The League of the North

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Abstract. Among the 104 “covenants” (mýng 鑪) in the Chūn/Chyōu (CC) chronicle, what distinguishes the 16 tung-mýng 同盟 (Legge “covenanted together”)? The commentaries give no convincing answer. But there must have been some feature that made these covenants different for those entering into them. On considering the political context, I find that the tung-mýng covenants were a sort of collective security agreement, meant to enforce solidarity among the northern states against the military threat from southern and non-Sinitic Chū. I also note that this north/south polarity virtually defines the middle period of Spring and Autumn.

Data. I will distinguish three phases: one in which tung-mýng first appear, as an innovation of Chū Hwán-gúng (0678, 0667); a second in which Hwán-gúng (0656) and then Jìn Wén-gúng (0632) take the lead in directly opposing Chū, supported by alliances but not by tung-mýng; and a third where tung-mýng are revived by later Jìn rulers to enforce Jìn dominance and maintain cohesion among the northern states. Only the last of the 16 tung-mýng occurs after the peace agreement with Chū in 0546.

1DJ 1/1:5 uses the term 同盟 in the meaning “those with whom [the deceased ruler] had covenanted.” At the first occurrence of 同盟 in the special sense discussed here, it paraphrases 鄭成, which is enigmatic. Gungyáng 3/16:4 says that tung-mýng means 鄭敬也 “that they had a common desire,” which could apply to any covenant; Gulyáng specifies that 有同 “they had a common purpose, which was 同尊周也 to honor Jōu.” Since Jōu is not represented, either in the context or at the meeting, this too seems enigmatic.

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First Period: 0684-0660

Chữ first appears in the CC in 0684. Chữ (then called Jing 東) defeated Tsâu and took its ruler back to Chữ; it again entered Tsâu in 0680. This probably secured Chữ against Tsâu interference with any Chữ northward movement. The natural target of such an attack was Jvng; it was nearest, there was good chariot ground between, and controlling it would split the north into eastern and western groups.

Jvng and Sùng had been at odds since at least 0719. In autumn 0679, Jvng invaded Sùng. As if in response, Chí and Wêi joined Sùng in attacking Jvng in summer 0678. Then came the previously prepared attack of Chữ. Here are the relevant CC entries:

1 (CC 3/16:2-4, 0678).

- Summer. A man of Sùng, a man of Chí, and a man of Wêi attacked Jvng.
- Winter, 12th month. [The Lù Prince] met with the Lord of Chí, the Prince of Sùng, the Lord of Chvń, the Lord of Wêi, the Elder of Jvng, the Leader of Syw, the Elder of Hwa, and the Master of Tvjng. They made a tung-mvng at Yö in Sùng territory.

Tsâu, which had been intimidated by Chữ, is not included in the tung-mvng, but many states north of it are present; Chí Hwán-güng was evidently the leader. The size of the covenant (nine states) is unprecedented: the largest previous covenant was of three persons. Its purpose is situationally obvious: not just to end the conflict between Jvng and Sùng, but to secure unity among the northern states, no one of which was strong enough to stand against Chữ militarily. It is this common interest in resisting Chữ which seems to be meant by the distinctive label tung. There was a pro-Chữ party in Jvng, and the CC record for 0677 is mostly taken up with the removal of a certain Jăn, apparently the leader of that party:

CC 3/17:1-3 (0677):

- 17th year, spring. A man of Chí seized Jăn of Jvng.
- Summer. A man of Chí was slaughtered in Swěi [previously extirpated by Chí; the “man of Chí” was apparently the head of the Chí occupation force].
- Autumn. Jăn of Jvng escaped from Chí and came [to Lù].

Lù’s reception of the fugitive irritated Chí, a situation which was finally resolved by a punitive raid of Chí and Sùng into the western border of Lù in 0675. In 0671, Chữ sent a friendly mission to Lù. Lù and Chí met shortly thereafter, and covenanted that winter. Chí may have been sounding out a possible Lù/Chí division. None occurred; a state marriage between Chí and Lù took place in 0670.

2 (CC 3/27:2, 0667). The rulers of Lù, Chí, Sùng, Chvń, and Jvng met in summer 0667 and made a tung-mvng covenant, again at Yö in Sùng territory. In 0666 Chí attacked Wêi, which had not been a party to that covenant, and may instead have been its target.

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2 In CC usage, a leader who is not the ruler or a close relative. In what follows, I will usually ignore these details, and simply list military contingents by the state from which they come.

3 Of the 20 covenants for the period 0722-0679, 4 (20%) involved three parties (CC 1/8:5, 2/11:1, 2/11:5, and 2/12:2); the other 16 (80%) were between two parties.
That autumn, Chù again invaded Jýng. Lú, Chí, and Súng, all parties to the 0667 covenant, joined in relieving Jýng. In 0665, the external danger being seemingly past, local expansion agendas were resumed. Jýng invaded Syw. Lú fortified some of its border towns. In 0664 the Lú host made camp in Chvng 彰, apparently to deter Chí. Notwithstanding which, Chí presently forced the surrender of Jang 章. 4

In winter 0660, Wèi was beset by the Dí people, who entered its capital. 5

Second Period: 0659-06276

In 0659, Chí, Súng, and Tsâu went to relieve Syng 彰, which had been invaded by the Dí; their efforts were limited to helping wall the new capital to which Syng now moved. Chú again invaded Jýng. A meeting of the rulers of Lú, Chí, Súng, Jýng, Tsâu, and Jū led to no covenant. Instead, Lú attacked Jū 邜 and defeated Jyw 魏. 7

In 0658, Chí and Súng made a covenant with officers from the small Chú border states Jyáng 阳 and Hwáng 裳. Chú renewed its expansion threat further north, by again invading Júng in the winter of that year. In autumn 0657, the covenant of 0658 was renewed by the same parties; that winter, Lú sent an envoy to covenant with Chí. Evidently undeterred, Chú immediately invaded Jýng.

In 0656 came Chí Hwán-gúng’s masterpiece, a long-distance joint attack by Chí, Lú, Súng, Chvng, Wèi, Jýng, Syw 韋, and Tsâu. They first entered the capital of Tsât, which potentially threatened their southward advance on its flank. Having dispersed the population of Tsât, they went on to make camp in Chú territory. After a month, a representative of Chú made a covenant with the invaders in their camp. On the way back, members of the allied force dealt other problems of the same kind: Chú seized Ywán Tâu-chú of Chvng, and the Lú ruler, with forces led by men of the Chú border states Jyáng and Hwáng, also attacked Chvng. At the end of winter, Lú, with Chí, Súng, Jýng, Syw, and Tsâu again invaded Chvng. It seems that both Chvng and Tsât were at this time considered to be potentially favorable to Chú.

The effects of this allied attack on Chú and its perceived allies were minor. In autumn 0655, Chú extinguished the small border state of Syén 順, whose ruler fled to Hwáng. In autumn 0654, a Chú force besieged Syw 韋, and several northern allies, who were then involved in a punitive invasion of Jýng, came to raise the siege. Chú invaded Hwáng in the winter of 0649, and extinguished that state in summer 0648. Thus was resolved one part of the appeal which had been made by Hwáng and Jyáng to the northern states back in 0658.

4Jáng was a dependency of Ji 剪, a state toward which Lú had been consistently well disposed. For Chí and Lú cooperation in suppressing the Rúng peoples, which was relevant to the control of their own territory, and about which the two had covenanted at the end of 0664, see Brooks Point.

5For one factor behind this new pressure from the Dí, see Brooks Climate.

6This period includes the great exploits of Chí Hwán-gúng and Jín Wýn-gúng. I have chosen its boundaries to coincide with the reign of Lú Syí-gúng, the greatest of the Lú Princes; for further information, see Brooks Syí-gúng.

7For a more consecutive account of Jyw than can here be given, see Brooks Jyw.
Of longer-lasting effect was the defeat administered to Chû on northern territory in 0632, by a geographically wide northern force assembled by Jin Wên-gûng. This time the alignments were somewhat different. Lû, itself on the Chû side, had backed one party in Wêi; Jin and some other northern states supported another party. The brother of the Lû ruler had been sent to take charge of preventing incursions into Wêi in support of that other party. He failed, and was brought back to Lû and executed. Chû then intervened by sending a force to relieve Wêi. Chû made the mistake of lingering too long on the scene, and Jin was able to assemble a force from the entire north (Chîn on the west, Jin itself in the center, and Chû on the east, along with Sûng), and defeat the Chû force at Chûngpû 楚頒. This was Wên-gûng’s great achievement. On the strength of it, he compelled the Jû King to recognize his position as chief among the Lords. Chû executed its commander on his return, and for eight years thereafter, Chû made no major military effort. In 0624 it besieged Jûäng.

Neither action against Chû invoked the tung-mûng idea. It had been abandoned by Chî Hwán-gûng for more direct methods, and was never used by Jin Wên-gûng.

Third Period: 0626-052910

The next Jin ruler was Syûng-gûng (r 0627-0621). Attacks by Chîn troubled Jin in this period, but there were no equally worrisome initiatives from Chû. The next ruler, Lîng-gûng (r 0620-0607), came to the throne as a child. Effective power in Jin came to be wielded by the minister Jâu Dûn. It was apparently at Jâu Dûn’s initiative that the tung-mûng covenant reappears in the CC record.

The ruler of Jû 郑 had died in 0614; in 0613 Jû and Lû had attacked each other. The Lord of Chû died in the summer of 0613. In the following month, Jâu Dûn arranged a tung-mûng among many parties to the original tung-mûng back in 0678.

3 (CC 6/14:4, 0613). The rulers of Lû, Sûng, Chûn, Wêi, Yûng, Syûng 謝, and Tsâu, and Jâu Dûn of Jin, made a tung-mûng. Jin then tried, but unsuccessfully, to introduce its candidate for the Jû succession into Jû. It may be that Jâu Dûn, as the only minister among rulers, lacked the prestige to carry the tung-mûng states with him. No further tung-mûng were made in that reign or the next (that of Chûng-gûng, r 0606-0600), despite Chû invasions of Yûng in 0606 and 0605. In response to the Chû invasion of Yûng in 0604, Jâu Dûn led a Jin force and invaded Chûn in spring 0603. In 0602, the Prince of Lû met with Jin, Sûng, Wêi, and Tsêu, but no covenant resulted.

In 0601, Jin and its Dî allies invaded Chûn; later that year, Chû invaded Chûn. In 0600, the rulers of Jin, Sûng, Wêi, Yûng, and Tsêu (but not Lû) met at Hû, but no covenant followed; an unsupported Jin force invaded Chûn. Meanwhile, the ruler of Jin died at Hû. That winter, presumably relying on unsettled conditions in Jin, Chû invaded Yûng. But Jin was not unsettled, and promptly sent a force to relieve Yûng.

8For its probable size, and other numerical aspects of the battle, see Brooks Numbers.
9For this event and its later overinterpretation, see Brooks Hegemon.
100529 is the date of the last tung-mûng covenant, 17 years after the peace with Chû (0546); 0546 perhaps has a better claim to represent the end of the period here in question.
The next Jin ruler, Jing-gung (r 0599-0581), five times made use of tung-mvng, the points of concern being strategic Chvn and perpetual target Jvng.

In 0599, forces from Jin, Sung, Wei, and Tsao attacked Jvng. Chu responded by invading Jvng. In 598 Ch, Chvn, and Jvng made a covenant. Factions in Chvn were of two minds about this: that winter, Chu executed one Chvn notable, and entered Chvn to restore two others to power. North and south were both strengthening their respective key states. In 0597, Chu besieged Jvng. A Jin force, without allies, fought a battle with Chu, and lost. The winter, Chu extinguished the state of Syau. The futility of opposing Chu with only one northern army had become obvious, whence:

4 (CC 7/12:6, 0597). Jin, Sung, Wei, and Tsao made a tung-mvng. Sung attacked the common enemy Chvn, but then Wei went to the defense of Chvn, and Chu invaded Sung in 0596. Jin executed the officer who had represented Jin at the tung-mvng of 0597, and justly so, since the implementation of that covenant had clearly been faulty.

Jin invaded Jvng in 0595; Chu responded by besieging Sung that autumn. Lu made contact with the occupying Chu force in spring 0594, and as a result, Chu and Sung made peace that summer. Jin was attacked by Chvn that year, and the next year Jin exterminated several Di tribes. These things distracted Jin. Perhaps for that reason:

5 (CC 7/17:6, 0592). The rulers of Lu, Jin, Wei, Tsao, and Ju made a tung-mvng. The main result was that Jin and Wei made a joint attack on nonsignatory Ch.

The Lu ruler died in 0591, and Lu covenanted with Jin in 0590, presumably to confirm the 0592 covenant. This was well considered, since nonsignatory Chvi invaded the Lu northern border in 0589. Wei fought with Ch in response, and was defeated, but a joint Lu, Jin, Wei, and Tsao force presently defeated Ch in a set-piece battle. Ch made a covenant with the invaders, and in compensation, Lu received from Ch certain lands north of the Wpn River, its northern boundary.

The tung-mvng allies of 0592 invaded Jvng in 0588; Jvng in response invaded smaller Syw. Jin and Wei together invaded the Chyang-gau-ru tribe, a tribe of the Di, continuing the extermination program of 0594; ethnic simplification was part of a Jin policy of political homogenization. Jin and Wei sent friendly missions to Lu, and two covenants followed. Jvng invaded Syw. It did so again in 0587. Then:

6 (CC 8/5:7, 0586). The rulers of Lu, Jin, Ch, Sung, Wei, Jvng, Tsao, Ju, and Ji made a tung-mvng. Now Ch was included in the agreement, as was errant Jvng. This was better, but it did little to bring stability: in 0585, Wei invaded Sung, and Lu itself followed suit some months later. Chvi invaded Jvng, and a force from Jin relieved Jvng, apparently keeping a promise to guarantee its safety if it joined with its northern neighbors. In 0584, the ruler of Tsao visited Lu, as though keeping contact between two tung-mvng signatories. Chvi again invaded Jvng. In almost immediate response:

7 (CC 8/7:6, 0584). The rulers of Lu, Jin, Ch, Sung, Wei, Tsao, Jyw, Ju, and Ch went to the relief of Jvng; in the 8th month, they made a tung-mvng. There were factional tensions in Wei, and a member of one party fled from Wei to Jin.

11For the definition of “battle,” see Brooks Defeat; for this particular battle, see p194.
In 0583, Jin persuaded Lü to return the Wén-yáng territory to Chí, apparently the price of keeping Chí in the tung-mýng group. A Jin force invaded Tsáu; later, Jin killed two members of the still powerful Jâu clan, a sign of internal tensions in Jin. Few states were free of them; as we have seen, many factions in one state had external allies in another state, and policy changes often entailed the flight of the losers.

8 (CC 8/9:2, 0582). The rulers of Lü, Jin, Chí, Sùng, Wèi, Jvéng, Tsáu, Jywéng, and Chí made a tung-mýng. Of the 0584 covenants, only Jü is here missing.

Jin seized the ruler of Jvéng, and a separate Jin force invaded Jvéng. Chû invaded Jywéng, and went on to enter Ywén, on the Lü border. In 0581, a Wèi force invaded Jvéng; later, the rulers of Lü, Jin, Chí, Sùng, Wèi, and Tsáu together invaded Jvéng.

The tung-mýng seems to have evolved, in Jin Júng-gúng’s reign, into an effective instrument for enforcing northern unity. Differences between the parties could be settled by diplomacy, as with Lü’s return of the Wén-yáng lands.

Jin Lí-gúng (r 0580-0573) held off Jin’s external enemies, but internally he tended to monopolize power, and in 0573 he was killed by the leading elements in the state. He had received the tung-mýng instrument from Júng-gúng in good condition, and used it twice toward the end of his short reign. Soon after taking the throne, he sent an envoy to Lü (0580). Lü met with Jin and Wèi in 0579, and later that year Jin defeated the Dí. The other Jin project, an invasion of Chín, was prepared by requesting a force from Lü. Under pretext of visiting the Jâu Kíng, the Lü force joined the rulers of Jín, Chí, Sùng, Wèi, Tsáu, Jü, and Tvéng in an invasion of Chín; the ruler of Tsáu died during the campaign. Except for the absence of Jvéng, the participants largely overlap with the most recent list of covenants; it seems that the tung-mýng is here being used not to maintain solidarity against Chû, but more precisely to aid Jin against Chín.

In autumn 0577, Jvéng again invaded Syw. The rulers of Jywéng, Wèi, and Chín all died within this year, and there seems to have been a disputed succession in Tsáu, whose ruler had died the previous year. General instability of this sort was unwelcome to the states, and what looks like a move to firm up the situation was made in 0576:

9 (CC 8/15:3, 0576). The rulers of Lü, Jin, Wèi, Jvéng, and Tsáu, the designated heir of Sùng (the ruler of Sùng was then ill, and died soon afterward), and officers of Chí and Jú made a tung-mýng. A total of eight states were thus represented, some of them by non-rulers. Chû invaded Jvéng. There were succession difficulties in Sùng; one high officer was put to death, and another fled to Chû. It seems that the anti-Chû party in Sùng had prevailed. It was undoubtedly a core expectation of the previous covenant that such factions should generally prevail.

In 0575, a Jvéng force invaded Sùng. Jin asked a force from Lü, and later that year, no Lü force having been sent, Jin alone defeated a joint Chû and Jvéng force; Chû killed its general on his return. In autumn, the Lü prince went to meet with representatives from Jin, Chí, Wèi, Sùng, and Jú, but the ruler of Jin would not see him. With allies Ywén, Jin, Chí, and Jú, the Lü ruler took part in an attack on Jvéng. This did not mollify Jin, which seized and imprisoned a Lü envoy. A Lü notable fled to Chû. A covenant was finally made between representatives of Lü and Jin. Shortly thereafter, Lü executed one of its notables, doubtless to resolve a Lü factional dispute in favor of the Jin party. Thus was a delicate situation finally patched up between Lü and Jin.
In 0574, Wèi alone invaded Jūng, and shortly thereafter, Wèi took part with Lù, Yīn, Shàn, Jìn, Sūng, Tsáu, and Jū in once again invading Jūng. The next month,

10 (CC 8/17:3, 0574). The above allies made a túng-míng. This covenant followed a military event. The usual Spring and Autumn covenant precedes such an event; it is an agreement to do something in the future. But the future was also in the minds of the parties in 0574: that autumn, Jìn asked a force from Lù, which took part with Jìn (and with Shàn, Sūng, Wèi, Tsáu, Chū, and Jū) in invading Jūng. Chū, its attention being directed elsewhere, extinguished Shū-yūng, on its eastern border.

In 0573: a notable of Jìn, followed by the Jìn ruler himself, and a high officer of Chū, were killed in factional disputes. Exploiting the confusion, Chū and Jūng invaded Sūng. The ruler of Lù went to Jìn, probably for ceremonies attendant on the death of the old ruler, and shortly after his return to Lù, the new ruler (Dàu-gūng, r 0572-0558, but already in charge) sent a friendly mission to Lù. What will be the new Jìn policy?

Dàu-gūng turned out to be effective in both internal and external affairs, and his policy was largely the same. In winter, a joint Chū and Jūng force invaded Sūng. Jìn at once asked a force from Lù. The Lù ruler had recently died, but . . .

11 (CC 8/18:14, 0573). A Lù representative made a túng-míng with the rulers of Jìn, Sūng, Wèi, Jū, and an officer of Chū. This preceded a joint siege of the strategic city Pīng-chūng, near Sūng; its members being the above covenanters plus several small states. That summer, Jìn alone invaded problematic Jūng, and to coordinate with that expedition, a force from Lù, Chū, Tsáu, Jū, and Chū 果 took up a static position near to Jūng. The allies being thus occupied, Chū invaded Sūng. Both Jìn and Wèi sent friendly envoys to Lù.

In 0571, Jūng invaded Sūng, but presently the ruler of Jūng died, and a joint force from Jìn, Sūng, and Wèi invaded Jūng. Chū, which had been foiled in its recent intentions, executed the officer it held responsible, one Prince Shūn 公子申.

Just as Jìn had to worry about Chū on the west, so did Chū at this period have to take measures to counter the rising power of Wū on the east. Chū invaded Wū in 0570. Lù and Jìn made a two-party covenant that summer, and a few months later . . .

12 (CC 9/3:5, 0570). The rulers of Lù, Shàn, Jìn, Sūng, Wèi, Jūng, Jyw, Jū, and the heir to the throne of Chū, made a túng-míng. Strategically located Chūn, which had not been included in the meeting, sent a representative, and the contracting parties covenanted with him, thus adding him to their list. That winter, Jìn invaded Syw.

Wū was a problem for Chū, but also for the Sinitic states. In 0568, envoys from Lù and Wèi met with Wū; later that year there was a meeting of the rulers of Lù, Jìn, Sūng, Chūn, Wèi, Jūng, Tsáu, Jyw, Jū, Tỳng 胢, Syw 舜, the Chū heir, and officers of Wū and Dzūng. No covenant resulted, but that winter, a force from Lù went to guard Chūn. Chūn was promptly attacked by Chū, but a joint force from Lù, Jìn, Sūng, Wèi, Jūng, Tsáu, and Chū went to the relief of Chūn. The collective security system was working well.

For this tactic, compare the maneuver of Lù in 0573, above; a static position (in effect, a defensive position assumed by a normally offensive force) taken up in opposition to an attack.
Not that its working inhibited the normal expansion policies of the northern states, small and large: in 0567, Jyū extinguished Džvng, and Chí, having several times previously attacked Lát, to its east, now extinguished and absorbed it.

In winter 0566, Chū besieged Chívn, and a large meeting was held in Wèi, attended by Lú, Jín, Súng, Chívn, Wèi itself, Tsáu, Jyū, and Jū. No covenant resulted. The ruler of Jvng sought to join the meeting, but died before he reached the site. In spring 0565, Jvng attacked strategic Tsái and captured the ruler’s son. That winter, Chū invaded Jvng, this being the familiar reprisal of Chū when Jvng acts with the northern states.

13 (CC 9/9:5, 0564). Lú, Jín, Súng, Wèi, Tsáu, Jyū, Jū, Tvéng, Sywě, Chí, Little Jū, and Chí, attacked Jvng, and in the now familiar pattern, followed up their action by making a tung-mvéng. At year end, Chū again invaded Jvng.

Another large meeting between Wú and northern states (but not including Jvng) was held at the beginning of 0563. In answer, Chū and Jvng invaded Súng, Jín, not responding to this familiar provocation, attacked Chívn; Jyū attacked Lú. Finally, at the end of autumn, Lú, Jín, Súng, Wèi, Tsáu, Jyū, Jū, Chívn, Tvéng, Sywě, Chí, and Little Jū joined in invading Jvng. There ensued the murders of several nobles of Jvng, by rogues within Jvng, probably in an effort to change sides and to raise the attack. From outside, Chū sent a force which succeeded in relieving Jvng. In summer 0562, feeling once again strong enough to act against its northern neighbors, Jvng invaded Súng.


In 0561, Chū made an incursion into Súng. Another large meeting of northern states with Wú was held in early 0559. Many of the tung-mvéng participants, though not under that aegis, joined Jín in invading Chívn. Chū attacked Wú. In 0558, Chí infringed Lú territory in invading Jvng; Lú sent a force partway to relieve Jvng, and Lú forces assisted in the walling of outlying parts of the Jvng capital.

Ping-gúng (r 0557-0532) succeeded to the rulership of Jín in 0557. Early in his reign, a covenant (not a tung-mvéng) was made between Jín, Lú, Súng, Wèi, Jvng, Tsáu, Jū, Jyū, Sywě, Chí, and Little Jū; the rulers of Jū and Jyū were taken into custody by Jín. Chí, conspicuous by its absence from that meeting, presently invaded the Lú northern border. The link between the great states of the east and center had now been broken. Covenanters Lú, Jvng, Chí, Wèi, and Súng joined to attack Sywě, but Chí again invaded the Lú northern border on its way to besiege Jvng.

In 0556, Chí led two forces across the Lú northern border, striking simultaneously at two strongpoints, a dangerously innovative tactic. Chí attacked Lú again in 0555. In response, virtually all the 0557 covenanters joined in besieging the capital of Chí. Chí, seeing an opportunity in the absence of the northern states in Chí, attacked Jvng. At the end of the Chí siege, Jín arrested the ruler of Jū, and Lú was given lands at the expense of Jū, in compensation for those Lú had been compelled to return to Chí.

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13This is one of two occasions on which Confucius’s father is said to have distinguished himself for his bravery. See Brooks Analects 268, and now Brooks Emergence 36-37.
In 0553, pro-Chù notables fled from both Chùn and Tsâu to Chù, indicating that the previous actions, though not solemnized by a new tung-mîng, showed the continuing effect of the old tung-mîng, when interpreted and implemented with sufficient vigor.

Chù ceased to attack Lû, but in 0550 it invaded Wèi, and went on to attack Jìn; Lû sent a force to relieve Jìn. Chù made a surprise attack on Jyw.\footnote{Syí 番, a surprise attack, made by forces ostensibly on another mission.}

In 0549, Lû invaded Chù; that summer, Chù invaded Wú. Chù, passing up Lû, instead invaded Jyw, south and east of Lû. That autumn, there was a meeting of Jù, Jìn, Sûng, Wèi, Jýng, Tsáu, Jyw, Jù, Týng, Sywê, Chù 蹫, and Little Jù, not issuing in a tung-mîng but evidently meant to rally the members of the previous tung-mîng. In response, that winter Chù combined with Chùn and Tsâu to invade Jwng.

In 0548, Chù renewed its attacks on Lû’s northern border. An officer of Chù killed the ruler of Chù. East-west stability was once again in serious doubt, and the usual states met: Lû, Jìn, Sûng, Wèi, Jýng, Tsáu, Jyw, Jù, Týng, Sywê, Chù, and Little Jù. A force from Jwng, again operating on behalf of northern security, entered Chùn.

15 (CC 9/25:5, 0548). The above states then made a tung-mîng. Evidently it was felt that the old agreement was in need of formal renewal. And on the opposing side, Chù extinguished another of its small eastern neighbors; Jwng again invaded Chùn.

Of great importance was the last event of 0548: The ruler of Wû perished in an assault on the gate of a Chù city he had attacked. This and the Chù attack on Wû in the previous year were naval expeditions; the Yângdž River had now become the highway of Wû expansion, just as the level ground between Chù and Jwng had previously defined an opportunity horizon for Chù. With both Wû and Chù now exploiting that east/west road, the north/south axis came to be less important to Chù. Chù had never been in danger of invasion from the north (the incursion under Chù Hwán-gûng was a demonstration that could not be developed militarily), but it was now facing a serious threat from another southern power equipped with maritime skills. In 0547, Chù with Chùn and Tsâu again invaded Jwng, but in the interest of attending to first priorities, these northern expeditions now had to be quietly abandoned.

Peace between Chù and the north came with a covenant of 0546 between Chù, Chùn, and Tsâu for the Chù side, and Jìn, Lû, Wèi, Jýng, Sywê, and Tsáu for the other; the meeting was held in Sûng territory. These were the states making up the central north/south corridor; neither Chùn nor Chù (which had provided the military edge in the great northern victory of Chûng-pù in 0632) were present. The men of Jìn might well congratulate themselves; under their leadership, the always fragile and ever fluid league of the north had held, as much and as long as it had needed to. Was it for this role in bringing stability to a long-contested area that the Jìn ruler of this time was given the posthumous epithet Ping 明, or Peacebringer?

The peace did not endure to the end of the reign. The heir of Chûn was murdered in 0534. The ruler died. One officer fled to Chù, and another was executed by Chûn. Evidently a contest between pro- and anti-Chù factions was in progress. That winter, Chù extinguished Chûn altogether, and banished the Chûn heir to Ywê.
Jin Ping-gung died in 0532 and was succeeded by Jâu-gung (r 0531-0526). On the occasion of the death of a previous Jin ruler, Chû had sensed an opportunity for bold ventures. Continuing the previous already bold venture, it now lured the ruler of Tsâi to Shvû, killed him, and besieged the capital of Tsâi. That winter, it extinguished Tsâi, carried the Tsâi heir back to Chû, and there sacrificed him. In 0530, Chû invaded Syû. This sudden northward initiative from previously quiescent Chû caught the forces of Jin attending to another matter: invading the Syên-yû people.

What Chû expected to accomplish by this drastic reversal of policy is not clear. It may also have been unclear to a member of the ruling clan of Chû, who at this point returned to Chû from Jin and killed the Chû ruler; he was himself promptly killed. That autumn, the tsûng-mûng made its final appearance in the CC record:

16 (CC 10/13:5, 0529). Lû, Lyûu [representing the Jûu King], Jin, Chí, Sûng, Wên, Jûng, Tsâi, Jwû, Jû, Tûng, Sywê, Chí, and Little Jû met in Jin territory, and the following month made a tsûng-mûng. No military action was taken by the redefined league of states, but within a matter of weeks, rulers were returned to Chvûn and Tsâi, and those states were restored. Wû, seeing an opportunity in this sudden Chû setback, took the strategically located small state of Jûu-lâi. The tsûng-mûng, to maintain northern solidarity in the face of the threat of Chû, had been sufficiently achieved.

The End of the Affair. The buffer zone between Chû and the north had now been re-established, and the previous peace had been stabilized. It would hold, with only minor interruptions, for the rest of Spring and Autumn; Those remaining years are a subperiod of their own. The purpose of the tsûng-mûng, to maintain northern solidarity in the face of the threat of Chû, had been sufficiently achieved.

Summary. What was unique about the tsûng-mûng? It was not an agreement to attack, like most covenants, but an agreement to resist attack, on the part of states recognizing a common interest: that none of them imperil the others by siding with the aggressor. The tsûng-mûng expressed the collective anxiety of the states, as distinct from their normal mutual hostility. Once the outside threat which created the anxiety had receded, the collective interest was no longer articulated, and the basic hostility, the wish of each to conquer the others, alone remained.

That wish would continue. It would dominate the doings of the states all through the centuries of the succeeding Warring States period, until it finally burned itself out in the establishment of the unified Chûn Empire.

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