

Philosophers and Warring States During the Eastern Zhou Period (770–256 B.C.E.)

The Multistate System of the Eastern Zhou

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The foundations of Chinese thought were established in the five centuries that followed the transfer of the Zhou court to Luoyang in 770 B.C.E. During this period, the old Zhou fiefs came to function more and more like independent states linked to one another in a multistate system. Gradually, warfare between the states intensified, and social, political, and cultural change also quickened. By the third century B.C.E., only seven important states remained. Over the course of these centuries, hereditary ranks meant less and less, and rulers made more use of the *shi* (shih), the lower ranks of the old aristocratic order. As the *shi* competed to offer advice to rulers, they advanced the art of argument and set in motion a tremendous intellectual flowering. China entered one of its most creative periods, when the ideas underlying the Confucian, Daoist, and Legalist traditions were developed.

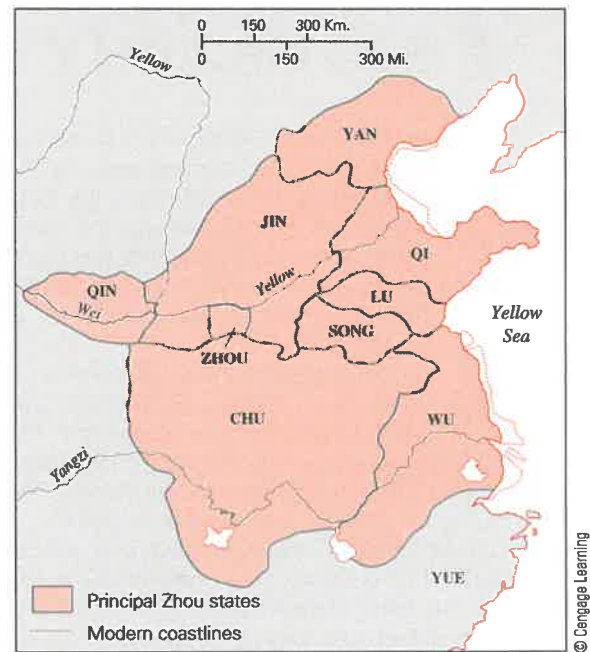
Historians of ideas, warfare, and social and political change have all found the Eastern Zhou a fascinating period to study. Archaeological evidence remains fundamental to expanding our understanding of this period and has been particularly valuable for showing the richness of the culture of the south, the region of the state of Chu (choo). Few of the philosophical texts of this period were written by a single known author, so scholars have devoted much of their energy to distinguishing the earlier and later layers of texts. Knowing the importance of the strong, centralized state in later periods of Chinese history, historians have also drawn attention to the advances in statecraft of this period and the connections between the ideas articulated in the period and the social and political situation. Would comparable ideas have emerged if China had not been politically divided? How significant was the emergence of the *shi* to the intellectual history of this period? Is it more than coincidental that China's first intellectual flowering occurred in roughly the same centuries as that of ancient India, Greece, Persia, and Israel?

THE MULTISTATE SYSTEM OF THE EASTERN ZHOU

The Eastern Zhou Dynasty is conventionally divided into two periods named after books that recorded events of the time: the Spring and Autumn period, to 479 B.C.E., and the Warring States period after it. The history of the Eastern Zhou Dynasty is better documented than the history of the Western Zhou because of advances in the art of political narrative. For the Spring and Autumn period, the most important chronicle is the *Zuo zhuan* (dzaw jwan), a narrative covering the years 722 to 463 B.C.E., traditionally treated as a commentary to the much briefer *Spring and Autumn Annals*. For the Warring States period, *The Intrigues of the Warring States* presents lengthy narratives, arranged by state rather than chronologically. A third work, the *Discourses of the States*, also arranged by state, concentrates on speeches and covers both periods. The authorship and dating of all three of these works are uncertain, but at a minimum they contain Zhou material.

Although the Zhou kings were still considered the supreme monarchs, they no longer had the military might to force obedience. Sometimes supposed vassals would even attack the Zhou king. During this period, the ruler of one state would sometimes be recognized as the hegemon, the leader of the alliance of Zhou states (see Biography: Guan Zhong [gwan jung]). These hegemons periodically called meetings of the allied states where rulers or leading ministers would swear to uphold the Zhou feudal structure. At a meeting in 657 B.C.E., the states swore not to dam irrigation waters, withhold sales of grain, replace heirs apparent, promote concubines to wives, or let women interfere in state affairs. The principal states of the early Warring States period are shown on Map 2.1.

Succession disputes were a common pretext for war between states. A ruler typically had concubines in addition to a wife and thus would have children by several women. In theory, succession went to the eldest son of the wife, then younger sons by her, and, only in their absence, sons of concubines. In actual practice, however, the ruler of a state or head of a powerful ministerial family could select a son of a concubine to be his heir if he wished. During his lifetime, this led to much



Map 2.1 Zhou States in the Sixth Century B.C.E.

scheming for favor among the various sons and their mothers and the common perception that women were incapable of taking a disinterested view of the larger good. Sons who felt unfairly excluded often journeyed to other states in search of allies. Because rulers regularly took their wives from the ruling families of other states, a contender could try the state that his mother or grandmother had come from or the states his sisters or aunts had married into. The rulers of these states were often happy to see someone indebted to them on the throne of a neighboring state and would lend armies to help oust rivals.

There were, of course, other reasons for warfare. States tried to maintain a balance of power and prevent any one state from becoming too strong. States on the periphery had the advantage because they could expand outward. Thus, the four states to gain the most over the course of the Spring and Autumn period were Qin (chin) in the west, Jin in the north, Qi (chee) in the east, and Chu (choo) in the south. As Chu expanded from its base in the south, Qi organized other states to resist it. Sometimes the states in the middle, weary of being caught in the fighting between the larger powers, organized peace conferences.



BIOGRAPHY

Guan Zhong

By the time of Confucius the success of states was often credited more to the lord's astute advisers than to the lords themselves. To Confucius, the most praiseworthy political adviser was Guan Zhong (ca. 720–645 B.C.E.), the genius behind the rise of the state of Qi in eastern China.

The earliest historical sources that recount Guan Zhong's accomplishments are the commentaries compiled in the Warring States period to elaborate on the dry chronicle known as the *Spring and Autumn Annals*. The *Zuo zhuan*, for instance, tells us that in 660 B.C.E., Guan Zhong advised Duke Huan (hwan) to aid the small state of Xing (shing), then under attack by the non-Chinese Rong (rung) tribes: "The Rong and the Di are wolves who cannot be satiated. The Xia [Chinese] states are kin who should not be abandoned." In 652, it tells us, Guan Zhong urged the duke to maintain the respect of the other states by refusing the request for an alliance by a ruler's son who wished to depose his father. Because the duke regularly listened to Guan Zhong's sound advice, Qi brought the other states under its sway, and the duke came to be recognized as the first hegemon, or leader of the alliance of states.

Guan Zhong was also credited with strengthening the duke's internal administration. He encouraged the employment of officials on the basis of their moral character and ability rather than their birth. He introduced a system of drafting commoners for military service. In the history of China written by Sima Qian (se-ma chyen) in about 100 B.C.E., Guan Zhong is also given credit for enriching Qi by promoting trade, issuing coins, and standardizing merchants' scales. He was credited with the statement that "when the granaries are full, the people will understand ritual and moderation. When they have

enough food and clothing, they will understand honor and disgrace."

Sima Qian's biography of Guan Zhong emphasized his early poverty and the key role played by a friend, Bao Shuya, who recognized his worth. As young men, both Bao and Guan Zhong served brothers of the duke of Qi. When this duke was killed and a messy succession struggle followed, Bao's patron won out and became the next duke, while Guan Zhong's patron had to flee and in the end was killed. Bao, however, recommended Guan Zhong to the new duke, Duke Huan, and Guan Zhong took up a post under him.

In the *Analects*, one of Confucius's disciples thought this lack of loyalty to his first lord made Guan Zhong a man unworthy of respect: "When Duke Huan killed his brother Jiu (jiu), Guan Zhong was unable to die with Jiu but rather became chancellor to Duke Huan." Confucius disagreed: "Guan Zhong became chancellor to Duke Huan and made him hegemon among the lords, uniting and reforming all under heaven. The people, down to the present, continued to receive benefits from this. Were it not for Guan Zhong our hair would hang unbound and we would fold our robes on the left [that is, live as barbarians]" (*Analects* 14.18).

A book of the teachings associated with Guan Zhong, the *Guanzi*, was in circulation by the late Warring States period. Although today it is not thought to reflect the teachings of the historical Guan Zhong, the fact that later statecraft thinkers would borrow his name is an indication of his fame as a great statesman.

Questions for Analysis

1. How did Guan Zhong help the rulers whom he served?
2. What did Confucius see as Guan Zhong's most important accomplishment?

Another common reason for the hegemon to bring troops to the aid of a state was to help it fend off attack by various forces from beyond the Zhou world. But those labeled with the non-Chinese ethnic terms Di, Rong, or Yi were not always in a position of enmity to the Chinese states. For instance, Jin often enlisted Rong or Di polities to join it in fighting Qin. Moreover, some Rong and Di leaders were versed

in Chinese literature. There was also intermarriage between the ruling class of Zhou states and the Rong and Di elites. Duke Wen of Jin's mother was a Rong, his wife a Di. The only written language in this world, however, was Chinese, which worked toward making Chinese the common language. In the south, the states of Wu and Yue emerged from outside the Zhou sphere but adopted Zhou cultural

patterns; Yue, in fact, claimed to be descended from the Xia Dynasty, making it more ancient than the Zhou Dynasty.

Archaeological evidence confirms steady cultural exchange between Zhou and non-Zhou elements during this period. The rulers of the state of Zhongshan in the northeast were recognized as descended from White Di, who had been driven by other tribes from Shaanxi into Hebei in the sixth century. With help from the state of Wei, they established their own city there. Although Zhongshan was a very minor state, its rulers decided to call themselves kings when other states' rulers did. The tomb of King Cuo (tsaw) of Zhongshan (jung-shahn), who died around 308 B.C.E., included inscribed bronzes that record historical events in typically Confucian language, full of stock phrases from the classics.

Rulers continued to be buried with followers during this period. Duke Mu (moo) of Qin had 177 people accompany him in death after he died in 621 B.C.E., and nearly a century later, in 537 B.C.E., Duke Jin was buried with 166 people. By this period, there were people who disapproved of the practice. In the state of Qin, the practice was outlawed in 383 B.C.E. Moreover, the sacrificing of war captives in ceremonies unrelated to burials no longer seems to have been practiced. Remnants of this practice could still be seen in the use of the blood of captives to consecrate newly cast war drums and the ritual of presenting captives at the ancestral temple or other altar.

WARFARE AND ITS CONSEQUENCES

The purpose and conduct of war changed dramatically in the Eastern Zhou period. In the Spring and Autumn period, a large army would have up to ten thousand soldiers, the chariot remained central to warfare, and states were ranked by how many hundreds of chariots they could deploy. A code of chivalrous conduct regulated warfare between the states. The two sides would agree on the time and place for a battle, and each would perform divination and sacrifices before initiating hostilities. One state would not attack another while it was in mourning for its ruler. Ruling houses were not wiped out so a successor could continue to sacrifice to their ancestors. Battle narratives in the *Zuo zhuan* give the impression that commanders cared as much about proving their honor as about winning. In 638 B.C.E.,

the duke of the small state of Song felt compelled to fight a much stronger state. Because his forces were greatly outnumbered, his minister of war urged him to attack the enemy while the enemy's forces were fording a river, but the duke refused. The *Zuo zhuan* reports that he explained his behavior this way: "The gentleman does not inflict a second wound, nor does he capture those with gray hair. On campaigns the ancients did not obstruct those in a narrow pass. Even though I am but the remnant of a destroyed state, I will not drum an attack when the other side has not yet drawn up its ranks."* When combat was hedged with these ceremonial restrictions, war was less deadly—a wound ended the victim's combat status but not necessarily his life.

By the Warring States period, such niceties were being abandoned as advances in military technology changed the nature of warfare. Large, well-drilled infantry armies were becoming a potent military force, able to withstand and defeat chariot-led forces. By the late Warring States period, military obligations were nearly universal for men. By 300 B.C.E., states were sending out armies of a couple hundred thousand drafted foot soldiers, usually accompanied by horsemen. Qin's campaign against Zhao (jow) in 260 B.C.E. mobilized all men over age fifteen. Conscripts with a year or two of training would not have the martial skills of aristocratic warriors who trained for years and tested their skills in hunts. But infantry armies won out through standardization, organization, discipline, and sheer size.

Adding to the effectiveness of armies of drafted foot soldiers was the crossbow, invented in the southern state of Chu. The trigger of a crossbow is an intricate bronze mechanism that allowed a foot soldier to shoot farther than a horseman carrying a light bow. One text of the period claimed that a skilled soldier with a powerful crossbow and a sharp sword was the match for a hundred ordinary men. To defend against crossbows, soldiers began wearing armor and helmets. Most of the armor was made of leather strips tied with cords. Helmets were sometimes made of iron.

Although most soldiers were drafted peasants, it became common to select and train elite corps of crack troops. The elite troops in the state of Wei had to wear heavy armor and helmets, shoulder a crossbow and fifty arrows, strap a spear to their backs and a sword by their waists, carry three days' supply of food, and march about 50 kilometers in a

*Duke Xi, 22nd year. Translations cited by the traditional sections are by the author.

single day. Those meeting this standard earned their household exemption from all taxes and labor service obligations.

The development of infantry armies created the need for a new type of general because rulers became less willing to let men lead troops merely because of aristocratic birth. Treatises on the art of war described the ideal general as a master of maneuver, illusion, and deception, ruthless in searching for the advantage that would lead to victory. He also had to be an organizer, able to integrate the efforts of the units under him.

Because cities were walled, attacks on them resulted in prolonged sieges, and generals were eager to try new ways to attack and defend walls. Portable ladders were brought to scale the walls. When attackers dug tunnels under the walls, defenders would use large bellows of the sort common in smelting iron to pump smoke into the tunnels and suffocate the attackers.

City walls were not the only defensive structure important to warfare of the period. States began building chains of watch stations and forts, often connecting them with long defensive walls. Permanent garrisons were left at strategic points to prevent the passage of armies. Barriers also allowed states to check those who entered or left their territories and to collect transit taxes from merchants.

The introduction of cavalry struck another blow at the chariot-riding aristocracy. Shooting bows and arrows from horseback was first perfected by non-Chinese peoples to the north of China proper, who at that time were making the transition to a nomadic pastoral economy. As the northern states expanded northward, absorbing non-Chinese communities of mixed shepherds and farmers, they came into direct contact with the horse riders of the steppe. In 307 B.C.E., the king of the northern state of Jin ordered his troops to adopt the nomads' trousers and practice mounted archery (see *Documents: The King of Zhao Convinces His Uncle to Wear Barbarian Dress*). Soon Zhao was using cavalry against other Chinese states, which then had to master the new technology to defend themselves. Larger infantry armies of one hundred thousand or two hundred thousand men would be supported by a few hundred mounted warriors. Cavalry were considered especially valuable for reconnaissance, pursuing fleeing soldiers, cutting supply lines, and pillaging the countryside. From this time on, acquiring and pasturing horses was a key component of Chinese military preparedness (see *Color Plate 2*).

As a result of all these developments in the art of war, conflicts came to be waged with greater intensity

and on a much larger scale than ever before. Whereas Spring and Autumn period campaigns had lasted no longer than a season and battles no longer than a day or two, some campaigns in the Warring States period lasted for years, with separate armies operating independently on several fronts. Qin's defeat of Zhao in 260 B.C.E. came after a campaign that lasted three years and involved hundreds of thousands of soldiers on each side deadlocked across a front that stretched more than a hundred miles.

Because these developments in the art of war made commoners and craftsmen crucial, rulers of the warring states tried to find ways to increase their populations. To increase agricultural output, they brought new land into cultivation, drained marshes, and dug irrigation channels. By the sixth century B.C.E., some rulers were surveying their land and beginning to try to levy taxes on farmers. They wanted to undermine the power of lords over their serfs in order to get direct access to peasants' labor power. Serfdom thus gradually declined. Registering populations led to the extension of family names to commoners at an earlier date than anywhere else in the world.

The development of iron technology in the Zhou period also promoted economic expansion. Iron was cast from the beginning, unlike in the West, where iron was wrought long before it was cast. By the fifth century B.C.E., iron was being widely used for both farm tools and weapons. By the third century B.C.E., the largest smelters employed two hundred or more workmen.

The economic growth of the late Zhou period is evident in the appearance of cities all over north China. In addition to the thick earthen walls built around the palaces and ancestral temples of the ruler and other aristocrats, outer walls were added to protect the artisans, merchants, and farmers living in the surrounding area. Another sign of economic growth was the emergence of a new powerful group in society: rich people who had acquired their wealth through trade or industry rather than inheritance or political favor. Late Zhou texts frequently mention cross-regional trade in objects such as furs, copper, dyes, hemp, salt, and horses. To promote trade, rulers began casting coins, at first in the shape of miniature spades.

In the fourth century B.C.E., rulers of states started calling themselves kings, a step that amounted to announcing their intent to conquer all the other states. Rulers strengthened their control by dispatching their own officials rather than delegating authority to hereditary lesser lords. Rulers controlled these

DOCUMENTS

The King of Zhao Convinces His Uncle to Wear Barbarian Dress

The Intrigues of the Warring States is a collection of late Zhou historical anecdotes and fables about the political ploys adopted by the various competing states. The book, full of speeches by kings and court advisers, has been appreciated as a work of literature, even by those who were dismayed by its morality. In this passage, the king of Zhao has decided to adopt the trousers of the northern nomads, the Hu (hoo; also called Xiongnu [shyung-noo]), but he worried that others would make fun of him. He sent a messenger to ask his uncle, Gongzi Cheng (gung-dse chuhng), to join him in changing his dress. We begin here with the uncle's response.

[The uncle] Gongzi Cheng bowed twice: "I had, of course, heard of the king's Hu clothing but having been ill abed I had not yet gone to him to present my opinions. Since the king now sends me these orders, I must now make my clumsy gesture of loyalty.

"I have heard the Middle Kingdoms described as the home of all wisdom and learning, the place where all things needful of life are found, where saints and sages taught, where humanity and justice prevail, where the *Book of Poetry* and *Book of Documents* and *Canons of Ritual and Music* are used; a country where extraordinary skills and uncommon intelligence are given hearing, a land looked up to from afar, and a model of behavior for the barbarian. But now the king would discard all this and wear the habit of foreign regions. Let him think carefully, for he is changing the teachings of our ancients, turning from the ways of former times, going counter to the desires of his people, offending scholars, and ceasing to be part of the Middle Kingdoms."

When [the messenger] Wangsun Xie (wahngsun shyeh) had reported, the king said merely, "I knew, of course, that he had been ill." Then, going in person to the home of Gongzi Cheng, the king urged his support: "Clothes exist to be useful and manners respond to conditions. Therefore the sage was guided by what was right and proper for each locality and encouraged behavior related to its conditions: always they sought to profit the people and strengthen their states," said the king. "To crop the hair, decorate the body, rub pigment into arms and fasten garments on the left side are the ways of the Ba

and Yue [southern barbarians]. In the country of Daiwu the habit is to blacken teeth, scar cheeks, and wear caps of sheepskin stitched crudely with an awl. Their costumes and customs differ but each derives benefit from his own....

"From Changshan to Dai and Shangdang, we border Yan and the Eastern Hu in the east, and Loufan, Qin, and Han in the west. Along this line we have not a single mounted archer.... I change our garments and mount archers to guard our borders with Yan, the Eastern Hu, Loufan, Qin, and Han.... With my men dressed as mounted archers I can today prepare for Shangdang nearby and exact vengeance upon Zhongshan at a distance."

Gongzi Cheng made deepest obeisance twice: "Such has been my stupidity that I had not even conceived of these arguments, your majesty. I had instead the temerity to mouth platitudes. But now that I too wish to carry out the hopes of Kings Jian and Xiang, the ambitions of our ancestral rulers, what choice have I but to make obeisance and obey your order?"

He was given the Hu garments.

Questions for Analysis

1. What meaning do garments carry in this passage?
2. How does the king convince his uncle to wear the new clothes?

Source: J. I. Crump, trans., *Chan-kuo Ts'ueh*, rev. ed. (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Center for Chinese Studies, 1996), pp. 288–292, modified.

officials from a distance through the transmission of documents and could dismiss them if they proved unsatisfactory. For the *shi* (lower-level aristocrats), serving a ruler in this way offered new opportunities for advancement. There were plenty of *shi* eager for these opportunities because every time a state was destroyed, its old nobility sunk in status to *shi*. Although many *shi* did not have military skills by this period, they retained knightly values such as a sense of honor and an ideal of loyal service.

THE HUNDRED SCHOOLS OF THOUGHT

The late Zhou was a period when all sorts of ideas were proposed, debated, written down, and put to use, leading Chinese to refer to it as a period “when a hundred schools of thought bloomed.” The political rivalry and constant warfare of the period helped rather than hindered intellectual creativity. Rulers turned to men of ideas for both solutions to the disorder around them and the prestige of attracting to their court wise and able men from across the land. Political strategists would travel from state to state, urging rulers to form alliances. Lively debate often resulted as strategists proposed policies and challengers critiqued them. Successful men of ideas attracted followers who took to recording their teachers’ ideas on rolls of silk and tied together strips of wood or bamboo that functioned as books.

Historians of later periods, beginning with Sima Qian in about 100 B.C.E., grouped these thinkers into schools, using labels that have survived until today, such as Confucianism, Daoism, and Legalism, which may give the mistaken impression that people of the time thought in those terms. Even the books we have today are not identical to the books that first circulated; the works of an author were added to, subtracted from, and rearranged after his death, usually by his followers. Scholars today try to distinguish the different layers of texts to analyze the development of ideas and emphasize the extensive interchange of ideas among diverse teachers and thinkers.

Confucius and the *Analects*

Confucius (whom early historians dated to 551–479 B.C.E.) was the first and most important of the men of ideas seeking to influence the rulers of the day.

As a young man, Confucius served in the court of his home state of Lu (Loo) without gaining much influence. After leaving Lu, he wandered through neighboring states with a small group of students, searching for a ruler who would follow his advice.

Confucius’s ideas are known to us primarily through the sayings recorded by his disciples in the *Analects*. The thrust of his thought was ethical rather than theoretical or metaphysical. He talked repeatedly of an ideal age in the early Zhou, which he conceived of as a perfect society in which all people devoted themselves to fulfilling their roles: superiors looked after those dependent on them, inferiors devoted themselves to the service of their superiors, and parents and children, husbands and wives all wholeheartedly did what was expected of them.

Confucius saw much of value in family ties. He extolled filial piety, which to him encompassed reverent obedience of children toward their parents and performance of the expected rituals, such as mourning them when they died and making sacrifices to them afterward. If one’s parents were about to make a major mistake, the filial child should try to dissuade them as tactfully as possible but should try not to anger them. The relationship between father and son was one of the five cardinal relations stressed by Confucius. The others were between ruler and subject, between husband and wife, between elder and younger brother, and between friends. Mutual obligations of a hierarchal sort underlay the first four of these relationships: the senior leads and protects, the junior supports and obeys. The exception was the relationship between friends, which was conceived in terms of mutual obligations between equals.

Confucian Virtues

<i>ren</i>	humanity, benevolence
<i>xiao</i>	filial piety
<i>yi</i>	integrity, righteousness
<i>zhong</i>	loyalty, constancy
<i>xin</i>	honesty
<i>jing</i>	reverence, respect
<i>li</i>	propriety, ritual decorum

Confucius urged his followers to aspire to become true gentlemen (*junzi* [jewn-dze], literally “son of a lord”), a term that he redefined to mean men of moral cultivation rather than men of noble birth. He

contrasted gentlemen of integrity with petty men seeking personal gain. The gentleman, he said, “feels bad when his capabilities fall short of the task. He does not feel bad when people fail to recognize him” (15.18).

The Confucian gentleman should advise his ruler on the best way to govern. Much of the *Analects* consequently concerns how to govern well:

The Master said, “Lead the people by means of government policies and regulate them through punishments, and they will be evasive and have no sense of shame. Lead them by means of virtue and regulate them through rituals and they will have a sense of shame and moreover have standards.” (2.3)

To Confucius, the ultimate virtue was *ren* (run), a term that has been translated as humanity, perfect goodness, benevolence, human-heartedness, and nobility. A person of humanity cares about others and acts accordingly:

Zhonggong asked about humanity. The Master said, “When you go out, treat everyone as if you were welcoming a great guest. Employ people as though you were conducting a great sacrifice. Do not do unto others what you would not have them do unto you. Then neither in your country nor in your family will there be complaints against you.” (12.2)

Treating people as though they were guests and employing them as though participating in a great sacrifice were other ways of saying they should be treated according to *li* (lee; ritual, manners, propriety, good form). In other passages as well, Confucius stressed the importance of disciplining one’s behavior through adherence to ritual: “Respect without ritual is tiresome; caution without ritual is timidity; boldness without ritual is insubordination; straightforwardness without ritual is rudeness” (8.2). But ritual must not be empty form: “Ritual performed without reverence and mourning performed without grief are things I cannot bear” (3.26).

In the Confucian tradition, studying texts came to be valued over speculation, meditation, and mystical identification with deities. Confucius encouraged the men who came to study with him to master the poetry, rituals, and historical traditions that we know today as the Confucian classics. Many passages in the *Analects* reveal Confucius’s confidence in the power of study:

The Master said, “I am not someone who was born wise. I am someone who loves the ancients and tries to learn from them.” (7.19)

The Master said, “I once spent a whole day without eating and a whole night without sleeping in order to think. It was of no use. It is better to study.” (15.30)

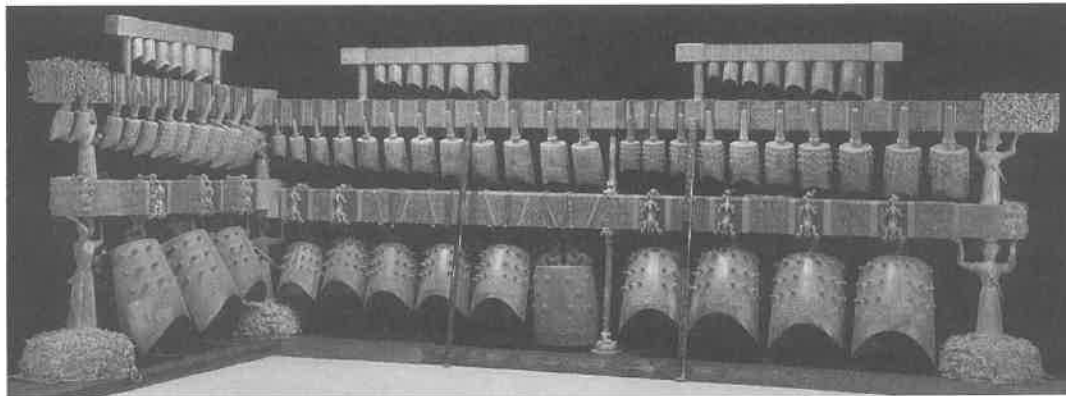
Confucius talked mostly about the social and political realms rather than the world of gods, ghosts, or ancestral spirits. Moreover, although he is portrayed as deeply committed to ritual, he was said to have performed sacrifices as though the spirits were present, leaving open the possibility that he was not convinced that ancestors or other spirits were actually aided by the offerings people made to them.

Mozi

Not long after Confucius died, his ideas were challenged by Mozi (Maw-dze, ca. 480–390 B.C.E.), a man who came not from the aristocracy but from among the master craftsmen. He was, however, well read and, like Confucius, quoted from the *Book of Documents* and the *Book of Poetry*. Unlike Confucius, however, he did not talk of the distinction between gentlemen and vulgar “petty men” but rather of “concern for everyone,” sometimes translated as “universal love.” He put forward the idea that conflict could be eliminated if everyone gave other people’s families and other people’s states the same concern he gave his own. Mozi contended that all people recognize the validity of this idea because if they have to leave their family in someone else’s care, they choose someone who accepts this ideal. To counter the argument that impartiality is not easy to achieve, Mozi said the sage kings of old had practiced it, proving its feasibility. Mozi also argued strongly for the merit principle, asserting that rulers should choose their advisers on the basis of their ability, not their birth.

The book ascribed to Mozi (called *Mozi*) proposes that every idea be evaluated on the basis of its utility: does it benefit the people and the state? Using this standard, Mozi rejected many of the rituals emphasized by Confucius’s followers, especially mourning parents for three years, which Mozi noted interrupts work, injures health, and thus impoverishes the people and weakens the state. Music, too, Mozi saw as a wasteful extravagance of no utility.

Mozi made a similar case against aggressive war, seeing no glory in expansion for its own sake. He pointed to the huge losses in weapons, horses, and human lives it causes. The capture of a city, he argued, is not worth the loss of thousands of men. But Mozi was for strong government and obedience



Bells of the Marquis of Yi. The tomb of a minor ruler who died in 433 B.C.E. contained 124 musical instruments, including drums, flutes, mouth organs, pan pipes, zithers, a set of 32 chime stones, and this 64-piece bell set. Five men using poles and mallets, and standing on either side of the set of bells, would have played the bells by hitting them from outside.

toward superiors. He argued that disorder could be eliminated if everyone conformed his beliefs to those of his superior, the king conforming to Heaven.

Mozi had many followers over the next couple of centuries, and they organized themselves into tight groups. Because they saw offensive warfare as evil, these Mohists, as they are called, considered it their duty to come to the aid of cities under attack. They became experts in defending against sieges, teaching, for instance, that each soldier on the city walls should be held responsible for the two soldiers on his immediate left and right, a form of group responsibility later picked up by the Legalists.

After a few centuries, however, Mozi's school declined and eventually lost its distinct identity. Certain ideas, such as support for the merit principle and criticism of extravagance, were absorbed into Confucian thought in later centuries. Mencius, who lived a century after Mozi, borrowed his arguments against military aggression and, like him, would often try to persuade rulers that they had not correctly identified where their advantage lay. Confucians, however, never accepted Mohist ideas about treating everyone equally, which they saw as unnatural, or of applying rigidly utilitarian tests to ritual and music, whose value they saw in very different terms.

Mencius

Among the followers of Confucius eager to defend his teachings against Mozi's attacks, Mencius stands out. We know of Mencius (or Mengzi, muhng-dze, ca. 370–ca. 300 B.C.E.) largely from the book that

bears his name, which Mencius may have written in large part himself. Mencius came from the small and unimportant state of Zou (dzoe), next to Confucius's home state of Lu. He was born too late to have studied with Confucius himself, but he quotes Confucius approvingly and was said to have studied Confucian teachings with a student of Confucius's grandson.

The first two of the seven parts of the *Mencius* record conversations that took place from 320 to 314 B.C.E. between Mencius and a king of Qi and two successive kings of Wei. The opening passage in the *Mencius* records one such encounter:

Mencius had an audience with King Hui (hway) of Liang [Wei]. The king said, "Sir, you did not consider a thousand li too far to come. You must have some ideas about how to benefit my state."

Mencius replied, "Why must Your Majesty use the word 'benefit'? All I am concerned with are the benevolent and the right. If Your Majesty says, 'How can I benefit my state?' your officials will say, 'How can I benefit my family,' and officers and common people will say, 'How can I benefit myself.' Once superiors and inferiors are competing for benefit, the state will be in danger." (1A.1)

Like Confucius, Mencius traveled around offering advice to rulers of various states. He tried repeatedly to convert them to the view that the ruler able to win over the people through benevolent government would succeed in unifying "all under Heaven." Mencius proposed concrete political and financial measures for easing tax burdens and otherwise

improving the people's lot. He also tried to get rulers to give up seeking military victories. To seek military domination will backfire, he argued, for it will turn the world against you, whereas those who are benevolent will have no enemies.

Men willing to serve an unworthy ruler earned Mencius's contempt, especially when they worked hard to fill his coffers or expand his territory. He pointed out that Confucius broke off his relationship with his disciple Ran Qiu when Ran Qiu doubled the tax collection but did not do anything to reform the ruler's character.

Although the bulk of the *Mencius* concerns issues of governing, Mencius also discussed moral philosophy. He argued strongly, for instance, that human nature was fundamentally good because everyone is born with the capacity to recognize what is right. He gave the example of the person who automatically grabs a baby about to fall into a well: "It would not be because he wanted to improve his relations with the child's parents, nor because he wanted a good reputation among his friends and neighbors, nor because he disliked hearing the child cry" (2A.6). Rather it was due to his inborn feelings of commiseration and sense of right and wrong.

Mencius quotes some conversations with a contemporary philosopher who disagreed with his interpretation of human nature:

Gaozi (Gow-dze) said, "Human nature is like whirling water. When an outlet is opened to the east, it flows east; when an outlet is opened to the west, it flows west. Human nature is no more inclined to good or bad than water is inclined to east or west."

Mencius responded, "Water, it is true, is not inclined to either east or west, but does it have no preference for high or low? Goodness is to human nature like flowing downward is to water. There are no people who are not good and no water that does not flow down. Still, water, if splashed, can go higher than your head; if forced, it can be brought up a hill. This isn't the nature of water; it is the specific circumstances. Although people can be made to be bad, their natures are not changed." (6A.2)

Sometimes Mencius related men's moral nature to Heaven. Heaven wants men to be moral and operates in history through men's choices. Heaven validates a ruler's authority through the people's acceptance of him. But Mencius did not think all rulers had been validated by Heaven; true kings tended to appear only about every five hundred years.

Xunzi

The *Xunzi* was written in large part by Xunzi (shyewn-dze, ca. 310–ca. 215 B.C.E.), who lived a half-century after Mencius and was Mencius's rival as an interpreter of Confucius's legacy. Xunzi explicitly opposed Mencius's view of human nature, arguing that people are born selfish and that it is only through education and ritual that they learn to put moral principle above their own interest. Much of what is desirable is not inborn, he said, but must be taught:

When a son yields to his father, or a younger brother yields to his elder brother, or when a son takes on the work for his father or a younger brother for his elder brother, their actions go against their natures and run counter to their feelings. And yet these are the way of the filial son and the principles of ritual and morality. (13)

Neither Confucius nor Mencius had much actual political or administrative experience. By contrast, Xunzi worked for many years in the governments of several of the states. Not surprisingly, he showed more consideration than either Confucius or Mencius for the difficulties a ruler might face in trying to rule through ritual and virtue. He strongly supported the view, earlier articulated by Mozi, that the worthy should be promoted even if they were descendants of commoners. In response to a question on how to govern, Xunzi said the ruler should promote the worthy and capable, dismiss the incompetent, and punish the evil without bothering to try to reform them. Xunzi, like Mencius, supported the basic message of the Mandate of Heaven: "The ruler is the boat, the common people are the water. It is the water that bears up the boat but also the water that capsizes it" (9).

Xunzi was a more rigorous thinker than his predecessors and developed the philosophical foundations of many ideas that Confucius or Mencius had merely outlined. Confucius, for instance, had declined to discuss gods, portents, and anomalies and had spoken of sacrificing as if the spirits were present. Xunzi went further and explicitly argued that Heaven does not intervene in human affairs. Praying to Heaven or to gods, he asserted, does not induce them to act. "Why does it rain after a prayer for rain? In my opinion, for no reason. It is the same as raining when you had not prayed" (17).

Although he did not think praying could bring rain or other benefits from Heaven, Xunzi did not



Silver Inlaid Wine Flask. The sinuous curves of the geometrical decoration on this flask were popular in the late Warring States period.

Freer Art Gallery, Smithsonian Institution. Gift of Charles Lang Freer H.1915.103a-b

propose abandoning traditional rituals. In contrast to Daoists and Mohists, who saw rituals as unnatural or extravagant, Xunzi saw in ritual an efficient way to attain order in society. Rulers and educated men should continue traditional ritual practices such as complex funeral protocols because the rites themselves have positive effects on performers and observers. Not only do they let people express feelings and satisfy desires in an orderly way, but by specifying graduated ways to perform the rites according to social rank, ritual traditions sustain the social hierarchy. Xunzi compared and contrasted ritual and music: music shapes people's emotions and creates feelings of solidarity, while ritual shapes people's sense of duty and creates social differentiation.

Daoism and the Laozi and Zhuangzi

Confucius and his followers believed in moral and political effort. They thought men of virtue should devote themselves to making the government work to the benefit of the people. Those who later came to be labeled Daoists disagreed. The authors of the *Laozi* (low-dze) and *Zhuangzi* (jwang-dze) thought striving to make things better generally makes them worse. They defended private life and wanted the rulers to leave the people alone. They sought to go beyond everyday concerns and let their minds wander freely. Rather than making human beings

and human actions the center of concern, they focused on the larger scheme of things, the whole natural order identified as the Way or Dao (dow).

Both the *Laozi* and the *Zhuangzi* are literary masterpieces that date to the third century B.C.E. Master Lao, the putative author of the *Laozi*, may not be a historical figure, but the text ascribed to him has been of enduring importance. A recurrent theme in this brief, aphoristic text is the mystical superiority of yielding over assertion and silence over words. "The Way that can be discussed is not the constant Way" (1). The highest good is like water: "Water benefits all creatures but does not compete. It occupies the places people disdain and thus comes near to the Way" (8).

Because purposeful action is counterproductive, the ruler should let people return to a natural state of ignorance and contentment:

Do not honor the worthy,
And the people will not compete.
Do not value rare treasures,
And the people will not steal.
Do not display what others want,
And the people will not have their hearts confused.
A sage governs this way:
He empties people's minds and fills their bellies.
He weakens their wills and strengthens their bones.
Keep the people always without knowledge and
without desires,
For then the clever will not dare act.
Engage in no action and order will prevail. (3)

In the philosophy of the *Laozi*, the people would be better off if they knew less, gave up tools, renounced writing, stopped envying their neighbors, and lost their desire to travel or wage war.

Zhuangzi (369–286 B.C.E.), the author of the book of the same name, was a historical figure who shared many of the central ideas of the *Laozi*, such as the usefulness of the useless and the relativity of ordinary distinctions. He was proud of his disinterest in politics. In one of his many anecdotes, he reported that the king of Chu once sent an envoy to invite him to take over the government of his realm. In response, Zhuangzi asked the envoy whether a tortoise that had been held as sacred for three thousand years would prefer to be dead with its bones venerated or alive with its tail dragging in the mud. When the envoy agreed that life was preferable, Zhuangzi told the envoy to leave because he would rather drag his tail in the mud.

The *Zhuangzi* is filled with parables, flights of fancy, and fictional encounters between historical figures, including Confucius and his disciples. Yet the book also deals with serious issues, including death. Zhuangzi questioned whether we can be sure life is better than death. People fear what they do not know, the same way a captive girl will be terrified when she learns she is to become the king's concubine. Perhaps people will discover that death has as many delights as life in the palace. When a friend expressed shock that Zhuangzi was not weeping at his wife's death, Zhuangzi explained that he had at first, but then began thinking back to before she had life or form or vital energy. "In this confused amorphous realm, something changed and vital energy appeared; when the vital energy was changed, form appeared; with changes in form, life began. Now there is another change bringing death. This is like the progression of the four seasons of spring and fall, winter and summer" (18). Once he had realized this, he stopped sobbing.

Zhuangzi was similarly iconoclastic in his political ideas. In one parable, a wheelwright insolently tells a duke that books are useless because all they contain are the dregs of men long dead. The duke, insulted, threatened to execute him if he could not give an adequate explanation of his remark. The wheelwright then explained that he could feel in his hand how to chisel but could not describe it in words. "I cannot teach it to my son, and my son cannot learn it from me. So I have gone on for seventy years, growing old chiseling wheels. The men of old died in possession of what they could not transmit. So it follows that what you are reading are their dregs" (13). Zhuangzi here questions the validity of verbal reasoning and the sorts of knowledge conveyed in books.

The ideas of the *Laozi* and *Zhuangzi* can be seen as a response to Confucianism, a rejection of many of its basic premises. Nevertheless, over the course of Chinese history, many people felt the pull of both Confucian and Daoist ideas and studied the writings of both schools. Even Confucian scholars who devoted much of their life to public service might find that the teachings of Laozi or Zhuangzi helped them put their frustrations in perspective. Whereas Confucianism often seems sternly masculine, Daoism was more accepting of feminine principles (yin of the yin-yang pair) and even celebrated passivity and yielding. Those drawn to the arts were also often drawn to Daoism, with its validation of spontaneity and freedom. Rulers, too, saw merit in the Daoist notion of the ruler who can have great power simply by being himself without instituting anything.

Legalism

Over the course of the fourth and third centuries B.C.E., as one small state after another was destroyed, rulers, fearful that their state might be next, were ready to listen to political theorists who claimed expertise in the accumulation of power. These theorists, labeled Legalists because of their emphasis on the need for rigorous laws, argued that strong government depended not on the moral qualities of the ruler and his officials, as Confucians claimed, but on establishing effective laws and procedures.

In the fourth century B.C.E., the state of Qin, under the leadership of its chancellor, Lord Shang (d. 338 B.C.E.), adopted many Legalist policies. Instead of an aristocracy with inherited titles, social distinctions were based on military ranks determined by the objective criterion of the number of enemy heads cut off in battle. In place of the old fiefs, Qin divided the country into counties and appointed officials to administer them according to the laws decreed at court. To increase the population, migrants were recruited from other states with offers of land. To encourage farmers to work hard and improve their land, they were allowed to buy and sell it. Ordinary farmers were thus freed from serf-like obligations to the local nobility. Nevertheless, direct control by the state could be even more onerous because taxes and labor service obligations were heavy.

In the third century B.C.E., Legalism found its greatest exponent in Han Feizi (hahn fay-dze, d. 233 B.C.E.), who had studied with the Confucian master Xunzi but had little interest in Confucian virtues. Alarmed at the weakness of his own state of Han, Han Feizi wrote to warn rulers of the political pitfalls awaiting them. They had to be careful where they placed their trust, for "when the ruler trusts someone, he falls under that person's control" (17). This was true even of wives and concubines, who think of the interests of their sons. Given subordinates' propensities to pursue their own selfish interests, the ruler should keep them ignorant of his intentions and control them by manipulating competition among them. Warmth, affection, or candor should have no place in his relationships with others.

Han Feizi saw the Confucian notion that government could be based on virtue as naive. Even parents calculate their long-term advantage in favoring sons over daughters. One cannot expect rulers to be more selfless than parents. If rulers would make the laws and prohibitions clear and the rewards and punishments automatic, then the officials and common people would be easy to govern. Uniform laws get

people to do things they would not otherwise be inclined to do, such as work hard and fight wars, which were essential to the goal of establishing hegemony over all the other states.

The laws of the Legalists were designed as much to constrain officials as to regulate the common people. The third-century B.C.E. tomb of a Qin official has yielded statutes detailing the rules for keeping accounts, supervising subordinates, managing penal labor, conducting investigations, and many other responsibilities. Those who violated these statutes were fined.

Legalism saw no value in intellectual debate or private opinion. The ruler should not allow others to undermine his laws by questioning them. Rulers of several states adopted some Legalist ideas, but only the state of Qin systematically followed them. The extraordinary but brief success Qin had with these policies is discussed in Chapter 3.

Yin and Yang

The thinkers and books discussed here had the greatest long-term impact on Chinese civilization, but the late Zhou “Hundred Schools of Thought” also included much else. There were logicians, hedonists, utopians, hermits, and agriculturalists who argued that no one should eat who does not farm. There were natural philosophers who drew lessons from their study of such fields as astronomy, medicine, music, and calendrical calculations. The concepts of yin and yang were particularly important to natural philosophy. Yin is the feminine, dark, receptive, yielding, negative, and weak; yang is the masculine, bright, assertive, creative, positive, and strong. Yin and yang are complementary poles rather than distinct entities or opposing forces. The movement of yin and yang accounts for the transition from day to night and from summer to winter. They are also involved in health and illness. The *Zuo zhuan* quotes Physician He on the six *qi* (chee, vapors, forms of energy), which he defines as yin and yang, wind and rain, dark and bright. These six *qi* divide to make the four seasons, radiate to make the five colors and five sounds, and, when they go to excess, produce the six illnesses.

The Art of War

Another important strand of thought of this period concerns military strategy. Sunzi’s (sun-dze) *Art of War*, dating probably to the third century B.C.E., warns against bravado. Because warfare causes

loss of life and property, it is better to win without expending resources. “One hundred victories in one hundred battles is not skillful; what is skillful is subjugating the opponent’s army without battle” (Chap. 3). Great generals are not those who charge up hills against overwhelming odds but those who advance only after they know they can win. Heroism is a useless virtue that leads to needless deaths. Discipline, however, is essential, and Sunzi insisted that the entire army had to be trained to follow the orders of its commanders without questioning them. Spying on and manipulating the enemy are tactics worth learning, as is doing things the enemy will not anticipate. Often phrases in the *Art of War* echo the *Laozi*: “The form of the military is like water. Water in its movements avoids the high and hastens to the low. The military in its victory avoids the solid and strikes the empty. Thus water determines its movement in accordance with the earth. The military determines victory in accordance with the enemy.”*

The World of Spirits

The development of rationalistic and naturalistic ways of thinking does not mean that people no longer took an interest in the world of spirits. The records of divination found in the tomb of an official who died in 316 B.C.E. show that illness was seen as the result of unsatisfied spirits or malevolent demons, best dealt with through exorcisms or sacrifices to the astral deity Taiyi (ty-ee, Grand One). Some texts give incantations that could be used to exorcise offending demons. There were also ceremonies that could offer protection from evil spirits. To escape trouble on a trip, travelers were encouraged to perform a ceremony at the threshold of the gate to the city. They would call on the sage-king Yu to clear the road for them, draw five lines on the ground, then pick up some of the soil by the lines and put it in the folds of their robe by their bosom. Texts on these occult and magico-religious subjects that have been found in excavation of late Warring States tombs have shown that traditions in these fields were transmitted in writing much as those of the philosophers were.

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MATERIAL CULTURE

Lacquer

Lacquer is made from the sap of a tree native to south and central China. When it is heated and purified, the sap makes a light, strong, smooth, and waterproof material that is highly resistant to decay. By Eastern Zhou times, craftsmen were using lacquer on furniture, coffins, bowls, cups, musical instruments, and sculpture. In most cases, many layers of lacquer were applied over a wooden core. Lacquer objects could be decorated with pictures or designs, using lacquer colored with pigments such as cinnabar for red and carbon for black. See also Color Plate 3.



Jingzhou Prefecture Museum, Hubei Province/Cultural Relics Press

Lacquer Cup. This six-inch-long cup was found in Tomb 1 at Mashan, Jiangling, Hubei province, and dates to the early third century B.C.E. It is decorated with images of two large birds in red, black, and yellow colors. (*Jingzhou Prefecture Museum, Hubei Province/Cultural Relics Press*)

WARRING STATES LITERATURE AND ART: THE CASE OF CHU

All through the Eastern Zhou Dynasty, despite political division, peoples on the periphery of the Zhou world were drawn into it. This does not mean, however, that all cultural differences were eliminated. As discussed in Chapter 1, the bronzes found south of the Yangzi River during the Shang Dynasty employed the same technology used at Anyang yet often featured highly distinctive decoration. For the Zhou period, because of the much greater survival of texts and an abundance of archaeological finds, it is possible to trace how the south steadily became a more integral part of the Zhou world and yet maintained a distinctive style.

The dominant state in the south was Chu. From Western Zhou times on, Chu gradually expanded, absorbing fifty or more small states as it pushed its borders northward and eastward. During the Eastern Zhou period, Chu became one of the strongest and most innovative states. In 548 B.C.E. it conducted a survey of its population to assess tax and military

duties. Chu also was the first to form counties (*xian*) out of newly annexed land and to dispatch officials to administer them (instead of conferring the land on hereditary lords). In 334 B.C.E. Chu conquered the state of Yue, gaining control of the Lower Yangzi region. By the third century, Chu was a full participant in the alliances designed to maintain a balance of power. This does not mean that those in the central regions no longer put it down as a primitive or barbarian region. Mencius chastised a man for following a teacher who came from Chu, saying, “I have heard of men using Chinese ways to transform the barbarians but not of being transformed by the barbarians” (*Mencius* 3A.4).

It has been estimated that 70 percent of known Eastern Zhou tombs are in the Chu area. Much more in the way of lacquer and silk survives from tombs in this region than elsewhere in China for this period—a function of the high water tables in many places—giving us a remarkably full picture of the material life of the elite of Chu. Flowing, curvilinear lines, sometimes incorporating birds, dragons, snakes, and other creatures, are found on embroidered silks, inlaid bronzes, and painted lacquer (see **Material Culture: Lacquer**).

One of the most interesting of the Chu tombs, excavated in 1986–1987 in Baoshan, Hubei province, was for an official who died in 316 B.C.E. The tomb had four chambers filled with ritual vessels, furniture, and other objects of daily life such as fans, mirrors, boxes, weapons and chariot fittings, and books. The books include reports by the local government, texts on divination, and an inventory of the tomb's contents. Although the calligraphy of the books is elegant, many of the characters are in obsolete forms that have not yet been deciphered.

The distinctiveness of Chu culture can also be seen in the masterpiece of Chu literature, the *Songs of Chu* (Chu ci, choo tse). The fantastic poems in this work are worlds apart from the poems in the *Book of Poetry*. The principal poem in the collection, titled *Encountering Sorrows*, is the lament of Qu Yuan (chyu ywan, ca. 340–278 B.C.E.), an anti-Qin minister who lost the favor of the Chu kings and was sent into exile. Distraught that his loyalty to his ruler was not appreciated, he finally threw himself into a river. In the poem, Qu Yuan describes his misfortunes, declares his virtue, maligns those who have defamed him, and goes on a cosmic quest for a lord worthy of his devotion. On that venture, he imagines himself wandering on the clouds and looking down on the earth. The structure of the almost four hundred lines of this lengthy poem corresponds to shamanic spirit quests in which the shaman declares his worth and goes to heaven to seek the god or goddess who spurned him. Several of the shorter poems in the *Songs of Chu* fall into this tradition as well. The one that follows is titled the “Lord of the Yellow River”:

With you I will roam to the river's nine channels,
when blasts of wind rise driving waves across stream,
we will ride my coach of waters, its canopy, lotus,
hitched to paired dragons, by basilisks flanked.
I climbed Mount Kun-lun, I gazed all around,
the heart flew aloft, it went sweeping off free.
Soon the sun was to set, I, transfixed, forgot going,
and then to the far shore I looked back with care.
My roofs are of fish scales, halls of the dragon,
turrets of purple cowries, palaces of carmine—
why is the holy one here, down in the water?
We will ride on white turtles, goldfish attend us,
with you I will roam by the river's isles,
where the current is rushing, there we'll go down.

You clasp your hands, journeying eastward;
you go with the Fairest to the southern shores
where the swell of the waves is coming to meet us,
and the schools of fishes, will send off my bride.*

SUMMARY

After the Zhou court was transferred east to Luoyang in 770 B.C.E., the ties between the Zhou king and his lords gradually weakened, and over time the domains came to act like independent states. From 500 to 256 B.C.E., China is best thought of as a multistate realm. This was a time when social change quickened. Hereditary ranks came to matter less, and rulers made more use of the *shi*, the lower ranks of the old aristocratic order. Cities were built across China, iron technology promoted economic expansion, and money came into circulation. Advances in military technology contributed to the pace of change. Warfare was no longer hemmed in by notions of chivalry, and with the introduction of cavalry, infantry armies, and the crossbow, warfare became much more deadly. The stakes rose as the independent states destroyed one another in a battle for supremacy. By the middle of the third century B.C.E., only seven important states remained.

This violent age turned out to be the golden age of Chinese philosophy. As the *shi* competed to offer advice to rulers, they advanced the art of argument and set in motion a tremendous intellectual flowering. The ideas underlying the Confucian, Daoist, and Legalist traditions were first articulated in this era and are known to us through texts that have often grown over time. From the *Analects*, which contains sayings by Confucius recorded by disciples and later followers, we know Confucius believed that the use of force was not as effective as moral example. He advised rulers and followers alike to cultivate the key virtues of sincerity, loyalty, benevolence, propriety, and filial piety. After his death, Confucius's message was elaborated by important followers, including Mencius, who urged rulers to rule through goodness and argued that human nature is good, and Xunzi, who stressed the

*From *An Anthology Of Chinese Literature: Beginnings To 1911*, edited and translated by Stephen Owen. Copyright © 1996 by Stephen Owen and The Council for Cultural Planning and Development of the Executive Yuan of the Republic of China. Used by permission of W.W. Norton & Company, Inc.

power of ritual and argued that human nature is selfish and must be curbed through education.

In the contentious spirit of the age, Confucian principles were open to debate. Mozi argued against favoring one's own relatives or neighbors and advocated instead showing equal concern for all. He decried the wastefulness of the rituals advocated by Confucians, such as stopping work for three years to mourn one's parents. Daoists looked beyond the human realm to the entire cosmos and spoke of the relativity of concepts such as good and bad and life and death. In contrast to the Confucian emphasis on moral effort, Daoists believed that striving to make something better could in fact make it worse. For their part, Legalists heaped ridicule on the Confucian idea that a ruler could get his people to be good by being good himself and proposed instead a strong government and rigorous laws enforced through strict rewards and punishments. There were also natural philosophers who explored issues that Confucius had neglected, such as the yin and yang forces that bring about the changes in the seasons, the transition from day to night, and cycles of health and illness.

The writings of these philosophical schools greatly enrich our understanding of the culture and society

of the Eastern Zhou period. However, archaeological discoveries are also of great value, especially for showing the richness of the culture of the south, the region of the state of Chu.

How much did China change during the five centuries of the Eastern Zhou period? The Chinese world had grown by absorbing previously peripheral areas like Chu in the south and Zhongshan in the north. The economy had changed from one that was essentially manorial to one in which coinage was in use, trade was much more extensive, and iron was widely used for tools. The social structure had similarly been transformed from one in which membership in the elite depended almost entirely on birth to one in which there was considerable opportunity for advancement for talented *shi*. City-states had become territorial states, with rulers making use of officials to draw on the resources of their entire population. Conscription was nearly universal. Intellectual discourse was much richer, with a great many texts in circulation that sought to persuade through argument and example. Distinct schools of thought had emerged. The writing of history had advanced, with much more in the way of extended narratives.