Mwodz 14-16 "Universal Love"

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Mwòdž 14-16 兼愛 “Universal Love”

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Abstract. I here examine the Mwòdž Jyên Ai 兼愛 or “Universal Love” triplet. As with MZ 17-19, I wish to ask whether they may be regarded as a developmental series, rather than (as Graham claims)¹ a group of variants, and to consider their specifics in more detail than was possible in my paper on the Mician ethical chapters.²

MZ 14 and 15, unlike MZ 17-18, show the expansion of an argument. Formal comparison shows that the extra length of MZ 15 (1312 words) consists of objections (O) beyond the self-asked and answered questions (Q) of MZ 14 (585 words):

MZ 14
One must know causes of disorder
Similitude of the physician
Cause: want of mutual love
Wise man must investigate causes
They are from lack of universal love
Example: unfilial sons
Example: profiteering families
Example: thieves and robbers
Suppose all love universally;
Will any be unfilial etc?
Conclusion: No

MZ 15
Purpose: To get benefits, avoid disorder
Wars (and impiety etc) are calamities
Q1: Whence these calamities?
A1: From lack of universal love
Q2: How can this be changed?
A2: By supplying mutual love and aid
Q3: It is a remote ideal
R3: Gentlemen do not recognize good
Example: Jin Wûn-gûng
Example: Chû Ling-wâng
Example: Gôu-ÿên liked courage
Conclusion: What ruler wants he gets
Q4: It is impracticable
R4: Ancients practiced it
Example: Yû
Example: Wûn-wâng benevolent rule
Example: Wû-wâng
Conclusion: It is possible

MZ 14 is a simple exposition. MZ 15 adopts a form based on a series of questions and answers (Q/A), changing in the second half to objections and replies (O/R).³ The opposition in part accounts for the greater detail, and greater length, of the argument.

¹Graham Divisions 18-28.
²Brooks Ethical; see also Brooks Fragment and Brooks Mwòdž 17-19.
³I have numbered the division as 1, 2, 3, etc, whether they are in Q/A or O/R format.

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**MZ 15 and 16** show further expansion, with retention of much of the material of MZ 15 in MZ 16, though with some rearrangement of sections, and a more consistent use of the objection format. The greater length of MZ 16 (2,716 words) is used to answer new objections, and to cite specific texts in support of its historical examples:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MZ 15</th>
<th>MZ 16</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Aim: Procure benefits, avoid calamities</td>
<td>Aim: Procure benefits, avoid calamities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wars (and impiety etc) are calamities</td>
<td>Wars (and impiety etc) are calamities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q1: Whence these calamities?</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>A1: From lack of universal love</td>
<td>A1: From hatred; meaning partial love</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q2: How can this be changed?</td>
<td>[Q2] Continuation: Need a proposal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A2: By supplying mutual love and aid</td>
<td>Must supply universal love</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**But the objections are not yet done**

O3: Is it useful?
Yes. Hypothetical examples
But the objection is not exhausted
O4: Perhaps for commoners, not rulers
Yes. Hypothetical examples

O3: It is a remote ideal
R3: Gentlemen do not recognize good
Example: Jīn Wén-gūng
Example: Chū Ling-wáng
Example: Gōu-jyén liked courage
Conclusion: What ruler wants he gets

**But the objections are not yet done**

O4: Impracticable
R4: Ancients practiced it
Example: Yū [Hán state reference]
Example: Wén-wáng benevolent rule
Example: Wū-wáng
Conclusion: It is possible

**But the objections are not yet done**

O5: No one has ever done it
R5: Ancients practiced it
Text: Tái Shī on Wén-wáng
Text: Yū against the Myāu
Text: Oath of Tǎng
Text: Jū Poems: Wén and Wū

O4: Impracticable
R4: Ancients practiced it
Example: Yū [Hán state reference]
Example: Wén-wáng benevolent rule
Example: Wū-wáng
Conclusion: It is possible

**But the objections are not yet done**

O6. Does this not violate filial piety?
R6: Hypothetical examples
Text: Dà Yū
Text: [Fēng]
Q7: Is it because it is difficult?
A7: Harder things have been done
Example: Jīng Ling-wáng
Example: Gōu-jyén of Wū
Example: Jīn Wén-gūng
Conclusion: Universal love is the way of the sage kings

In structure, MZ 15 had shifted partway from Q/A to O/R format, where the objections seemed to be raised by an imaginable real-time opponent. MZ 16 goes further in this direction, using the recurring line “But the objections of those in the world who oppose Universal Love are not yet done” to punctuate and unify the essay. Apart from retaining the initial two Q/A sections of MZ 15, it also reverses the order of ancient and modern examples, perhaps to give the more relevant position the final, emphatic position. The chief objection to the Mician program may have been that it might have worked in the past, but not in the present.
**Continuity.** That there is both substantive and rhetorical progression within the triplet, from MZ 14 through MZ 16, will now be clear. But how much of the previous Mician theoretical output does MZ 16 know? From its own triplet, there is the obvious repetition of arguments from MZ 15, some of them in turn retained from MZ 14. The last essay, though it has developed far from the first, is not isolated from the first.

From earlier essays in different triplets, MZ 16 recognizably echoes the following:

- MZ 17 (c0390). Argument about a blind man
- MZ 18 (c0362). Dependence on hearing and seeing (MZ 16 prefers texts)
- MZ 26 (c0352). The idea that Heaven is on high (天), the spirits occupy a middle realm (地), and that men dwell below (下)
- MZ 25 (c0330). Filial sons caring for parents
- MZ 19 (c0326). Punishment of the Mya peoples

It appears that Mician thought evolved, but also maintained continuity, over time.

In terms of the tentative chronology proposed elsewhere, MZ 16 was written in about 0310. At that time, Chi had recently been expelled from its occupation of Yên (0314), and Chín had taken one city from Ngwèn (0313) and attacked another (0311). The dangers of war, which are emphasized in MZ 16, were obvious. What was also obvious was the danger of desisting from war. As a slightly later Gwándž essay remarked, “If talk of Universal Love prevails, the soldiers will not fight” (GZ 6:5). Such was the world’s final argument against Universal Love. The danger of Mician antiwar propaganda was precisely that it might succeed in one’s own state.

MZ 14 was the first Mician writing to offer something besides an objection to war; it showed how society might be organized on something besides a war basis. This was something new and important in human thought. That the idea of a peaceable state found stiffening opposition as the unification wars moved toward their seemingly inevitable conclusion is something old, and yet not less important, in human thought. The Universal Love triplet preserves for us an important strand in that confrontation.

**Works Cited**

The Mician Ethical Chapters. WSP v1 (2010) 100-118
Carine Defoort. The Growing Scope of Jian OE v45 (2005/06) 119-140
A C Graham. Divisions in Early Mohism Reflected in the Core Chapters of the Mo-tzu. [Singapore] Institute of East Asian Philosophies 1985

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4For a recent and compatible conclusion, see now also Defoort Scope.

5I find it hard to resist quoting a remark of A C Graham (Later 5n7): “One of the interesting things in pre-Han, as in early Greek philosophy, is that we can watch over several centuries a people learning how to think.” Graham himself resists the idea that some of the Mician ethical chapters were as late as the 03c. In my opinion, the panorama of progress in Chinese thought is none the worse for extending it, in the Mician case, over more than one century.