

On the restoration of the principality of Shen during the mid- and late Spring and Autumn period

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The principality of Shen 申 was a feudal aristocratic state of the Western Zhou and early Spring and Autumn period ruled by the Jiang 姜 family and located in the vicinity of Nanyang 南陽, Henan Province. The conventional wisdom has it that during the early Spring and Autumn period, Shen was invaded and conquered by the principality of Chu 楚, became one of its most important Northern *xian* 県 districts and made significant contributions to Chu's military advance into the midlands of the Huanghe River basin. However, according to the entry in *Zuo-zhuan* 左傳 for the 13th year of the Zhaogong 昭公 era, the inscription on a bell ensemble (*bianzhong* 編鐘) unearthed from the early Warring States period tomb of Yi 乙, prince of Zeng 曾 (Suizhou city, Hubei Province) and Lingwang Sui Shen (靈王遂申) in the Shanghai Museum Chu bamboo slips, the principality of Shen continued to exist after the conquest. Shen is thought to have been restored by the bulk of its former indigenous ruling class, whom the author refers to as *kuoren* 国人, during the reigns of Chu Kings Gong 共, Kang 康 and Jia Ao 郟敖.

As to the location of Shen during the late Spring and Autumn period, there has been strong support as of late for theories centering upon the city of Xinyang 信陽, despite the absence of any definitive bibliographical or archeological evidence. In any event, the Shanghai Museum Chu bamboo slips and newly discovered Peng 彭 family burial site strongly suggest that the state of Shen was restored in Nanyang, while Shen *xian* continued to exist under kingdom of Chu.

The Shen restoration was a policy adopted to deal with both the Huanghe basin and the principality of Wu 吳, to appease the princes under Chu rule on which it had laid heavy military burdens and to maintain an international order centered upon the kingdom of Chu. Not only were the *kuoren* class of Chen assuaged, but the other client princes were also assured that their small fiefdoms would continue to exist.

For Chu, the armies of its client princes were necessary for its foreign strategy, but those same armies also posed a latent threat to its hegemony. For this reason, in addition to its policy of appeasement, Chu also intervened in internal affairs of its client states through such means as relocating their *kuoren* members, in preparation for their dissolution.

The reason for establishing Shen *xian* along with the state of Shen was to affirm Chu's direct rule over the local population in Shen *xian*, thus taking the former ruling class of Shen away from Shen *xian*. Direct rule included pressing the subjects of *xians* into the Chu army, thus eliminating the importance of the former ruling class of client states in the kingdom's military efforts. The author concludes that the restoration of the state of Shen was a policy that clearly reflected the historical features of the period of transition from the Spring and Autumn world order to that of the Warring States period.