to perform would inevitably develop his ambition, for the military skills of his people could not but be improved by their constant struggles with raiding tribesmen along the western frontier.

From this Qin chief would eventually descend Zheng, the unifier of China and its First Emperor.

THE SPRING AND AUTUMN PERIOD (790-481 BC)

Though the Son of Heaven became a ceremonial figure within a small domain surrounding Luoyang, feudalism

enjoyed a brief flourish during the so-called Spring and Autumn period, called after annals of the same name. In their own domains, feudal lords conducted sacrifices to their ancestors and local deities that over time assumed almost as much significance as those at Luoyang. A few of these quasi-states were almost the size of a modern province, even though many consisted of little more than a few walled towns along with the villages in countryside around them. At the start of the Spring and Autumn period there were some 120 feudal states; by its end less than twenty survived. The tendency for powerful states to swallow up their smaller neighbours was even more marked later, during the Warring States period (481-221 BC), when only seven states were able to marshal adequate forces for war. Powerless, successive Sons of Heaven watched as two great semi-barbarian powers, Qin and Chu, gained territory until the last Zhou king was rudely pushed from his throne by Qin troops in 256 BC. By 221 BC the strength of Qin was sufficient to destroy all its rivals and unify China as an empire.

The chief reason for the unending conflict was undoubtedly the succession disputes that erupted on the deaths of feudal lords. Intrigues arose through the custom whereby a ruler chose which of his sons, by his wife or his concubines, should be his heir. The other sons were frequently assigned to posts in outlying lands, where there were opportunities to build up individual power bases. Violence for instance marred the funeral of Huan in 642 BC. The struggle between his sons delayed burial until the condition of the corpse became scandalous. Worms were seen crawling out of the room in which it lay, and so putrid was the flesh that final preparations could not be undertaken in daylight.

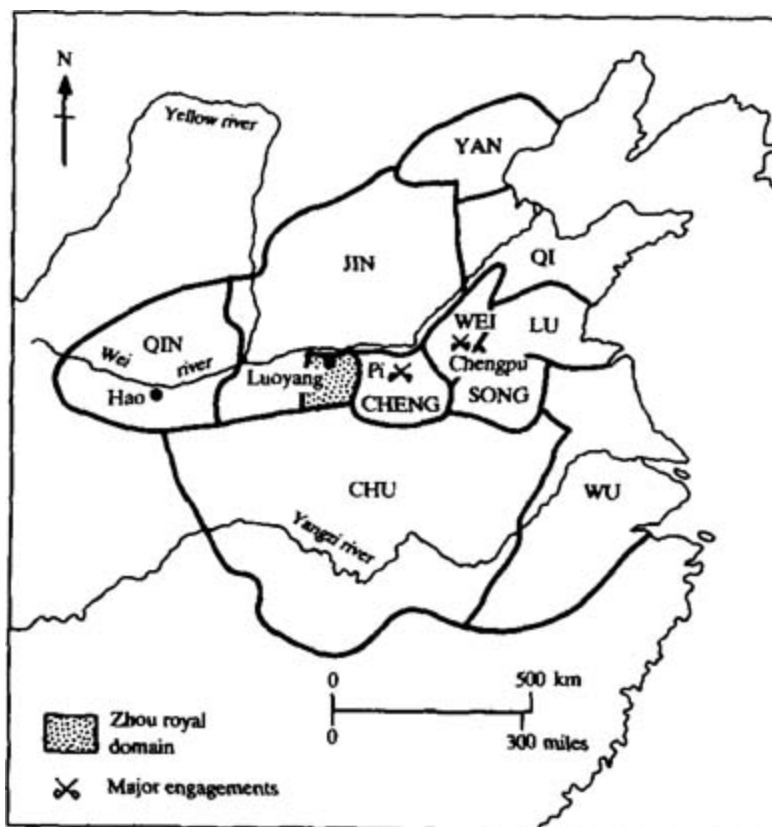
Huan had been the first *ba* ('hegemon' or 'overlord'). To fill the vacuum created by the decline of Zhou power, the custom had arisen by which leading feudal lords became hegemon in turn to exercise authority in the Son of

Heaven's name. Huan was duke of Qi, a prosperous north-eastern state in Shandong province. Though Qi's economic strength was securely based on salt, iron and irrigation, Huan's elevation resulted from the energetic measures he took in dealing with barbarian incursions and inter-state rivalry. Confucius told his disciples a century or so later that his campaigns against the northern barbarians had saved Chinese civilization: otherwise 'we should now button our clothes down the side and wear our hair down the back'.

Huan was ably assisted by his chief minister Guan Zhong (died 645 BC), one of the earliest statesman to be associated with a body of political theory. The rival schools of Confucianism and Legalism were both influenced by Guan Zhong's ideas, even though Confucius reacted unfavourably to his concentration on the ruler's position. Mencius (372-288 BC), the greatest follower of Confucius, singled out for criticism the authoritarian outlook of Guan Zhong when he argued for consistency in the treatment of the people. Whereas Mencius considered the will of the people to be a decisive political factor which might express itself in justified rebellion against tyrannical government, Guan Zhong looked upon a docile people as the natural instrument of a ruler's will. 'For one who is skilled in using the people,' Guan Zhong said, 'can kill them, imperil them, work them, exhaust them, cause them to suffer hunger and thirst; indeed, the ruler who knows how to use the people may achieve these extremes, yet among the people will be no one plotting harm to him.' Yet he did not advocate any reliance on terrible punishments - branding on the forehead, cutting off the nose, cutting off the legs, castration, and death by cutting in half - unlike his fellow chief minister Shang Yang, who died in 338 BC. This fervent believer in Law said bluntly: 'In an orderly state, punishments are numerous and rewards are rare. Therefore the good ruler punishes the bad people, but does not reward the virtuous ones.' For it had to be

made worse for someone to fall into the hands of the police than to go to war.

Huan always claimed to act on behalf of the Son of Heaven, but in fact pursued ambitions for his own benefit. While he preferred to settle problems through diplomacy rather than on the battlefield, he was obliged to go to war twenty-eight times as hegemon. The family feud for the succession on Huan's death ruined Qi and allowed the hegemony to pass first to neighbouring Song, and then in 636 BC to Jin, the biggest state of all until internal troubles in 403 BC split it into three separate units: Han, Wei and Zhao. Jin's duke felt grand enough to summon and dismiss the Zhou king without ceremony.



The Middle Kingdom during the Spring and Autumn period (790-481 BC), showing the principal states

In the warfare of the Spring and Autumn period is encountered the Chinese equivalent of the epic battles of

Greek and Indian warriors. Two battles stand out: Chengpu and Pi. The first was a defeat inflicted on Chu by hegemon Wen, duke of Jin. In 632 BC the Jin army marched to the relief of its ally Song, the capital of which had been besieged for several months. The bulk of the Chu forces withdrew on the approach of Wen, but one general refused, in defiance of his orders. He could not accept the taunt: 'A man of virtue cannot be opposed'. At the border town of Chengpu, Wen lured this Chu commander into a dangerous advance, and then caught his exposed troops in a pincer movement hidden behind a screen of dust raised by chariots dragging trees. In disgrace, the defeated Chu general committed suicide.

The engagement at Pi in 595 BC more than revenged the reverse at Chengpu. 'Through this defeat,' a Jin counsellor remarked, 'Heaven is perhaps giving a grave warning to our state.' There were so many Jin casualties that the ruler of Chu seriously considered 'piling up the bodies to make an imposing monument'. That he was persuaded to erect an ancestral temple instead accords exactly with the gallantry displayed on the battlefield. In a lull before the start of hostilities three Chu heroes riding in a chariot had challenged the Jin lines. Pursued by a squadron of charioteers, these adventurers were making their escape when a stag leapt up before them. They downed the beast with their last arrow, halted and presented it to their pursuers, who accepted the gift and broke off the chase. The Jin nobles let the Chu chariot get away in recognition of the prowess and courtesy of their foe.

But these mannered skirmishes were not to last. The eclipse of the chariot in the face of the deadly crossbow during the fourth century BC destroyed the link between aristocracy and war. Battles turned into large-scale infantry actions, with massed armoured columns of foot soldiers supported by crossbowmen, cavalry and chariots. The new riveted iron mail-coats were far removed from the padded

jackets or treated sharkskin and animal hide used in Huan's lifetime. With the demise of the hegemon system war became not just professional and serious, but also very expensive as larger states absorbed their smaller neighbours and diverted more resources to military purposes. The powerful states of Qin and Chu could each put into the field over a million soldiers.

THE WARRING STATES PERIOD (481-221 BC)

Because the core of the contending armies consisted of regulars, highly trained and well-equipped, rulers were anxious not to waste in unprofitable engagements what was a considerable investment. Sun Zi's *Art of War (Bingfa)*, the oldest known military treatise in the world, cautions the eager commander against taking unnecessary risks with his forces: 'Under fragrant bait there is certain to be a hooked fish.' Nor should advantage be pressed too hard: 'Never press an enemy at bay. Always leave a way of escape, or your foe will be forced to fight to the death.' The realism of this fifth century BC strategist stemmed from his appreciation of logistics, and their burdensome cost:

Operations inevitably require 1000 fast chariots, 1000 wagons, and 100,000 mail-clad foot soldiers. When provisions are transported for 1000 km the expenditure at home and at the front, including entertainment of allies, the cost of materials such as glue and lacquer, and sums spent on chariots and armour, will amount to 1000 pieces of silver a day. Such is the outlay required to put into the field an army of 100,000 men. When the actual fighting commences, and a victory is slow in coming, the weapons of troops grow dull and their morale weakens. When a city is besieged, you quickly exhaust your army's strength. Again, if a campaign is protracted, the resources of the state will prove unequal to the strain. When your weapons are dulled