



SESSION IX: STATE AND SOCIETY -- II

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AN OBSERVATION ON THE STATE FUNCTIONARIES TIAN, MU, AND WEI IN ORACLE-BONE INSCRIPTIONS AND THE ORIGINS OF THE PRINCES HOU, DIAN, NAN, AND WEI

ABSTRACT:

According to the historical sources of the early Zhou dynasty, the 外服 of the Shang kingdom included 侯, 田(甸), 男, 卫 and 邦伯. In the late oracle-bone inscriptions, 田 and 侯 were mentioned side by side, and so were 多田 and 多伯. In the Western Zhou period, 侯, 甸, 男, 卫 were all princes. The 田 in oracle inscriptions was considered by most scholars as a kind of prince too. The author of this paper does not quite agree with this point of view. According to the fact that 田 were often mentioned as 在某田, and that some of the places where 田 were staying were located in the fiefs of 侯 or 伯, the author believes that 田 were originally officials who were sent by the king to be stationed at places beyond the capital of the Shang kingdom to engage in cultivation. But in the late Shang period, many 田 became princes.

The situation of 牧 and 卫 was similar to that of 田. They were often referred to as 在某牧 and 在某卫 respectively in oracle-bone inscriptions. The former was sent to be stationed at some place to engage in livestock husbandry, and the latter to defend the kingdom. A number of them also became princes afterwards.

The name 侯 which came from the word 候 should have been the title of certain military officials who were sent to border areas to defend the territory of the kingdom. Since the position of 侯 was important and their military power was rather strong, the development of a 侯 into a prince was completed much earlier than that of 田 and 牧.

The character used in oracle inscriptions to denote 男 is 任. Probably 男 was originally a certain kind of officer who served the king.

To sum up, tracing back to their sources, the four different princes 侯, 甸, 男, and 卫 all evolved from state functionaries.

#### DISCUSSION:

Tu Cheng-sheng and Qiu Xigui resumed their discussion of the previous panel session about the dates of certain early Zhou bronze inscriptions and the genealogical relationships of the persons mentioned therein, but without significantly advancing the matter. Tu stated, furthermore, that lai 來 in Qiu's example No. 12 ought to be taken as a personal name. Qiu replied that both his and Tu's interpretations were feasible.

Referring to p. 23 of Qiu's paper, Ken-ichi Takashima questioned his identification of the two titles nan 男 and ren 任. In the Shi jing -- one of the bases for Qiu's argument -- the phonetic elements of the characters nan and ren belong to two different rhyme groups, namely, zhen bu and qin bu, Takashima pointed out. Serruys said that nan and ren are sufficiently close in Archaic Chinese to be considered homophonous. But he wondered if the character nan even existed in the Shang dynasty; and if it did, why it did not turn up in the oracle inscriptions. This Qiu was at a loss to explain. Concerning this question, Jao Tsung-yi added that in Wang Mang's time, the former Han title nan was re-named ren, following what was -- perhaps rightly -- believed to be a more ancient tradition.

Referring to p. 29 in Qiu's paper, Jung Bor-sheng stated that according to Tung Tso-pin, the characters 甸 and 畿 (dian) were identical. Qiu took care in the formulation of his reply and ended up by saying that he was aware of a problem concerning this identification, but did not want to push the issue.

Itō Michiharu emphasized the importance of Qiu's paper for the understanding of the whole of Shang society. He doubted, however, that there were as many analogies between the Shang official system and the Zhou feudal system as Qiu had suggested. He remarked that there were profound institutional changes at the Zhou takeover, and that it was only through the conscious rejection of part of the Shang political heritage that the Zhou could advance. The enfeoffment of dian 甸 and hou 侯 officials, he concluded, could not have been institutionalized in the Shang period, even though there may have been individual cases of such enfeoffment, and quite definite proto-feudalist tendencies. Qiu remarked that similar objections had also been raised by Akatsuka Kiyoshi in a written handout distributed among the participants. In fact, the difference between Akatsuka's

opinion and his own was only a matter of degree. He believed that the position of hou had been more firmly institutionalized than that of dian officials. The truth, he asserted, was in a middle path between the two extremes of positing total heterogeneity vs. total identity of the Shang and Zhou systems. Akatsuka expressed his appreciation of such a well-balanced attitude.

Wang Guimin expressed his support for Qiu concerning the issue of tian not being a personal or clan name in Period I. In fact, the expression dou tian 多田 only appears in that period, never thereafter (see a 1981 article by Wang). Wang referred, moreover, to an essay of his on wei 衛 officials that would soon be published. He said it was sometimes difficult to discern whether wei was meant verbally ("to protect") or as an official title. There was, no doubt, a generic relationship between the two meanings of the word. Wang finally expressed his belief in a strong continuity between the Late Period of Shang and Early Western Zhou, especially regarding the development of the feudal system.

Terry Kleeman posited two models about the developments analyzed by Qiu Xigui. Was there first a unified state with a centralized official system present in all outlying regions, which became decentralized in the course of either territorial expansion beyond the point of diminishing returns on decay of the central power? Or did the Shang state grow from a confederation of local chiefdoms, with local leaders being awarded "official" titles by the central authorities? Qiu Xigui believed in the prevalence of the first model (as he had also indicated in his paper). But he conceded that under certain circumstances, such patterns as suggested by the second model could also have prevailed. He thought, however, that the bestowal of titles on local chiefs became a possibility only after the official hierarchy had been established as such. He emphasized the heterogeneous origin of the various titular appellations, and the informal nature of the institutional changes that occurred during the Late Shang period. Hou was perhaps the first official title to become hereditary. Models, in his opinion, could not explain the exact historical events.

Kleeman voiced doubts that the Early Shang would have been powerful enough to uphold a centralized bureaucratic system. Qiu Xigui retorted that lacking any epigraphic material, he could not speak for the Early Shang period; he did think, however, that the flourishing Late Shang state at Yinxu could have had a relatively sophisticated institutional basis.