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The Revision of the *Shang shu* in the Early
Chan kuo Period — With Special Reference
to the Fragments quoted in *Mêng tzu* —

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The *Shang shu* 尚書 or the *Shu ching* 書經 is one of the oldest and the most important historical books in China, but the conditions of its compilation and revision have so far been little known. This is due to the fact that, though the oldest part of the *Shang shu* was made in the eleventh century B. C., the book continued to be revised and added to until the third century B. C., and most of the text has now been lost.

The author adopts the following method for the basic study:

(1) to investigate the fragments of the *Shang shu* quoted in various classics during the following four periods: the Ch'un ch'iu 春秋 period (fifth century B. C.) and the beginning, middle and end of the Chan kuo 戰國 period (fourth, and the earlier and latter parts of the third century B. C., respectively).

(2) to distinguish the chapters added during the said periods from the original text and to study the reason for its revision.

(3) to exclude the added chapters and to re-establish the original form of the *Shang shu* as it existed in the Western Chou dynasty (earlier than the middle of the eighth century B. C.).

In this article the author examines the 25 fragments of the *Shang shu* quoted in *Mêng tzu* (孟子) in order to know the condition of the text in the early Chan kuo period. He tries to restore those parts of the original text which are not now extant and studies the process of its compilation.

The result of his study is that the revision had a close relation to the concept of history in each period. At the end of the Ch'un ch'iu period, in which Confucius was alive, people endeavoured to restore the political system of the early Chou, because they thought the government of that period to be the ideal one. Thus the *Shang shu* at that time dealt mostly with the beginning of the Chou dynasty. But the contemporaries of *Mêng tzu*, having been disappointed in their hopes of restoring the Chou political system, became more interested in the broader field of the historical changes in the Yü 虞, Hsia 夏, Yin 殷 and Chou dynasties and they tried to find a new theory from amidst these vicissitudes. Thus their desire for a historical theory was the cause of the revision and enlargement of the *Shang shu*. This fact is closely connected with the thought of *i-hsing ko-ming* 易姓革命 and in later periods the text underwent changes on an even larger scale.