CHAPTER V
SIGNIFICANCE OF GUAN ZHONG IN CHINESE POLITICAL AND
INTELLECTUAL HISTORY

1. The Contribution of Guan Zhong to Qi's Hegemony

With the decline of the Zhou Dynasty, all the feudal states started to diverge from the central authority of the Zhou king. This led to each state governing itself in his own way resulting in warfare and annexation among the various states. This was the national phenomenon at that time. ¹ Besides Qi, the other prominent states were Song, Lu, Wei, Chen, Cai, Yan, Cao, and Jin. These feudal states together with the rest of the smaller ones amounted to a total number of about a hundred feudal states in all. They were constantly at war with one another. At the same time, the alien states or barbarians surrounding the Central Plain, such as the Di in the north, Xirong in the northwest and Jingman in the south also seized the opportunity to

¹ As recorded in the Shiji, "At the time of King Ping, the royal family of Zhou had declined, the stronger states annexed the weaker states, and Qi, Chu, Qin, Jin became stronger ..." See Sima Qian, "Zhou Benji" 周本纪 in Shiji, juan 4, p. 149.
harass the states in the Central Plain. ²

Faced with a situation of continual internal strife and external foreign aggression, the royal Zhou family found themselves in an embarrassing predicament. Although the Zhou kings were still recognized in name as the supreme ruler, they found themselves powerless in their control of the feudal states, and in their efforts to consolidate and unify these states so that they would work together to expel the foreign invaders. On the other hand, the different dukes had their own ulterior motives and had refused to submit to the leadership of others. Under these unstable conditions, the King of Zhou only succeeded in maintaining his status and position in name only.

As an insightful statesman, Guan Zhong was aware that the Zhou King was powerless. However, he also realized that although all the dukes no longer honoured the Zhou rulership, nevertheless, should any states use military force against the Zhou Dynasty, the rest of the

² Tong Shuye said, "With the decline of the royal family, the situation among the states became worse because they fought one another, so much so that the Central Plain could not unite and this led to more chaos, and caused the invasion of the barbarians." See Tong Shuye 童书业, Chun Qiu Shi 春秋史, Hong Kong: Taiping Shuju 太平书局, 1962, p.149. See also Zhongguo Lidai Zhanzhengshi 中国历代战争史, edited by Sanjun Daxue 三军大学 Taipei: Liming Wenhua Shiye Gufen Youxian Gongsi 黎明文化事业股份有限公司, 1980, p.113.
states would rally together in defence to attack that particular state. Pragmatic as he was, Guan Zhong thus made use of the situation of his time and seized the opportunity to realize his cause to "honour the King", resulting in the creation of wealth, expansion of power, and military strength throughout the nation. He nine times convened the states in the Central Plain for an alliance meeting, thus dissipating interstate friction and chaos. ¹ By helping and supporting the weak and frail states, and through Guan Zhong's repeated urgings and supervision of Duke Huan to raise his reputation and credibility among the other dukes, at the same time upholding the King of Zhou, Qi gradually built up its status as the leader of the dukes. Henceforth, the states submitted to the the call for "honouring the King", upholding Qi as the hegemon. Thus, Guan Zhong had taken a step further in his efforts to unite the dukes under the banner of safeguarding the Zhou culture and territory; together they resisted the aggression posed by the foreign invaders. ²

¹ Yang Bojun, "Xianwen Pian" in Lunyu Yizhu, op.cit., p.151.

² "Xiaokuang Pian" in GZJJ, p.392.
The call for "honouring the King and expelling the barbarians" which received the expected response and support from the dukes undoubtedly showed that they had accorded diplomatic recognition to Qi's status as the hegemon. Then the hegemony of Qi was at the peak. But undeniably before Qi obtained the endorsement from the dukes, Guan Zhong had already established Qi's actual strength. Guan Zhong's influence on the success and failure of Qi's hegemony was notable. Especially before Duke Huan's rule, government decrees in Qi were ever changing, rules regarding reward and punishment were ambiguous, and corruption and incompetence prevailed in politics. Guan Zhong set up the guiding principles, ruled the state according to law, dismissed the venal officials, and was both strict and fair in meting out reward and punishment. Consequently, the people became so law-abiding that the monarch himself abided by the law. Guan Zhong's proposal to "honour the king" fulfilled two functions. On the one hand, it appealed to the people's natural instinct to obey the monarch as the law-maker, since the ruler was revered as a divine being and represented Heaven and Earth. On the other hand, it

---

5 Before Guan Zhong became prime minister to Duke Huan of Qi, the crisis during Duke Xiang's reign in Qi was serious. After Duke Xiang was murdered, the political situation was unstable. A conflict started between Prince Xiaobai and Prince Jin for the throne. For details, see Tong Shuye, op.cit., p. 143.
restricted the privileges of the monarch. This means that although the monarch was the law-maker, he had no authority to abrogate the law unto his own ends. Furthermore he should follow the principle of "establishing law to govern oneself", which means that the ruler should be the first person to act according to the law. 6 Guan Zhong realized that if the ruler acted selfishly, the state would be in chaos. This strict observance of the law made Qi a well-governed and harmonious state.

Another characteristic a hegemon should possess was the ability to strictly organize the internal administration and military affairs. The policy adopted by Guan Zhong to reform Qi's internal and military affairs was "to carry out military reforms through internal administration". 7 This policy was so successful in uniting and organizing the people of Qi, that they became well-disciplined and dedicated people, ever ready and always prepared to defend their nation. The fact that Guan Zhong was able to "assemble the feudal lords nine times without armour carts" 8 was no

---

6 "Fafa Pian" in GZJJ, p.295.
7 "Xiaokuang Pian" in GZJJ, p.388.
doubt partly due to their respect for Qi's credibility and righteousness, but it was also because of Qi's strong military power and stable internal administration. Naturally, the stability of its internal administration was a testimony to Guan Zhong's policy of employing men of high calibre. The various men of ability whom he recommended to Duke Huan undoubtedly contributed greatly to the attainment of hegemony by Qi.  

Among the reforms to be carried out, economic reforms should also be given top priority. To attain peace and harmony, it was essential for a state to provide its people with the basic necessities - food, clothing, and shelter. Huge funds were needed to make improvements in the internal administration and military reorganisation. Funds could be raised from agricultural land in the form of taxes levied according to the fertility and productivity of the land. He also nationalized all forest reserves and mines, and appointed officials to manage the salt and iron trade monopoly. Besides, he also developed trade and commerce, and set up nine special departments to deal with such matters as minting and managing currency in

9 "Dakuang Pian" in GZJ, pp.342-343.
order to regulate the rise and fall of consumer prices. The economic policies and measures he had implemented greatly improved the people's livelihood and increased the income of the state at the same time.

As Guan Zhong's policies were practical and beneficial to both the state and the people, they were greatly appreciated and fully supported by all classes of people. These political, economic and military policies made Qi powerful and prosperous, and together with the rounded, articulated and well-managed foreign policies and diplomatic strategies, they resulted in the submission of all feudal lords to Qi's leadership. Thus Qi succeeded in becoming the hegemon exemplar in the Spring and Autumn period. The firm foundations, as laid down for Duke Huan by Guan Zhong, indeed contributed enormously to his hegemonic accomplishment. 10

10 Yang Youjiong commented in his writing: "Before Guan Zhong was at the helm of the state, Qi was in a state of decline and chaos. When he became prime minister, he implemented some policies for enriching the state and strengthening the military. He also advocated honouring the king and expelling the barbarians, and his goal was to become hegemon. In order to become a hegemon, he practised "minting currency and accumulating wealth" to make the country rich, and to reform the military through internal administration. See Yang Youjiong, Zhong Guo Zhengzhi Sixiangshi 中国政治思想史, Taiwan: Shangwu Yinshuguan Gufen Youxiangongsi 商务印书馆股份有限公司, 1989, p. 138.
2. The Influence of the Theory of "Enriching the State and Strengthening the Army" on the other States of the Spring and Autumn period

The hegemony established by Guan Zhong was a brilliant achievement during the Spring and Autumn period; it not only induced many feudal states to follow in Qi's footsteps, but also made Qi's policies a role model for future leaders. To the other feudal states, she was a successful political paradigm in leadership and management. The theory that economic wealth and military strength played a vital role in the attainment of hegemony therefore became the governing principle for all future states which strove for leadership and power. Guan Zhong's influence was evident in the state of Jin. Jin eventually took over the ruling position as the hegemon after Qi.  

The "Jin Yu" records that while the Prince of Jin, Zhong Er, was taking refuge in the state of Qi, his wife, Qi Jiang

---

11 Guan Zhong became prime minister to Duke Huan for 43 years. He succeeded in safeguarding the Central Plain from the invasion of the barbarians, and the people lived peacefully for 37 years. Guan Zhong's contributed towards the recovering of self-confidence among the people, and he also set an example for Jin to later lead the dukes in confronting with Chu. See Zhonguo Lidai Zhanzhengshi, vol.1., p.155.
齐姜，^{12} who had witnessed the success of Guan Zhong's policies, said to him:

I have heard Guan Zhong say that a state must have authoritative power over its people so that the people would fear and obey. Otherwise it would lose control of its people. Guan Zhong used this power to govern Qi efficiently and effectively, thus making it into a hegemonic state. Now if you dismiss his concept of rule, wouldn't it be too difficult for you to rule?^{13}

When Prince Zhong Er returned to Jin from Qi and later became Duke Wen, he implemented several reforms following Qi's policy of enriching the state and strengthening the military, and became the next hegemon after Duke Huan in the Spring and Autumn period. In 632 B.C. he was commissioned by the King of Zhou to pacify the states in the four quarters of the country, and to punish and remove the miscreants. Duke Wen subscribed fully to Duke Huan's concept of rule and Guan Zhong's view points. He proclaimed himself the protector of the royal Zhou State. He also treated the other dukes with good courtesy. Duke Wen totally agreed with Guan Zhong's political concept, that was: "The

^{12} Qi Jiang 齐姜 was a relative of Duke Huan of Qi. She become Zhong Er's wife. See "Jin Shijia" 晋世家 in Shiji, juan 39, p. 1658.

^{13} "Jinyu" char in Guoyu, in Sibu Beiyao, Shibu 史部, juan 10, op.cit.,p.2b-3a.
legitimacy of the hegemony lies in the hegemon's relationship with the king and the consent of the dukes. The latter have to be won."  

Duke Wen's motive to become hegemon was evident from the following events:

First and foremost, in 636 B.C. the brother of King Xiang 襄 of Zhou, Prince Dai 带, together with the Di barbarians, attacked King Xiang. The latter took refuge in Zheng, and pleaded to Jin for help. 15 Duke Wen perceived that that was the most appropriate opportunity to honour the King and at the same time to expel the barbarians. Therefore, he led the army to suppress the rebellion, protect King Xiang of Zhou, and kill Prince Dai. Since then, the policy to "honour the king and expel the barbarians" was upheld by all, first paving the way for Jin, and making powerful impact among the dukes.

Duke Wen also adopted the principle of helping the weak and supporting the frail; for example when Sung was attacked by Chu in around 633 B.C. and 632 B.C., it

---


15 Li Zhongtong, CZJJ, juan 7, pp. 347 - 351.
pleaded to Jin for help. Twice Duke Wen helped Sung in times of emergency. He also convened the general alliance meeting. In 632 B.C. after Duke Wen defeated Chu for the second time, he called for a summit meeting in Jian Tu 跡土 (the present Xing Yang 漢陽 district in Henan 河南). A pledge was signed making a pronouncement to "be good to the royal family and do not harm one another. Any state which betrays the pledge will be completely annihilated by the Heavenly army assembled for that sole purpose.  

This meant that with the pledge, the assembled states must "honour the king" by preventing any further rebellions; they must not attack or harm one another. If one state broke the covenant, the others would join forces to defeat it, and they would fight until victory was won. This alliance was known historically as the "Jian Tu Alignment" 跡土之盟. After the alliance, Duke Wen became the hegemon of the Central Plain. 

Duke Wen emerged to replace Duke Huan as the hegemon, thus maintaining the peace in the Central Plain. He not only stopped the aggressive expansion of

16 Ibid., juan 8, p. 372 & 382.

17 Ibid., juan 8, p. 382.

18 Tong Shuye, op.cit., p. 181.
Chu, but also successfully defeated the foreign invaders - Di in the north and Yi in the south. In this way, Chinese culture was restored and preserved. Duke Wen's many accomplishments resulted from his continuous observation of and adherence to Guan Zhong's call to "honour the King and expel the barbarians."

Apart from Jin, other feudal states such as Qin, Chu, and Sung were also eager to become hegemon, but they lacked sufficient strength and were unable to compare with Duke Huan of Qi. Even Duke Wen at his peak of accomplishment was unable to compare with the reputable hegemon of Qi. After the decline of Qi, there was an endless striving for leadership especially between Qin and Chu, the two more powerful feudal states. Even though Duke Dao of Jin eventually restored hegemony status in Jin, in terms of actual strength he was unable to restrain the ambitious Chu and Qin. The level of hegemony that Duke Huan established with the assistance of Guan Zhong was unparalleled and incomparable. Even Confucius commended him by saying: "Duke Huan was righteous and not crafty, whereas Duke

19 Ibid., p. 180 - 183.

20 Ibid., for details see p. 178 - 188.

21 Ibid., p. 217 - 221.
Wen was cunning and unrighteous." 22 Duke Wen followed Duke Huan's way in governing the state, yet with respect to his personality and moral character, in no way could he be compared to Duke Huan. Duke Huan's impeccable leadership was due chiefly to the wise and outstanding counsel of his prime minister, Guan Zhong, who never failed to give him the appropriate advice or admonition, so much so that a good reputation was established in helping out the weak and supporting the frail throughout his rule in Qi.

3. Realistic Political Thought of Guan Zhong

The political thought of Guan Zhong was imbued with a strong patriotic consciousness and love for the people. The theories that he held were both practical and relevant, particularly the ones about building the nation by strengthening the military, and "honouring the king and expelling the barbarians." Therefore, throughout the Spring and Autumn period, there was internal stability within the country and externally peace was maintained among the various feudal states.

---

Guan Zhong was more a pragmatic politician than a political thinker. He differed greatly from the rest of the thinkers in his capacity to think logically and to set realistic political goals. Furthermore, he possessed the capability, ability, and charisma required for fulfilling these ideals and dreams. His contribution to and influence on the contemporary dukes and also political thinkers in post-feudal eras were exemplary and ahead of his time. For instance, as cited by the biography of Guan Zhong and Yan Ying in Shiji, "Qi became the most powerful feudal state because it observed and practiced Guan Zhong’s theories of government. It was only a hundred years later that there emerged Yanzi." In Shiji, Sima Qian 司马迁 wrote a joint biography of Guan and Yan, and historical records generally group Guan and Yan together. This indicates to us that the two are historically linked. While it may be too much to claim that Yan Ying was Guan Zhong’s ideological successor, yet it would be acceptable to regard Yan as one who further developed Qi’s cultural tradition following Guan Zhong.


24 It has been claimed that "Yan Ying was the inheritor of Guan Zhong’s ideology, he further developed the traditional culture of Qi." See Zhou Lisheng 周立升 edited, Chungiu Zhuxue 春秋哲学, Shantong Daxue Chubanshe 山东大学出版社, 1989, p. 140.
For example, in helping Duke Huan to achieve his hegemonic position Guan Zhong actually used the pretext of fighting solely for the preservation of the Zhou Dynasty. He emphasized that rites and rituals with morality and ethics were the foundation stone for governing a state. Yan Ying also held a high regard for rites and ritual. As the power of the Tian clan (Tian Shi 田氏) grew in Qi, and the regime was in the process of transferring from the hands of the Jiang clan (Jiang Shi 姜氏) to the Tian clan, Duke Jin 景 of Qi sought the advice of Yan Ying for a resolution. Yan Ying emphasized the implementation of the rites of Zhou, he said: "Only rites can serve the purpose. As far as rites are concerned, it is better to implement these at the national level than at the family level. In this way, people and farmers would not migrate, artisans and merchants would not change their occupations, scholars would not become excessive, officers would not flatter, and high officers would not embezzle." He further

25 See "Xigong Shang" 僖公上 in CZJJ, juan 6, p.256.

26 The Tian Clan 田氏 was a noble family in Qi. They were able to take over the duke's authority. See "Tian Jingzhong Shiji" 田敬仲世家 in Shiji, juan 46, p.1888.

27 "Zhao gong liu" 昭公六 in CZJJ, juan 26, p. 1278.
added that if all rites were stringently observed, the state would last as long as heaven and earth. 28 On top of that, both Yan Ying and Guan Zhong were not blindly loyal to their monarch. The former said, "...I am loyal not only to the king, rather I deem the good of society is more important." 29 It can therefore be seen that, Yan was a man loyal to the state, 30 and he resembled Guan Zhong in that he was renowned in admonishing his lord. Shiji described him as wholeheartedly serving the lord, even daring to admonish him. 31 This indicates that Yan Ying also acquired Guan Zhong's principles of governing the state. In his other ideas on politics and economy, such as moderate taxation and frugality, Yan Ying showed that he fully understood the problem of the masses. He made light the burden of the people, and tried to win them over to his way of government. On the political point, he strived to strengthen the government by achieving political stability through his political-economic policies. 32 In short, Yan Ying had

28 Ibid.

29 "Xianggong Si" 襄公十四 in CZJJ, juan 18, p. 935.

30 Ibid., pp. 142 - 143.

31 "Guan Yan Liezhuan" in Shiji, pp. 2136 - 2137.

positively adopted Guan Zhong's principles of government for the benefit of his state and people.

It can be said that the political thought of Guan Zhong was practical and pragmatic, initiated from the fundamental. He proposed the policy of enriching the state and strengthening the army, which fulfilled contemporary needs of the people. He was therefore able to receive overwhelming support and esteem from the people. His works became a standard model for governments and statesmen that came after him. Liu Shaoqi of the Wei dynasty remarked in Renwu Zhi 人物志 at "Guan Zhong and Shang Yang were both great statesmen who made the laws and enforced them to strengthen the state and enrich the people." 33

Further Development of the Legalist school after Guan Zhong

The impact of Guan Zhong's political reform was tremendous, both on the feudal states of the Spring and Autumn period and the Legalist school of the Warring States period that followed. His political reforms

Liu Shao 刘斯, "Liuye Pian" 流业篇 in Renwu Zhi 人物志, juan shang 卷上, see in Sibubetiyao, Zibu 子部, Taiwan: Zhonghua Shuju, p. 6b.

153
also had a far-reaching effect on the political thinkers
of later times. In his study of the political history
of the Pre-Qin era, Liang Qichao has made the following
remarks:

While the emergence of the Legalist School as
a definite system of thought came only in the
time of Shen Zi 慎子, Yin Wen Zi 尹文子 and
Han Fei Zi, the ideal of Law existed as far
back as the days of Guan Zhong and Zi Chan
子产 (543 - 522 B.C.) Previous schools of
thought had prepared the ground for it to
begin. 34

As pointed out earlier in Chapter IV, Guan Zhong's
governing strategy and thoughts contained many Legalist
elements. Thus he had been regarded as the pioneer of
the Legalist school. However, because of social changes
during the Warring States period and later, his
influence on his successors was not completely felt.
The formation of Legalism took quite a long time in
coming, long after Guan Zhong's time, and by then the
situation was politically and culturally very different
in nature from that found in the Spring and Autumn
period.

34 Liang Chi - Chao, History of Chinese Political Thought - During The Early
The formation of the Legalist school was closely related to Han Fei, the renowned Legalist regarded as the synthesiser of the Legalist School, who lived in the last days of the Warring States period (circa 280 B.C. - 233 B.C.). Naturally he was deeply influenced by the situation and circumstances of his time and his personal inclinations. His works more or less epitomized the experiences of reforms carried out during the Warring States period. He put forward the political theory of combining "law" (fa 法), "tactics" (shu 术) and "power" (shi 勢), with "law" as the basis for government. Through the two different streams of the law advocated by Shang Yang and Guan Zhong, Han Fei consolidated and synthesized the major works of the Legalists before him.  

Viewing from this point, it can be said that in actual fact Guan Zhong had no apparent or formal followers or disciples, and the Legalist school was not formed by him. So it would be difficult to ascertain how he had influenced the later Legalists. In the later period after the Legalist school was formed, scholars in different ages have defined the Legalists based on the characteristics and traits of the Legalist school.

35 Feng Youlan, Zhongguo Zhexueshi, p.389.
Their definitions somewhat differed from Guan Zhong's method and policy in the governing of state. Therefore strictly speaking, Guan zhong could only be called the pioneer of the Legalist school, but not its founder. 36

After Guan Zhong's death, his Legalistic thoughts had not submerged. On the contrary, his political theories and their implementation became the paradigm for later statesmen, especially those who emphasized the legal rule in politics. As a pioneer, he had undoubtedly played a significant role in the development of the Legalist school in the later generations. His remarkable political accomplishments, and outstanding ideologies and guidelines for law and order opened up a fertile land for the Legalist followers of later times to sow their seeds, and to grow, and produce abundant fruits of knowledge. Based upon foundations of Guan Zhong's political thoughts and ideas, the Legalists of later days had put forward numerous theories. One may ask whether what they proclaimed, upheld and achieved were based upon Guan Zhong's ideas in a continuous line of development or in a complex pattern which absorbed

36 Ji Zhe 稱哲 says: "The Legalist School started from Guanzi (or Guan Zhong). Guanzi advocated ruling the state by law; for this, he was the forerunner of the Legalist School". See Ji Zhe, Xiangqin Zhuzixue 先秦诸子学, Hong Kong: Qianzhai Shuwu 钱斋书屋, 1966, pp. 418 – 419.
from various sources ideas and thoughts so as to fit into their own principles and requirements. The answer is quite obvious. After Guan Zhong the development of the Legalist school was actually beyond his reach to control. The later legalists modified Guan Zhong's concepts in different ways, and they incorporated individual thoughts and ideas along the way. The end product was therefore rather different from the one proposed by Guan Zhong thousands of years ago.

Nevertheless, a trend that could not be avoided by all Legalists was the requirements and needs of the time. The pragmatic political thinking of Guan Zhong was congruent with the age, and the spirit of reforms in accordance with the changing circumstances of the time was something that all Legalists were obliged to faithfully observe. On the other hand, the emergence of Legalist thought was closely related to the destruction of the feudal order as well as the collapse of social ethics. It tallies with what Liang Qichao says, "Rulers resorted to laws to discipline the people." 37 which means that society and state of that time had already reached the stage where they required law to control them. But before that, there were various politicians

---
37 Liang Chi-Chao, History of Chinese Political Thought, p. 36.
and scholars who had condoned the enforcement of law to rule a state. Thus in the early years of the Spring and Autumn period, Guan Zhong had already initiated the Legalist thinking. Other proponents of Legalist thought during the Chunqiu era were Zi Chan 子产 (543 B.C. - 522 B.C.) and Fan Li 范蠡 (482 B.C. - 472 B.C.). Apart from the above, Li Kui 李悝 (427 B.C. - 387 B.C.), Wu Qi 吴起 (401 B.C. - 381 B.C.), Shen Buhai 申不害 (351 B.C. - 337 B.C.) and Shang Yang 商鞅 (352 B.C. - 338 B.C.) all hailed from the Warring States period. As Liang Qichao states, "All were statesmen of distinction whose works and teachings had a tremendous influence on society".38

Also, among the common people were scholars who studied Legalism, such as Deng Xi 邓析 of the Spring and Autumn period and Shen Dao 慎到 and Yin Wen 尹文 of the Warring States period. Finally, among all the Legalists, Han Fei represented and epitomized the Legalist teaching of all times. 39

Nevertheless, not all the people mentioned above were classified as Legalists; even Guan Zhong himself has been regarded as a Daoist by some. According to the

38 Ibid.


158
classification in the "Yiwen Zhi" in Han Shu, Guan Zhong, Li Kui, Shang Yang, Shen Buhai, Shen Dao and Han Fei were all classed as legalists, while Deng Xi and Yin Wen were classed as belonging to the School of Names (Mingjia 名家).  

But when it came to the time of the compilation of the Sui Shu, only Guan Zhong, Shang Yang, Shen Dao and Han Fei were classified as Legalists; Deng Xi and Yin Wen still remained in the School of Names, while Wu Qi was classed under the School of War (Bingjia 兵家).  

Therefore, according to what we gather from the Han Shu and the Sui Shu, the historians have definitely classified Shang Yang, Shen Dao, Han Fei as Legalists, while Guan Zhong, Li Kui and Shen Buhai were also incorporated into the Legalist school. As such, my study of the further development for the Legalist school after Guan Zhong would therefore centre around these figures. In this chapter, I will concentrate on the special traits and characteristics of their thoughts as well as their influence on and contributions towards the history of Chinese political thinking.

---

40 Ban Gu, "Yiwenzhi" in Hanshu, p. 1729 - 1737.

41 Wei Zheng, "Jingjizhi" in Suishu, p. 1003 - 1012.
The Legalists and their ideas

Before discussing the thinking of each individual Legalist, I would like have to integrate remarks made by "Yinwen Zhi" in Han Shu, and "Jinji Zhi" in Sui Shu regarding the characteristic thinking of a Legalist, within which both contrasting views of compliment and criticism are to be found. The most characteristic of the compliments is "the exaction of punishment and reward" which resulted in "prohibiting obscenity, rectifying lawlessness, and maintaining law and order". On the other hand, the defect of law is quoted as "too much regulations could lead to the lack of culturedness and love, so much so with harsh punishment no mercy would even be spared towards the closely related kindred, reciprocation was utterly abandoned." 42

According to the above assertion, those who authentically deserved to be called Legalists were Li Kui, Shang Yang, Shen Buhai, Shen Dao, and Han Fei. Below is a brief description of these Legalists and their thoughts, and their relationship to Guan Zhong's thoughts.

(1) Li Kui (circa 455 BC - 395 B.C.)

Li Kui, also known as Li Ke 李克, was a statesman who lived in the early Warring States period. He was a disciple of Zi Xia 子夏. He was the chief minister for Wei 魏 during the reign of Lord Wen 文. As stated in the "Xing Fa Zhi 刑法志 section in Jin Shu 晋书, "Li Kui compiled many laws and regulations for the various feudal states and wrote the Book of Law (Fajing 法经)." Nevertheless, the Book of Law was eventually lost; but records concerning its contents can be found in The Chronicles of Tang's Law (Tanglu Shuyi 唐律疏议). Altogether there were six chapters: "The Law Dealing with Robbery" (Daofa 盗法), "The Law Dealing With Theft" (Zeifa 贼法), "The Law Dealing With Imprisonment" Qiufa 囚法), "The Law Dealing With Arrest" (Bufa 捕法), as well as "The Law Dealing With Miscellaneous Other Items" (Zafa 杂法) and "Penal Law" (Jufa 具法). It is

There was another version which says that Li Kui and Li Ke were not the same man. According to this story, Li Ke was a disciple of Zi Xia 子夏. After Wei destroyed Zhong Shan 中山, Li Ke became the chief minister of Zhong Shan, he was also at one time Duke Wen's chief minister. See Sima Qian, "Wei Shijia" in Shiji, juan 44, p. 1840. "Yiwen Zhi" in Hanshu states Li Kui as a Legalist and Le Ke as a Confucian. See Ban Gu, "Yiwen Zhi" in Hanshu, p. 1724 & p.1735.


161
claimed that the Book of Law he compiled had a great impact on the Legalists after him. For instance, Shang Yang adopted his method of rule in Qin. It is also believed that the Book of Law was the blueprint for the ancient laws of the Qin and Han Dynasties. It could be regarded as the earliest written law code of China.

Although Li Kui was not classed as a Legalist by the Han Shu and the Sui Shu, he did actually implement some radical reforms to promote the law and order of Wei during his term as chief minister. His political strategy resembled that of Guan Zhong in carrying out his political reforms. According to the "Shihuo Zhi" 食货志 in Han Shu, Li Kui's reforms included making maximum utilization of the land, that was, to encourage farming and to increase the productivity of land; and also in the meanwhile, to implement crop storing system, that was, to stabilize food prices by buying and storing remnant food during times of good harvests, to prepare for times of bad harvests or famine. Besides

46 According to "Xingfazhi" in Jinshu, "Li Kui wrote the Fajing ... Shang Jun 商君 (or Shang Yang) made use of it to govern Qin during his premiership." p. 922.

47 As stated in the "Xingfazhi", "The law then was originally the old law of the Qin-Han Era. It was drafted by a teacher of Wei Wen hou 魏文侯, name Li Kui." Ibid.

48 Ban Gu, "Shihuo zhi" 食货志 in Hanshu, juan 2a, p. 1124-1125.
according to the "Ping Zhun Shu" 驢准书 in Shiji, Li also emphasized the idea of achieving self-affluence before helping others. ⁴⁹ This idea also resembled that of Guan Zhong in his chapter on "Sheperding the People" (Mumin 牧民), which taught that "only when the granaries are full, the people will know what rites and propriety are; when the people are properly clothed and fed, they will recognize honour and shame." ⁵⁰ Li Kui not only promoted political and economical development, but he also made Wei into one of the most powerful states in the early Warring States period. ⁵¹

(ii) Shang Yang 商鞅 (circa 390 B.C - 338 B.C)

Shang Yang was an important statesman and thinker in the mid Warring States period, and he was a representative figure for Legalists who laid great emphasis on the law. He was a citizen of Wei 卫, and a descendant of the feudal lords of Wei. His family name was Gongsun 公孙 and his given name was Yang 鞅, therefore he was known as Wei Yang 卫鞅 or Gongsun Yang

⁴⁹ "Ping Zhun Shu" in Shiji, juan 30, p.1442.


⁵¹ Ban Gu, "Shihuo zhi" in Hanshu, p. 1125.

163
Later he was granted the territory of Shang by the state of Qin, therefore was also known as Shang Yang. According to his biography in Shiji (Shangjun Liezhuan 商君列传), Shang Yang had studied the "Code of Penalty" and was influenced by Li Kui and his Book of Law.

At first Shang Yang served as an official in Wei, later in Qin, where he was heavily relied upon by Duke Xiao 季 of Qin. He worked for Duke Xiao for twenty more years as chief minister. In the sixth year of Duke Xiao’s reign (356 B.C.), he assumed the position of Zuoshu Zhang 左庶长 (a portfolio in charge of military administration). He disputed with the aristocratic officials Gan Long 甘龙 and Du Zhi 杜挚 over the controversy of law reforms. When he first proposed these reforms, he had expected arguments from some quarters. He knew that it would be inevitable for him to confront people who had doubts and were uncertain.

52 "Shangjun Liezhuan" 商君列传 in Shiji, juan 68, p. 2227.
53 "Qin Benji" 秦本纪 in Shiji, juan 5, p. 204.
54 "Shangjun Liezhuan" in Shiji, juan 68, p. 2227.
55 Fang Xuanling, "Xingfazhi" in Jinshu, juan 30, p. 922.
56 "Shangjun Liezhuan" in Shiji, juan 68, pp. 2227-2228.
57 Ibid., p. 2229. See also "Qin Benji" Shiji, juan 5, p. 203.
about the reforms. Therefore he put forward the following arguments in an attempt to convince others regarding the reforms:

Hesitation in action would cause obscurity, hesitation in affairs would bring no achievement. Those who have high ideals certainly would be criticized by the world; those with wisdom and insight would be able to fly above the world. The foolish ones would not be able to see the truth, the wise could foresee the cause and the beginning. The common people can only share the fruits of labour but not to bear with the problem at the beginning. The men of virtue would not conform to the ways of the common folks, the men of great accomplishment would not seek counsel from the ordinary public. Therefore the sagacious could strengthen the nation by not conforming to the past, and could benefit the people by not observing the rites. 58

Meanwhile, in his disputes with Gan Long and Du Zhi, he put forward the idea of "not following the past". Consequently, teachings such as "Do not follow the tradition" and "Do not conform to ancient rites and customs" became the salient feature of Legalist thought. 59

58 "Shangjun Liezhu'an" in Shi ji, juan 68, p.2229.
59 Ibid.
In the third year of Duke Xiao's reign, i.e. 359 B.C., Shang Yang implemented his first reforms. 60 Nine years later, i.e. 350 B.C., he implemented his second series of reforms. 61 On the whole, the reforms carried out during the two occasions incorporated the following features: (1) Abolition of the hereditary system of slave-ownership. Dukeships were inferred for military merits. (2) Awarding successful farmers during wartime. Those in possession of military merits received first class dukedom; those diligent in farming and weaving; and were able to produce bumper crops and cloth would be released from all hard labour. (3) Families with two adult males were to be separated into two units, otherwise the imposition of tax would be doubled. (4) Organizing scattered settlers into homesteads, grouping five families into a unit of bao 保, and integrating every ten bao together to form larger unity. (5) Encouraging reports of adultery. Those who purposely concealed the act would be executed, those making the report would receive equal rewards as those who beheaded the enemies. (6) Abolition of special privileges.

60 According to "Qin Benji", "He implemented the reforms and revised the penal law, encouraged farming in the state and awarded warriors who put up a heroic fight but were killed in action, in accordance with the law of reward and punishment". See Shi ji, juan 5, p. 203.

61 Ibid.

166
Aristocrats who received no military merits would not be granted any dukedom. (7) Opening up land for cultivation, abolishing the "well-field" system of farming (Jing Tian Zhidu 井田制度), allowing selling and buying of land, withdrawing the economic privileges of the feudal land lords who practised slavery, and imposing rental and tax on all. (8) Standardization of weights and measures. (9) Disbanding traditional communal organizations based on class, consolidating smaller town and villages into districts, and merging the territories throughout the land into forty-one districts (xian 县) to be ruled uniformly by officials sent from the central government. (10) Prohibiting the families with a member of adult males to live under one household. This was to separate the original family into small families for the purpose of developing agriculture, increasing levy taxes, and widening the

---

62 The "well-field" system of farming is said to be in operation during the early Zhou period. It was called "well-field" because the land was divided into square shape like Chinese character of well. For an account of this system, see Fung Yu-lan, p.75 and Zhongguo Lishi Cidian 中国历史辞典, edited by Zhang Zuoyao 张作耀, Beijing: Wenhua Yishu Chubanshe 文化艺术出版社, 1991, p. 193.

63 "Qin Benji" 秦本纪 in Shi ji, juan 5, p.203. But "Liu Guo Nianbiao" 六国年表 stated that there were 31 districts." "Liuguo Nianbiao" in Shi ji, juan 15, p.723.
sources for military recruitment. 64

Shang Yang carried out the reforms as he had aspiration to enrich the state and strengthen the military, and this was similar to what Guan Zhong had in mind. Both of them attached great importance to agriculture. They organized the people by grouping them together, and delimited the land into territorial units to be administered by the officials. Since Guan Zhong came before Shang Yang, it is only natural that Guan Zhong would have to a certain extent influenced the latter either directly or indirectly.

(iii) Shen Buhai (circa 385B.C. - 337B.C.)

The "Biographies of Laozi and Han Fei" (Laozi Han fei Liezhuan 老子韩非列传) in Shiji contain the background and teachings of Shen Buhai. They claim that Shen Buhai was an inhabitant of the Jing 京 district, and was originally a humble official of Zheng 郑. After having learnt the penal codes and techniques of the Legalist school, he sought employment from Duke Zhao 昭 of Han 韩, who later made him his chief minister. As

64 The above explanation is seen in Huang Zhongye 黄中业, Zhanguo Bianfa Yundong 战国变法运动, Jilin: Jilin Daxue Chubanshe 吉林大学出版社, 1990, pp. 77-89.
chief minister, he reformed and reorganized the political administration internally, and maintained good diplomatic relations with the other states and dukes externally. Within fifteen years, Han became strong and all other states feared to invade her. Shen Buhai's theories essentially derived from the Daoist teachings of "Huang Lao" (Huang Di and Lao Zi), but he also stressed on the penal code. He wrote a two-chapter book named Shenzi 申子. Sima Qian in Shiji notes that Shen Buhai not only left behind a legacy of written books but he also practised what he preached.

When he was chief minister of Han, Shen Buhai applied the tactics of the Legalists in governing the state. By using Legalist theories he was able to bring about efficient administration within the state, so much so that the dukes from other states dared not even invade or attack Han. Shen Buhai was indeed the champion for the Legalist tactics of government. The chapter on "Legalized Law" ("Dingfa Pian" 定法篇) in Han Feizi, indicates that "Shen Buhai advocated the use of

---

65 "Lao Zi Han Fei Liezhuan" in Shiji, juan 63, p. 2146.

66 Ibid., p. 2155 - 2156.

67 "Han Shijia" in Shiji, juan 45, p. 1869.
tactics". The fact that Shen Buhai emphasized the use of "tactics" or statesmanship was due to the factor of his historical background.

Han was the smallest of the seven states during the last years of the Warring States era. It was located near the states of Qin and Wei 魏, and was therefore in a more endangered position than Shang Yang's state. The Warring States period was characterized by greed for power and wealth. The dukes and their officials were engaged in flattery and corruption, and could not rule effectively. So, without the use of "tactics", the rulers would not be able to find men of talents to serve in their states. As chief minister in Han, Shen Buhai reorganized the political administration and decreed clear and strict rules of behavior. He also liaised with other dukes so that the states lived in peace and harmony with one another.

The so called "reorganizing of internal political administration" means the measures implemented in internal affairs. The "Annals on Penal Code" (*Xingfa

68 "Dingfa Pian" in Han Feizi, juan 17, p. 5B.
70 Ji Zhe, op.cit., p. 380.
Zhi" (刑法志) in Han Shu has made a remark about Shang Yang and Shen Buhai who both emphasized the importance of legal punishment: "In the period of the Warring States, the state of Han appointed Shen Zi while the state of Qin appointed Shang Yang (to serve as premiers); both applied severe punishment and increased its intensity by way of death penalty, amputation, boiling, caning, poking etc."  

Shen Bu-hai used law to govern the state. The Yiwen Leiju 艺文类聚 cites Shen Buhai's words, "The rulership of Yao was to make clear the decree. The sages of old appointed those who administered according to law rather then those who were considered wise. The rulership of Huang Di over the land was by the way of unchanging law to ensure that the people would live in peace and harmony."  

It can thus be seen that Shen Buhai's form of government included the following considerations. Firstly, the sage should rule the state by objective standards, not by subjective wisdom. Secondly, "unchanging law" means that law was to be consistent in nature so that the people could follow

---

71 Ban Gu, "Xingfa Zhi" in Hanshu, juan 23, p. 1096.

fixed standards of behavior and would not be confused.\textsuperscript{73} These two characteristics were also the specific traits in the "Law" of Han Fei's teaching. Therefore, although Shen Bu-hai advocated "tactics" or statesmanship, his idea of government by law was actually closely linked to that of Han Fei, and did have certain influence on Han.

(iv) **Shen Dao (circa 395B.C - 315B.C)**

Shen Dao was a citizen of Zhao 趙 who lived in the Warring States period. He taught at the Royal School of Qi for many years. The "Yiwenzhi" in Han Shu classified Shen Dao as a Legalist, and recorded the contents of forty-two chapters of Shenzi.\textsuperscript{74} Shiji described him as "having learned the teaching of Huang Lao's tactics of Dao."\textsuperscript{75} His thoughts comprised both Daoist and Legalist elements. Thus his Legalist ideas were in actual fact the integration of both these schools of thought.\textsuperscript{76}


\textsuperscript{74} Ban Gu, "Yiwenzhi" in *Hanshu*, p. 1735.

\textsuperscript{75} "Mengzi Xunqing Liezhuang" 孟子荀卿列传 in *Shiji, juan* 74, p. 2347.

\textsuperscript{76} Chen Qitian 陈启天, *Zhongguo Fajia Gailun* 中国法家概论, Taiwan: Zhonghua Shuju, 1970, p. 61.
Shen Dao's concept of "power" (shì 勢) had a profound effect on Han Fei. He also advocated government by law because "a great ruler must be able to resolve difficulties by law enforcement." 77 However, he believed that law could only be enacted with "power" at hand. He looked upon the power of a ruler as the primary condition for the decree and enforcement of law. He gave the following illustration: "A dragon can soar up to the sky mainly due to the force energized by cloud and fog. However, when the cloud disappears and fog disperses, the dragon will be reduced to the status of a worm or an ant on earth, helpless and powerless." In the same way, without power and authority, a sagacious ruler like King Yao 禹, will be unable to govern even three commoners; yet, if he had the power, an ineffectual ruler like Jie 舜, will have no difficulty in causing disturbance to the whole world. 78

Shen Dao's theory of rulership with power was a very important idea in the development of Chinese political thinking. Power was authority; only when a leader possessed authority could he be able to govern

---

77 Shen dao 慎到, "Junren Pian" 君人篇 in Shenzi 慎子, juan 1, Sibu Beiyao, Zibu, Shoushang Congshu 守山阁丛书, Taiwan: Zhonghua Shuju proofread and published according to Han Wei Congshuben 汉魏丛书本, p. 9b.

78 "Weide Pian" 威德篇, ibid., p.2a.
his state. Shen Dao believed that political leaders existed to serve the people. Therefore he said, "The ruler is installed for the sake of the world, but the world is not made for the ruler. A ruler is established for the state, not the state for the ruler." 79

The concept of "power" was also an important link in Guan Zhong's theory of administering a state. He stressed that "when the sagacious ruler is at the top, and have the power to rule, then the ministers will not dare to do wrong ...." 80 His objective was simply to put the state in order and let the people live peacefully. This was exactly the strategy of ruling a state which should be emphasized by the Legalists during the Warring States period. According to a scholar, Uno Seieji 宇野精一, the thought of Shen Dao was similar to that of Guan Zhong, as "power" was the central idea of Shen Dao's thought. 81


80 "Mingfajie Pian" 明法解篇 in *GZJH*, p. 973.

81 Due to the many political and social changes that took place then, the observance of rites and ethical code of conduct became a nonentity. Taoism proposes to adopt the concept of not doing anything that goes against nature as a remedial measure. The Legalists strive to make use of state power, and turn it into realistic laws. See Uno Seieji 宇野精一, *Zhongguo Sixiang Zhi Yanjiu* 中国思想之研究 "Mojia, fajia, luoji sixiang" 墨家, 法家, 逻辑思想, Taipei: Youshi Wenhua Shiye Gongsi 幼狮文化事业公司, 1977, pp. 120-122.
(v) Han Fei (280 B.C. - 233 B.C.)

Han Fei was a descendant of the feudal nobility of Han. He was fond of doctrines on penal code and Legalist tactics. He stammered but was good at writings. He had advised the Duke of Han to strengthen the state through reforms but his suggestion was rejected by the former. So instead he wrote down his ideas in numerous essays and books. 82

Han Fei was a theorist on the rule by law. He epitomized the historical experiences of reforms during the Warring States, and by integrating the three doctrines of law, tactics and power, he was able to synthesize these to form the nucleus of his Legalist thought. 83 In his article on the "Five Vermin" ("Wudu Pian" 五蠹篇), he expounded the essential differences among the four eras, namely the ancient times, the medieval times, the recent times and the present time. He emphasized the point that one must change according to times. 84 Accordingly, the law advocated by Han Fei had the following characteristics:

82 "Laozi Han Fei Liezhuan" in Shi ji, juan 63, p.2146 - 2147.

83 Huang Zhongyc 黄中业, op.cit, p. 304.

84 "Wudu Pian" 五蠹篇 in Han Feizi, juan 19, p. 1a and p.2b.
(a) It should be documented in writing

The law as advocated by Han Fei was to be written clearly and laid down in details. He said, "The so called law is the decree instituted by the government. The system of penal code should be deeply rooted in the minds of the public. The common folks must know that those who observe the law will be rewarded and those who go against it will be punished." 85 Law that was instituted by the government should be "compiled in the documentary records", that is, they should be written down, word by word. 86

(b) It should be widely proclaimed

This written law was not mysteriously inscrutable. Not only should the law be clearly written and documented, but also widely proclaimed so that every man would be aware of its existence. The effect was that all understood and obeyed it. 87 Besides, the enacting officer or any officer would carry out his duty according to the precise law so that he could reward the law-abiding person and punish the offender. Eventually

85 Ibid., "Dingfa Pian" in, juan 17, p. 5b.
86 Ibid., "Nansan Pian" 难三篇, juan 16, p. 7a.
87 Ibid.
the penal code of law would gain access and get rooted deep in the minds of the public. 88

(c) It should be just and impartial

Under the law, no one had the privilege of being free from the regulation of law. Han Fei said, "Law does not favour those in high positions and status, just as a plumb line will not yield to a twisted object. Once sanctioned by law, a wise man will not be able to defend or justify himself with eloquent speech, and a brave person will not dare to defy with force. In punishing those who have done wrong, even senior ministers will not be pardoned; and in awarding good deeds, even the ordinary folks will not be omitted." 89

(d) It should be the only standard for right and wrong

Han Fei stressed that law was the only guideline in determining right and wrong in the administration of government affairs. He said, "Apart from order or command, there is no other word more honorable than it; apart from law there is no other guideline more accurate

88 Ibid., "Dingfa Pian", p. 5b.

89 Ibid., "Youdu Pian" 有度篇, juan 6, p. 5b.
than it; therefore, whatever word or action that goes against law and orders must be prohibited.  

The above are the major characteristics of the law advocated by Han Fei. It was formulated for the purpose of fulfilling the needs of the time, namely, the final years of the Warring States period when society was experiencing a great upheaval and it was a time of transition between the new and old order, under which the people were constantly confused over various concepts. The great change in social structure also affected the relationship between rulers and ministers. During the Warring States era, rulers and ministers were not necessarily related by blood. Hence the ruler-ministers connection was often based upon a relationship of mutual interest. However, due to the power struggles among the various states of the time, rulers had to appoint the capable to take up the important posts. As a result, the relation between the two parties was actually based upon self-interests. In order to attain power and authority, the ministers often resorted to political maneuvering, while the rulers constantly had to be cautious of treachery from his

---


178
subordinates. This resulted in the development of "tactics" to discover the treacherous.

Han Fei had written several documents on "statesmanship" or "politics". His proposition was that for a ruler to maintain his political authority he must observe these three principles, namely, no revelation of inner intent, be decisive in making decision, and be autocratic. His definition of "tactics" was: Firstly, adopting the method of examining the ministers through the tests of authenticity and responsibility; 91 and secondly, to secretly adopt certain measures to test all things from all possible aspects in order to control and to manipulate his ministers. 92

Therefore the main function of "tactics" or statesmanship was to protect the status and authority of the rulers. It was said that "If the ruler does not make use of tactics, his authority will decline, and his ministers will act on their own authority." 93 The ruler must practise the art of statesmanship and continually

91 Ibid., "Dingfa Pian", juan 17, p. 5b.
92 Ibid., "Nansan Pian", juan 16, p. 7a.
93 Ibid., "Waichushuoyou Pian" 外储说右篇, juan 14, p. 8b.
check on his ministers and others who surrounded him, so that he would be able to consolidate his own position.

A ruler in his ruling position should be in control of his authority and should be appropriately situated, only then would he have the power to issue orders or bring about prohibitions. Han Fei was aware of the importance of power and authority, his theory on shi or power was derived from Shen Dao. To put it briefly, shi was simply the authority of a ruler who, situated highly on his throne, had the power to reward or punish his subjects, and the power over life and death.

The scope for Han Fei's theory of power covered both "natural power" and "man-made power". The former referred to the power and position which had been inherited from the ancestors, or status attained through special circumstances. The latter referred to the power created through the enactment of laws by the rulers, who were able to appoint capable men to implement the laws – it was thus power formed through the combination of law and the lofty position of the rulers.

---


95 Ibid., p. 2b - 3a.

180
According to Han Fei, "power" consisted of the following qualities:

(a) The ruling power engendered from a high position

Han Fei gave an example: "When Jie was the ruler he could subjugate the whole world, not because he was a sage but solely because he had power. On the other hand when Yao was a commoner, he could not even handle three families, not because he was unworthy, but solely because of his humble position." 96 It is clear that authoritative power stemmed not from personal attributes and moral goodness but was engendered from the ruler's lofty position, which means his "natural power" to rule.

(b) The all-conquering power

Han Fei interpreted that "in strength people would be drawn (to those in power), in weakness the reverse." 97 He understood that "high morality did not ensure the end of chaos." 98 Therefore an intelligent ruler used only

---

96 Ibid., "Gongming Pian" 功名篇, juan 8, p. 13a.

97 Ibid., "Xianxue Pian" 显学篇, juan 19, p. 11b.

98 Ibid.
power and authority to solve a crisis.

(c) Power as a symbol of authority and influence

Authority here also means the handle of government which had power over life and death; \(^9\) while "power" here refers to the resources to triumph over others.\(^1\) A ruler had the resources to triumph over his subjects, because he could control his people's life and death. In this way the ruler handled his authority to exercise his power. \(^2\) Thus, the basis of power was a ruler who, from his lofty position, handled his authority by meting out reward and to punishments to his subjects, and this was how his autocratic power in government was finally achieved. \(^3\)

---

\(^9\) Ibid., "Bajing Pian" 八经篇, juan 18, p. 9b.

\(^1\) Ibid.

\(^2\) Ibid., p. 9a.

\(^3\) Wang Bangxiong 王邦雄, Han Fei zi De Zhexue 韩非子的哲学, Taipei: Dongda Tushugufen Youxiangongsi 东大图书股份有限公司, 1988, p. 175.
5. The Influence of Guan Zhong on the Political Thinking of China

It can be said that to a large extent Guan Zhong had enlightened the three schools of Legalist thought, namely "Law", "Power", and "Tactics", as well as their synthesizer, Han Fei. Nevertheless, his greatest contribution to Chinese political thought was his establishment of hegemony, and leading the dukes to "honour the King and expel the barbarians" so as to bring about unification by ending the chaotic political situation in China. Before the unification of the Chinese empire under Qin, the trends and undercurrents towards unification were already taking place. During the Spring and Autumn period, because the the rulers were weak and ineffectual, the political arena centred around the powerful dukes. This created among the dukes a political phenomenon in which the strong would oppress the weak, the great would dominate the puny, and the aggressive would overrule the meek. There was a relentless series of events in conquerings, assaults, invasions and oppressions. As a consequence, when Guan Zhong became the chief minister of Qi, his first and foremost pledge was to establish unification throughout China. He proposed "enriching the state (of Qi) and
strengthening its army", making Qi into a state surpassing any other in internal administration, economy and military affairs. He championed the slogan of "honouring the King and expelling the barbarians" as a strategy to successfully ally the dukes into a united team to serve the King of Zhou. He thus succeeded in making Qi a hegemon.

In fact, the purpose for Guan Zhong using the slogan to "honour the King and expel the barbarian" was to relieve the political tension and reduce interstate conflict for the time being. Nevertheless, his idea of uniting the dukes together to serve under one ruler and his methods of administration had continued to inspire the Legalists after him to achieve the ideal of unification and adopt his methods of attaining unification. Thus Guan Zhong had undoubtedly played a very important role by enlightening and inspiring the later Legalists.

Above all, his influence upon Shang Yang had a very great impact and significance on the political thinking of China as a whole. When the belligerent states of the Warring States era were reduced to only seven, namely, Qi, Chu, Yan, Han, Zhao, Wei and Qin, Qin perceived that
the inevitable historical trend was towards unification. She thus appointed Shang Yang to establish a legal system, to step up farming and weaving, and to build up the defence system in preparation for war. The ultimate aim was to unify the whole land. Within ten years, Qin defeated the others six states of Qi, Chu, Yan, Han, Zhao and Wei, and established the first unified empire, unprecedented in the history of China. 103

However, the political phenomenon of the unified Chinese empire might not necessarily be the personal intention of Guan Zhong. As mentioned earlier, the development of Legalism after Guan Zhong was not directly derivable from him, but rather the result of meeting the requirements of the time, together with the personal ideas and concepts of the Legalists themselves as well as an integration of diversified thoughts to meet the special phenomena of the times. According to the analysis of W.T.de Bary in his work, "Chinese Despotism and the Confucian Ideal" (Zhongguo de Zhuanzhi yu Rujia Lixiang” 中国的专制与儒家理想) it is stated:

The establishment of Qin-Han despotism indicated the victory of Legalism ... Due to

the effort made by the Legalistic scholars, Qin was able to conquer the rest of the Warring States and unified China. She emphasized on the unification of the legal system, and the severity of punishment to ensure the implementation of law. What they meant by law was actually the personal will of the emperor; the basic aim was to unite together the nation's administration and to mobilize the will and action of the people into controlling the whole nation's resources and wealth. 104

Apparently, the political system established during the Qin-Han period and the various policies carried out by Guan Zhong in Qi, greatly differed in terms of purpose and significance. Moreover, since Guan Zhong advocated the idea of "honouring the King and expelling the barbarians" to unify the feudal states along the Central Plain, it is quite clear that basically his concept regarding the authority of a ruler differed greatly from that of the other Legalists after him, especially those in the post-Qin-Han period. In the mind of Guan Zhong, a wise and humanitarian ruler lived to take care of the well-being of his people and not for his personal interest. At the same time, a benevolent ruler should play his role in educating his people, and to enhance culture and civilization in order that his people would be sufficiently clothed and fed, having

their own land to cultivate, and also to stake out the rites and rituals for the society to observe. Apart from that, he had also to strengthen the military to safeguard the state. However, for the later times, the power of the emperor was regarded as a kind of possession or privilege, no longer as a responsibility or obligation, as claimed by Guan Zhong. Through the implementation of the centralized system of prefectural government, the emperor could fully exploit the people for the fulfilment of his own desires and interest. 105

Since the Legalists after Guan Zhong such as Zi Chan, Li Kui, Shen Buhai, Han Fei and Shang Yang, all shared much similar thinking with Guan Zhong, we can deduce that in practice, Guan Zhong's ideas did serve as the guideline for the policies implemented during the Warring States period. The Legalists more or less had learned from Guan Zhong's reformation. The political thought behind their policies was the central theme of Guan Zhong's idea of "enriching the state and strengthening the army".

In his work on the history of the Spring and Autumn period, Tong Shuye gave a high appraisal for Guan

105 Ibid., p. 225.
Zhong's policies. He said: "Looking at the methods of government by Guan Zhong on the whole,... these were really the strategies of a great statesman. He understood that the important point in government was firstly to divide internal administration into different departments and to unify state power; he also knew that the essential point in enriching a state was to sort out the taxes and develop agriculture and commerce, and let the state control the economy. What is most admirable was that he carried out military reforms through internal administration by making every citizen into a soldier... The various systems set up by him can still serve as models for our present day."  

---