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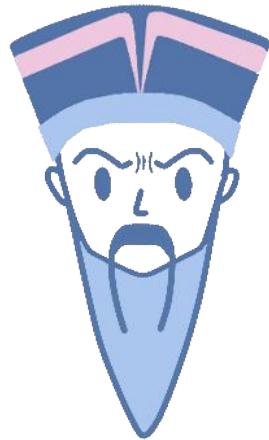


Week 9 Book of Lord Shang

Gened1091: Classical Chinese Philosophy and Political Theory



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Share your favorite passage from the *Book of Lord Shang*







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Terminology



Lord Shang = Shang Yang = Kung-sun Yang = Wei Yang



Paragraph 1: The Reform of the Law

The prince (Duke Hsiao) said: I intend, now, to alter the laws, so as to obtain orderly government, and to reform the rites, so as to teach the people ; but I am afraid the empire will criticize me.

Kung-sun Yang said: ...He who is concerned about the highest virtue is not in harmony with popular ideas ; he who accomplishes a great work, does not take counsel with the multitude. The law is an expression of love for the people; rites are a means for making things run smoothly. Therefore a sage, if he is able to strengthen the state thereby, does not model himself on antiquity, and if he is able to benefit the people thereby, does not adhere to the established rites.

Kan Lung (does not agree with Kung-sun Yang) and said: if Your Highness alters the laws without adhering to the old customs of the Ch'in state, and reforms the rites in order to teach the people, I am afraid that the empire will criticize Your Highness, and I wish that You would reflect maturely.

Kung-sun Yang replied: ... a wise man creates laws, but a foolish man is controlled by them; a man of talent reforms rites, but a worthless man is enslaved by them. With a man who is enslaved by rites, it is not worth while to speak about matters ; with a man who is controlled by laws, it is not worth while to discuss reform. Let Your Highness not hesitate.

...

Duke Hsiao said :— Excellent! ... Thereupon, in consequence, he issued the order to bring waste lands under cultivation.



Paragraph 2: An Order to Cultivate Waste Lands

Prerequisites for reforming agriculture:

What are the assumptions made in this paragraph? What's the desired outcome of Shang Yang in making the following argument to persuade his king?

"If there is no procrastination in the creating of order, depraved officials have no opportunity of gaining private profits at the expense of the people, nor will the hundred officials be in a condition to temporise and to shift responsibilities on to one another. If the hundred officials are not in a condition to temporise and shift responsibilities on to one another, then agriculture will know days of surplus; and if the depraved officials have no opportunity of gaining private profits at the expense of the people, then agriculture will not be ruined. If agriculture is not ruined, but knows days of surplus, then it is certain waste lands will be brought under cultivation."



Paragraph 2: An Order to Cultivate Waste Lands

Prerequisites for reforming agriculture:

What are the assumptions made in this paragraph? What's the desired outcome of Shang Yang in making the following argument to persuade his king?

“If taxes are levied according to the measure of grain, then the ruler will have system and consequently the people will have peace. If the ruler has system, he will be a man of his word, and being a man of his word, the officials will not dare to commit any depravity. If the people have peace, they are circumspect, and being circumspect, they are difficult to move. If the ruler is a man of his word and in consequence the officials dare not commit any depravity, and if the people are circumspect and consequently difficult to move, then there will be no criticism by inferiors of superiors, nor will the officials be regarded as obnoxious. If so, then the able-bodied will be strenuous in agriculture, without changing. If the able-bodied are so, then the youthful will learn it without resting, and when the youthful learn it without resting, it is certain waste lands will be brought under cultivation.”



Paragraph 2: An Order to Cultivate Waste Lands

Strategies to direct people to cultivate the land:

What's the strategy mentioned in this passage to direct people to agriculture?

“If dignities are not conferred nor office given according to deviating standards, then the people will not prize learning nor, besides, will they hold agriculture cheap. If they do not prize learning, they will be stupid, and being stupid, they will have no interest in outside things ; when they have no interest in outside things, the country will exert itself in agriculture and not neglect it, and when the people do not hold agriculture cheap, the country will be peaceful and free from peril. If the country is peaceful and free from peril, exerts itself in agriculture and does not neglect it, then it is certain waste lands will be brought under cultivation.”



Paragraph 2: An Order to Cultivate Waste Lands

Strategies to direct people to cultivate the land:

What's the strategy mentioned in this passage to direct people to agriculture?

“If salaries are liberal and consequently taxes numerous, then the large number of persons who live on others would mean ruin for agriculture ; but if they are assessed according to the calculated number of persons who live on others and are made to work hard, then the wicked and licentious, idle and lazy will have nothing on which to live, and having nothing on which to live, they will take up agriculture ; when they take up agriculture, then it is certain waste lands will be brought under cultivation.”



Paragraph 2: An Order to Cultivate Waste Lands

Strategies to direct people to cultivate the land:

What's the strategy mentioned in this passage to direct people to agriculture?

“Do not allow merchants to buy grain nor farmers to sell grain. If farmers may not sell their grain, then the lazy and inactive ones will exert themselves and be energetic ; and, if merchants may not buy grain, then they have no particular joy over abundant years. Having no particular joy over abundant years, they do not make copious profit in years of famine, and making no copious profit, merchants p.178 are fearful, and being fearful, they desire to turn farmers. If lazy and inactive farmers exert themselves and become energetic, and if merchants desire to turn farmers, then it is certain waste lands will be brought under cultivation.”



Paragraph 2: An Order to Cultivate Waste Lands

Strategies to direct people to cultivate the land:

What's the strategy mentioned in this passage to direct people to agriculture?

“If penalties are made heavy and relations are involved in the punishments, petty and irascible people will not quarrel, intractable and stubborn people will not litigate, slothful and lazy people will not idle, those who waste their substance will not thrive, and those of evil heart, given to flattery, will bring about no change. If these five kinds of people do not appear within the territory, then it is certain waste lands will be brought under cultivation.”



Paragraph 2: An Order to Cultivate Waste Lands

Strategies to secure agriculture.

What's the strategy mentioned in this passage to secure agriculture?

"If it is not permitted to petition officials on behalf of wrongdoers, nor to provide them with food, then criminal people will have no patrons ; having no patrons, crimes will not be encouraged ; crimes not being encouraged, criminal people will have no hold ; criminal people having no hold, farmers will not suffer, and if farmers do not suffer, it is certain waste lands will be brought under cultivation."



Break into group discussion

1. What is Shang Yang's ultimate goal? What is he trying to achieve?
2. If you were the king, would you like Shang Yang or not? Why?
3. If you were the people, would you like Shang Yang or not? Why? (Please keep in mind that people weren't having enough food to eat and shelter to live. Corruption, famine, and war were prevalent in all states during the Warring States period.)
4. If you were from a wealthy family, would you like Shang Yang or not? Why?
5. If you were the king, what would you do?



Paragraph 3: Agriculture and War

What does Shang Yang warn his ruler about in this passage? What is he advocating? How does he differ from the philosophers we have read so far?

"now the people within the territory all say that by avoiding agriculture and war, office and rank may be acquired, with the result that eminent men all change their occupations, to apply themselves to the study of the Odes and History and to follow improper standards; on the one hand, they obtain prominence, and on the other, they acquire office and rank. Insignificant individuals will occupy themselves with trade and will practise arts and crafts, all in order to avoid agriculture and war, thus preparing a dangerous condition for the state. Where the people are given to such teachings, it is certain that such a country will be dismembered." (p. 9)



Paragraph 3: Agriculture and War

From Shang Yang's perspective, what's essential in administering a country? What qualifies a sage king in his view?

"Where a hundred men farm and one is idle, the state will attain supremacy ; where ten men farm and one is idle, the state will be strong ; where half farms and half is idle, the state will be in peril." (p. 11)

"A sage knows what is essential in administrating a country, and so he induces the people to devote their attention to agriculture. If their attention is devoted to agriculture, then they will be simple, and being simple, they may be made correct. Being perplexed, it will be easy to direct them; being trustworthy, they may be used for defence and warfare. Being single-minded, opportunities of deceit will be few, and they will attach importance to their homes. Being single-minded, their careers may be made dependent on rewards and penalties ; being single-minded, they may be used abroad." (p.12)



Paragraph 3: Agriculture and War

What does Shang Yang warn his ruler about in this passage? What is he advocating? How does he differ from the philosophers we have read so far?

"If, in a country, there are the following ten things : odes and history, rites and music, virtue and the cultivation thereof, benevolence and integrity, sophistry and intelligence (623), then the ruler has no one whom he can employ for defence and warfare. If a country is governed by means of these ten things, it will be dismembered as soon as an enemy approaches, and even if no enemy approaches, it will be poor. But if a country banishes these ten things, enemies will not dare to approach, and even if they should, they would be driven back. When it mobilizes its army and attacks, it will gain victories ; when it holds the army in reserve and does not attack, it will be rich. A country that loves strength makes assaults with what is difficult, and thus it will be successful. A country that loves sophistry makes assaults with what is easy, and thus it will be in danger." (p. 11)



Rewards and Punishments

What are the ways in which humans can be motivated to act?

"A country that has no strength and that practises knowledge and cleverness, will certainly perish; but a fearful people, stimulated by penalties, will become brave, and a brave people, encouraged by rewards, will fight to the death. If fearful people become brave and brave people fight to the death, (the country will have no match); having no match, it will be strong, and being strong it will attain supremacy.

If the poor are encouraged by rewards, they will become rich, and if penalties are applied to the rich, they will become poor. When in administrating a country one succeeds in making the poor rich and the rich poor, then the country will have much strength, and this being the case, it will attain supremacy." (p.14)



Rewards and Punishments

What is the vision of statecraft put forth in this passage?

The way in which a sage administers a state is by **unifying rewards, unifying punishments, and unifying education**. The effect of unifying rewards is that the army will have no equal ; the effect of unifying punishments is that orders will be carried out ; the effect of unifying education is that inferiors will obey superiors. Now if one understands rewards, there should be no expense; if one understands punishments, there should be no death penalty; if one understands education, there should be no changes, and so people would know the business of the people and there would be no divergent customs...

What I mean by the unifying of rewards is that profits and emoluments, office and rank, should be determined exclusively by **military merit**, and that there should not be different reasons for distributing them. For thus the intelligent and the stupid, the noble and the humble, the brave and the timorous, the virtuous and the worthless, will all apply to the full whatever knowledge they may have in their breasts, exert to the uttermost whatever strength they may have in their limbs, and will be **at the service of their ruler even to death**; and the outstanding heroes, the virtuous and the good, of the whole empire will follow him, like flowing water, with the result that the army will have no equal, and commands will be carried out throughout the whole empire.

Aspect	Shang Yang	Confucius	Mencius	Laozi	Zhuangzi	Xunzi
Core Focus						
View on Governance						
View on Education						
Social Structure						



Post a reflection on Ed

- Prompt: Apply **one** concept from the *Book of Lord Shang* to a real-world scenario and share your thoughts. You may either agree or disagree with the author's ideas.
- Post it on Ed Discussion under “Sections” and “Week 9 Lord Shang”
- Submit the link of your post under Assignment
- If you can't finish it by the end of the section, please finish it by the end of the day.