

"The Mandate of Heaven" The Shu King Part V.—The Books Of Chau Book I.—The Great Declaration (first millennium BCE), p.81-85

Note that the text below uses Chau instead of the Zhou dynasty.

In the spring of the thirteenth year there was a great assembly at Mang-Ching. The king said, "Ah! ye hereditary rulers of my friendly States, and all ye my officers, managers of my affairs, harken clearly to my declaration." Heaven and earth is the parent of all creatures; and of all creatures man is the most highly endowed. The sincerely intelligent among men becomes the great sovereign; and the great sovereign is the parent of the people. But now, Shau, the king of Shang, does not reverence Heaven above, and inflicts calamities on the people below. Abandoned to drunkenness, and reckless in lust, he has dared to exercise cruel oppression. He has extended the punishment of offenders to all their relatives. He has put men into offices on the hereditary principle. He has made it his pursuit to have palaces, towers, pavilions, embankments, ponds, and all other extravagances, to the most painful injury of you, the myriads of the people. He has burned and roasted the loyal and good. He has ripped up pregnant women. Great Heaven was moved with indignation, and charged my deceased father Wan to display its terrors; but he died before the work was completed." On this account, I, Fa, the little child, have by means of you, the hereditary rulers of my friendly States, contemplated the government of Shang; but Shau has no repentant heart. He sits squatting on his heels, not serving God nor the spirits of heaven and earth, neglecting also the temple of his ancestors, and not sacrificing in it. The victims and the vessels of millet all become the prey of wicked robbers, and still he says, 'The people are mine; the heavenly appointment is mine,' never trying to correct his contemptuous mind." Heaven, for the help of the inferior people, made for them rulers, and made for them instructors, that they might be able to be aiding to God, and secure the tranquility of the four quarters of the kingdom. In regard to who are criminals and who are not, how dare I give any allowance to my own wishes?" 'Where the strength is the same, measure the virtue of the parties; where the virtue is the same, measure their righteousness.' Shau has hundreds of thousands and myriads of officers, but they have hundreds of thousands and myriads of minds; I have but three thousand officers, but they have one mind. The iniquity of Shang is full. Heaven gives command to destroy it. If I did not obey Heaven, my iniquity would be as great." I, the little child, early and late am filled with apprehensions. I have received the command of my deceased father Wan; I have offered special sacrifice to God; I have performed the due services to the great earth; and I lead the multitude of you to execute the punishment appointed by Heaven. Heaven compassionates the people. What the people desire, Heaven will be found to give effect to. Do you aid me, the One man, to cleanse for ever all within the four seas. Now is the time! — It should not be lost."

Section 2

On the day Wu-wu, the king halted on the north of the Ho. When all the princes with their hosts were assembled, the king reviewed the hosts, and made the following

declaration: "Oh, ye multitudes of the west, harken all to my words." I have heard that the good man, doing good, finds the day insufficient; and that the evil man, doing evil, also finds the day insufficient. Now Shau, the king of Shang, with strength pursues his lawless way. He has driven away the timeworn sires, and cultivates intimacies with wicked men. Dissolute, intemperate, reckless, oppressive, his ministers have become assimilated to him; and they form combinations and contract animosities, and depend on their power to exterminate one another. The innocent cry to Heaven. The odor of such a state is felt on high." Heaven loves the people, and the sovereign should reverently carry out this mind of Heaven. Chieh, the sovereign of Hsia, would not follow the example of Heaven, but sent forth his poisonous injuries through the States of the kingdom; Heaven therefore gave its aid to Thang the Successful, and charged him to make an end of the appointment of Hsia. But the crimes of Shau exceed those of Chieh. He has degraded from office the greatly good man; he has behaved with cruel tyranny to his repressor and helper. He says that with him is the appointment of Heaven; he says that a reverent care of his conduct is not worth observing; he says that sacrifice is of no use; he says that tyranny is no harm. The beacon for him to look to was not far off — it "was that king of Hsia. It would seem that Heaven is going by means of me to rule the people. My dreams coincide with my divinations; the auspicious omen is double. My attack on Shang must succeed." Shau has hundreds of thousands and millions of ordinary men, divided in heart and divided in practise; I have of ministers, able to govern, ten men, one in heart and one in practise. Though he has his nearest relatives with him, they are not like my virtuous men. Heaven sees as my people see; Heaven hears as my people hear. The people are blaming me, the One man, for my delay; I must now go forward. My military prowess is displayed, and I enter his territories to take the wicked tyrant. My punishment of evil will be great, and more glorious than that executed by Thaig. Rouse ye, my heroes! Do not think that he is not to be feared; better think that he can not be withstood. His people stand in trembling awe of him, as if the horns were falling from their heads. Oh! unite your energies, unite your hearts; so shall you forthwith surely accomplish the work, to last for all ages!"

Section 3

The time was on the morrow, when the king went round his six hosts in state, and made a clear declaration to all his officers. He said, "Oh, my valiant men of the west, from Heaven are the illustrious courses of duty, of which the several requirements are quite plain. And now Shau, the king of Shang, treats with contemptuous slight the five regular virtues, and abandons himself to wild idleness and irreverence. He has cut himself off from Heaven, and brought enmity between himself and the people." He cut through the leg-bones of those who were wading in the morning. He cut out the heart of the worthy man.

By the use of his power, killing and murdering, he has poisoned and sickened all within the four seas. His honors and confidence are given to the villainous and bad. He has driven from him his instructors and guardians. He has thrown to the winds the statutes and penal laws. He has imprisoned and enslaved the upright officer. He neglects the sacrifices to heaven and earth. He has discontinued the offerings in the ancestral temple. He makes contrivances of wonderful device and extraordinary cunning to please his wife. God will no longer indulge him, but with a curse is sending down on him this ruin. Do ye

with untiring zeal support me, the One man, reverently to execute the punishment appointed by Heaven. The ancients have said, 'He who soothes us is our sovereign; he who oppresses us is our enemy.' This solitary fellow Shau, having exercised great tyranny, is your perpetual enemy. It is said again, 'In planting a man's virtue, strive to make it great; in putting away a man's wickedness, strive to do it from the roots.' Here I, the little child, by the powerful help of you, all my officers, will utterly exterminate your enemy. Do you, all my officers, march forward with determined boldness to sustain your prince. Where there is much merit, there shall be large reward; where you do not so advance, there shall be conspicuous disgrace." Oh! The virtue of my deceased father Wan was like the shining of the sun and moon. His brightness extended over the four quarters of the land, and shone signally in the western region. Hence it is that our Chau has received the allegiance of many States. If I subdue Shau, it will not be from my prowess, but from the faultless virtue of my deceased father Wan. If Shau subdue me, it will not be from any fault of my deceased father Wan, but because I, the little child, am not good."

The Sacred Books and Early Literature of the East Volume Xi Ancient China Part V.—
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