Enfiefment Renewal in Lu

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Enfiefment Renewal in Lǔ 鲁

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Abstract. Three times in the Chūn/Chyōu chronicle, the Jōu King confers a mandate (ming 蓋) on a Lǔ ruler. The details of these incidents shed light on the nature of Jōu enfiefment, as it persisted after the loss of Jōu military power in 0771.

Data. The twelve CC rulers with their reign dates and mandate 蓋 conferrals, and some factors that might disqualify a new ruler from recognition by Jōu, are:

1. Yǐn 0722-0712 son of concubine
2. Hwán 0711-0694 previous ruler killed
3. Jwāng 0693-0662 legitimate heir
4. Mīn 0661-0660 underage ruler; legitimate heir killed
5. Syī 0659-0627 son of concubine; previous ruler killed
6. Wūn 0626-0609 legitimate heir
7. Sywān 0608-0591 son of concubine; legitimate heir killed
8. Chūng 0590-0573 legitimate heir
9. Syāng 0572-0542 underage ruler; son of concubine 1
10. Jāu 0541-0510 son of concubine; legitimate heir dies
11. Dīng 0509-0495 brother of previous ruler; a son is bypassed
12. Aī 0494- underage ruler; son of concubine

The usual understanding of Aī-gūng (Dzwō Jwān, Gūnyāng, Lǔ Dī-míng, Legge) is that he was the son of Dīng-gūng’s wife. But she is not styled fu-ṛvn 夫人 in the entry for her death (Dīng 15:9, where she is instead called Lady Sž 官氏), and is not styled syāu-jyōn 小君 at her burial (Dīng 15:14, where she figures as Dīng Sž 官). The Dzwō Jwān explains these irregularities as due to notification protocol or the closeness of her funeral to that of Dīng-gūng, but the likelier view is that of Gū-lyān, which is that she was a concubine 妹.

As to Aī-gūng’s age, six years pass before he appears in the CC: meeting with Wū (12/7/3), attacking Jū, and capturing its ruler (12/7/4); it may be also in this year that Aī-gūng resumes Dīng-gūng’s use of Confucius as a source of personnel.2 But in the above list, youth is never the sole reason for nonrecognition, and so was probably not a relevant consideration. Then Jōu expected a ruler’s legitimate son to succeed him at his natural death, and would recognize such a successor, even if underage.

1Syāng-gūng’s mother’s death is recorded at CC 9/4:3 and her burial at 9/4:5, in both cases with the titles proper for a wife, but DJ seems to recall a tradition that she was a concubine. The death of the regular wife of Syāng-gūng’s father is recorded at 9/2:3 and her burial at 9/2:7. The honors paid to Syāng-gūng’s real mother may thus have been, as DJ intimates, improper.

2See Brooks Analects 284. But no ruler is disqualified solely by youth; see preceding note.

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The wording of the first entry shows that no new mandate is being issued; rather, the previous mandate is being renewed:

3/1:6 (0693) 銘 公命 “bestowed [the previous ruler] Hwán-gùng’s mandate”
6/1:5 (0626) 銘 公命 “bestowed the princely mandate”
8/8:7 (0583) 銘 公命 “bestowed the princely mandate”

Lack of the previous ruler’s sacrificial name in 6/1:5 (on the model of 恒公 in 3/1:6) cannot be due to Jŏu ignorance of the name, since a Jŏu representative was present at the interment, 6/1:3; so also 8/8:7, where the visit is in the 8th year of the Lŭ reign. This may be nothing more than a change in Lŭ scribal convention.

There are some further finesses affecting these mandate renewals, which emerge on close study of the CC wording. For instance, we may ask, who sent the envoy on these occasions, and who was the envoy?

3/1:6 (0693) 王 sent 衆叔 [a third son of the Rŭng clan]
6/1:5 (0626) 天王 sent 毛伯 “The Elder of Măo”
8/8:7 (0583) 天王 sent 召伯 “The Elder of Shău”

These differences of term (王 in 3/1:6 is less grand), status (only the last two envoys have feudal titles, and thus high Jŏu rank), and timing, invite explanation.

The CC uses wáng 王 for the King’s and his daughters’ marriages, his children’s deaths, and his military actions. Tyên-wáng 天王 “Heavenly King” is used of actions reflecting his ritual status: diplomatic visits, disturbances in the royal house, or his own death. We should thus have expected 天王 in 3/1:6. Why does it not appear? It may be relevant that the 0693 envoy is a private person, while the other envoys are titled. The sending of a low-level envoy may have caused offense in Lŭ, thus prompting an answering snub in the record kept by the Lŭ scribe. As for the reason for the King’s slight, in sending a low-ranking envoy, it may have been a response to Lŭ’s failure to send a requested funeral gift a few years earlier, in 0697 (CC 2/15:1).

The reason for the late embassy to Chvăng-gŭng (in his 8th year) is a puzzle, on which it may be best not to speculate. What does seem to come through, in the details here considered, is that Jŏu Kings and Lŭ Princes had an idea of what was due them, in ceremonial gestures and in terms of respect, and that both sides were liable to be prickly when their expectations in this area were not met. Business somehow got done, but the feelings of the parties involved also managed to get themselves expressed.

All this suggests a continuing reality in the feudal relationship between Jŏ and Lŭ, a relationship which we might have expected would cease after 0771, but did not.

Works Cited

3A Rŭng Shŭ appears in 6/5:1 (0622, hence a different person) bringing funeral gifts; again, the donor is listed as 王, not 天王, despite the solemn occasion. A Jŏu snub may have been intended, since the deceased was a Lŭ concubine promoted to wife. When burial gifts were brought by Steward Sywăn 勢翰, a person of rank, in 1/1:4 (0722), the donor was duly entered as 天王. For the Lŭ court’s extreme sensitivity to protocol slights, see Brooks Distancing.