FUNCTIONAL DISPARITIES IN THE
SOCIO-POLITICAL TRADITIONS OF
SPRING AND AUTUMN CHINA

BY

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PART III: CH’U AND CHIN

Introduction

In the first two installments of this study 1) I investigated the distribution of official positions among the various types of lineages of the five major states of the lower Yellow River valley. The results showed that in two of these states (Sung and Lu) kinsmen of the princes (members of the ruling lineage and its collateral lineages) held a majority of the offices. This was especially so in Sung, where the proportion held by kinsmen was seven or eight out of every ten positions 2). Yet, in Chou and Ch’i, kinsmen held only about one-fifth of all positions. It was also found that in Cheng the pattern was that of Chou and Ch’i (non-kinsmen favored) in the early Spring and Autumn period, but that of Lu and Sung (kinsmen favored) in the later part of the era, while in the aggregate it fell into the Sung-Lu pattern.

From this it was concluded that, at least in terms of the patterns of social distribution of offices, the lower Yellow River valley (the "core area") was not a consistent cultural region. It was also found that, contrary to traditional generalizations, princes did not necessarily favor non-kinsmen in their attempts to regain power for themselves. It is clear that this would have been counter-productive in

1) Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient, XX (1977), pp. 208-43; 307-43. These will be referred to below as I and II, respectively. Preparation of these articles was made possible by a Faculty Research Grant from Seton Hall University.
2) Ibid., II, p. 335, n. 113.
states such as Chou and Ch'i, where non-kinsmen often infringed upon princely authority. The evidence indicated that princes allied with whichever groups were most advantageous to their interests and that this depended on the power configuration in each state at any specific time.

In this final article, I shall turn to a consideration of two of the "outer" states, Chin and Ch'u 3), the former lying to the north and northwest of the "core area", and the latter being situated to the south. When this data has been analyzed, I shall turn to some suggestions on the interpretation of the totality of the materials appearing in this series.

It is necessary to look at the social and political structures of these two states before moving on to an analysis of the statistical data. That the tsung-fa (lineage system) usually associated with Chou culture 4), existed in Chin there is no doubt. It was, unlike in most states, however, not much in evidence in the ruling clan. There were only two collateral lineages of the ruling clan in this state during the Spring and Autumn period any members of which are mentioned by name in the Tso Chuan. These were Han and Ch'ü-wo 5). The others were evidently maintained only fictionally, at least from the mid-seventh century on 6). After the Ch'ü-wo lineage usurped the throne, there was only one functioning collateral lineage in the state 7). There were, on the other hand, thirty

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3) The data on Ch'in and Wei, although they were important states, is inadequate for statistical analysis.


5) The name of this lineage is not given. It was originally enfeoffed at Ch'ü-wo but usurped the throne.


7) This was the Han lineage. Among the major states, only in Chin was there a change of ruling line in the Spring and Autumn period.