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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 Jyēn Ài 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	MZ 15
One must know causes of disorder	Purpose: To get benefits, avoid disorder
Similitude of the physician	
Cause: want of mutual love	Wars (and impiety etc) are calamities
Wise man must investigate causes	Q1: Whence these calamities?
They are from lack of universal love	A1: From lack of universal love
Example: unfilial sons	
Example: profiteering families	
Example: thieves and robbers	
Suppose all love universally;	Q2: How can this be changed?
Will any be unfilial etc?	A2: By supplying mutual love and aid
Conclusion: No	
	O3: It is a remote ideal
	R3: Gentlemen do not recognize good
	Example: Jīn Wǎn-gūng
	Example: Chǔ Líng-wáng
	Example: Gōu-jyèn liked courage
	Conclusion: What ruler wants he gets
	O4: It is impracticable
	R4: Ancients practiced it
	Example: Yǎ
	Example: Wǎn-wáng benevolent rule
	Example: Wǔ-wáng
	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.

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:

MZ 15	MZ 16
Aim: Procure benefits, avoid calamities Wars (and impiety etc) are calamities	Aim: Procure benefits, avoid calamities Wars (and impiety etc) are calamities
Q1: Whence these calamities?	Q1: Whence these calamities?
A1: From lack of universal love	A1: From hatred; meaning partial love
Q2: How can this be changed?	[Q2] Continuation: Need a proposal Must supply universal love
A2: By supplying mutual love and aid	<i>But the objections are not yet done</i>
	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: Jìn Wǐn-gūng	
Example: Chǔ Líng-wáng	
Example: Gōu-jyèn liked courage	
Conclusion: What ruler wants he gets	
O4: Impracticable	<i>But the objections are not yet done</i>
R4: Ancients practiced it	O5: No one has ever done it
Example: Yǐ [Hán state reference]	R5: Ancients practiced it
Example: Wǐn-wáng benevolent rule	Text: Tà Shǐ on Wǐn-wáng
Example: Wǔ-wáng	Text: Yǐ against the Myáu
Conclusion: It is possible	Text: Oath of Tāng
	Text: Jōu Poems: Wǐn and Wǔ
	<i>But the objections are not yet done</i>
	O6: Does this not violate filial piety?
	R6: Hypothetical examples
	Text: Dà Yǎ
	Text: [Fǐng]
	Q7: Is it because it is difficult?
	A7: Harder things have been done
	Example: Jīng Líng-wáng
	Example: Gōujyèn of Wú
	Example: Jìn Wǐn-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 然而天下之非兼者之言猶未止也 “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.⁴ 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 (上), the spirits occupy a middle realm (中), and that men dwell below (下)
- MZ 25 (c0330). Filial sons caring for parents
- MZ 19 (c0326). Punishment of the Myáu 苗 peoples

It appears that Mician thought evolved, but also maintained continuity, over time.⁵

In terms of the tentative chronology proposed elsewhere, MZ 16 was written in about 0310. At that time, Chí had recently been expelled from its occupation of Yēn (0314), and Chín had taken one city from Ngwèi (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.

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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.