

*The Last Three Reigns*

*The war between the center and the periphery, the conservative legitimate rulers and the modernizing great clans of the several states, was a feature of the whole classical period. In the 04c, the state of Jin was divided into three clan domains; in the 03c, a power behind the Chí throne, the Tyén clan, finally took the throne in its own name. Thus did two great Spring and Autumn states fail to maintain their integrity in Warring States times.*

*Lǚ has become something of a standard case of center/periphery polarity, and different opinions about it crystallized soon after the end of Spring and Autumn. The early Analects (05c) firmly sides with the legitimate ruler against the Jìsūn and other clans, and continues to hold this position through the 04c. On the other side, the Dzwǒ Jwàn pours scorn and derision on the Lǚ rulers and dismisses as foolish their efforts to assert their authority against the clans. It celebrates the virtues of the Jìsūn in Lǚ and the Tyén usurpers in Chí.*

*For all its troubles, Lǚ never split apart. There was no usurpation of the throne. The matter is of interest for comparative history; here, the comparison of Lǚ with some of its more powerful contemporaries.*

*Besides that political issue, much interest naturally attaches to Confucius, whose adult life was lived under these three rulers. He was not important enough to merit an entry in the chronicle (the record of his death in 0479 is a pious interpolation of the Kǔng family), but what can be inferred from other sources can be coordinated with what the chronicle does include. We have attempted to put the other sources together in our book *The Original Analects*. Here, without mentioning h8im, we fill in the public background of that career.*

*The conflict in this period is not so much between ancient and modern ways of doing things, as between two different ways of doing modern things. The state managers tended to think in terms of infrastructure, resources, and laws. Land and food, and trade as a new revenue source, are their constant concern. Their theories are voluminously preserved in the Chí statecraft text Gwǎndž. The Confucians were also modernizers. They were rooted in the warrior ethic, but transformed it into a loyalty no longer centered on the person of the ruler, and an integrity based on an inward sense of right action.*

*The doings of the world outside Lǚ are important for early Chinese history. In previous chapters, we extracted some information about persons from the record for Jāu-gūng. On this last pass through the text, we ignore such aspects, in order to see more clearly the large national and international movements: the day-to-day functioning of a large multistate system.*