

Sźmǎ Tán 司馬談 and the Shř Jì

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Abstract. I here develop a suggestion made earlier in connection with SJ 63, to see what else may be attributable to Sźmǎ Tán, and to assess his role in the Shř Jì project.

Lǐ Sź in SJ 87

The effect of Chyēn's additions to SJ 63 is to make Lǐ Sź more villainous than the rest of the chapter implies. The Confucians disliked Chín, and especially Lǐ Sź, under whose policies their counsel had been ignored and their texts had been suppressed. The blackening of his character in SJ 63 is thus consistent with Chyēn's Confucian viewpoint. Further confirmation may be found in the dual versions of Lǐ Sź's memorial recommending the banning of Confucian texts.

The Memorial occurs in SJ 87 (5/2546, short version) and in SJ 6 (1/254f, long version). Apart from small details of style and grammar, the two differ chiefly in the presence of extra clauses in the long version. Here is the short version, from SJ 87:

Of old, the world was divided and chaotic, no one could unify it, and so there arose the various Lords [of the Warring States period]. Their sayings were based on [Jōu] antiquity, and did damage to the present; they elaborated their empty words to confuse the facts. People thought well of their private ideas, and therewith contravened what their superiors had firmly established.

Now, His Majesty possesses the entire world; he has distinguished white from black and fixed a single authority. But the private thinkers join in opposing the institutions of the Legalist doctrine; when they hear that an order has been given, each proceeds to discuss it in terms of their private ideas. In private, their minds disapprove; in public, they discuss it in the byways. What is opposed to the ruler they take as terms of discourse; what is strange and eccentric they hold in esteem; they lead on the masses to slander and sedition. If this sort of thing is not prohibited, then above, the ruler's power will decline. and below, factions and associations will come into being. It will be expedient to prohibit this.

Your servant requests that all who possess literary writings, the Shī and Shū, and the sayings of the Hundred Schools, shall dispose of them. If thirty days after the promulgation of this order they have not done so, they are to be branded and set to hard labor. What is not to be disposed of are works on medicine, pharmacology, divination by shell or stalk, farming and arboriculture. If anyone wants to study anything else, let them take the officials as teachers.

The businesslike tone of this matches the fines paid to be paid in arms and armor to the Chín army, known from the Shwèihǔdì documents. Punishments are intended to benefit the state. Here, the miscreants are to work on walls; that is, national defense.

The SJ 6 version is more elaborate in its denunciation of the evil and more draconic in its advice for eliminating it. Following a response to Chún'yw Ywè, who had advocated a Jōu-style decentralized state, Lǐ Sǐ makes his specific proposal:

Of old, the world was divided and chaotic; no one could unify it, and so there arose the various Lords [of the Warring States period]. Their sayings were based on [Jōu] antiquity, and did damage to the present; they elaborated their empty words to confuse the facts. People thought well of their private ideas, and therewith contravened what their superiors had firmly established.

Now, His Majesty possesses the entire world; he has distinguished white from black and fixed a single authority. But the private thinkers join in opposing the institutions of the Legalist doctrine; when they hear that an order has been given, each proceeds to discuss it in terms of their private ideas. In private, their minds disapprove; in public, they discuss it in the byways. What is opposed to the ruler they take as terms of discourse; what is strange and eccentric they hold in esteem; they lead on the masses to slander and sedition. If this sort of thing is not prohibited, then above, the ruler's power will decline. and below, factions and associations will come into being. It will be expedient to prohibit this.

Your servant requests that **the History Office shall burn whatever are not Chín records. Apart from the holdings of the official erudites**, all who possess literary writings, the Shī and Shū, and the sayings of the Hundred Schools, **shall turn them in to the magistrates to be burned. If any dare to openly discuss the Shī and Shū, they shall be publicly executed. Anyone using the old to oppose the new will be executed with their families. Officials who see, or know of, violators will be guilty of the same crime.** If thirty days after the promulgation of this order they have not burned them, they are to be branded and set to hard labor. What is not to be disposed of are works on medicine, pharmacology, divination by shell or stalk, farming and arboriculture. If anyone wants to study anything else, let them take the officials as teachers.

To set at hard labor someone who has already been executed is not medically practical, and the SJ 6 additional clauses are obviously interpolations. As with SJ 63, they make Lǐ Sǐ not merely a villain, but an ogre. They too are probably the work of Chyēn.

Secure Identifications of Tán and Chyēn

WSW (18 Apr 2005)

The firmest information about the SJ contributions of Tán and Chyēn is found in SJ 130 太史公自序, which like the two texts above treated was probably a Tán essay later extended by Chyēn. The new post of Tàishǐ 太史¹ was given to Szmǎ Tán in 0140 or shortly thereafter. Tan died, in that same post, in 0110. Chyēn became Tàishǐ at the end of his mourning period in 0108. He worked on the calendar which was adopted in 0104 (as a new era: Tàichū 太初 “Great Beginning”). The latest date mentioned by Chyēn is the final entry for 090 in the SJ 22 table; he may have died later that year.

¹The Tàishǐ 太史, best translated (with Chavannes) as “Grand Astrologer,” was responsible for omens, portents, and the calendar. The compilation of history was not in the job description. The post seems to have been created early in the reign of Wū-dì 武帝 (0140-087).

One indication of differences between Tán and Chyēn is the two endpoints mentioned in SJ 130. The end of the contents list in that chapter (3321:11) speaks of 0104 as the cutoff date for the entire Shǐ Jì. This could only be Chyēn's cutoff date. At the head of that list (3300:12) the SJ is said to end with “the unicorn,” a reference to the end of Confucius' work on the Spring and Autumn, *and* to the date 0122, when a new era was proclaimed to honor the capture of a one-horned white deer. This may be Tán's heading for the contents list, reflecting Tán's original plan. It follows that Chyēn, in continuing Tán's work, has extended it past its originally intended endpoint.

Direct Testimony. Chyēn, clearly the final author of SJ 130, at 3296:13 mentions, as from his father, a comment including the phrase 有能紹明世. In the TSG comment to SJ 27 天官書 (prefaced by 太史公曰 “the Grand Astrologer says”) at 1342:12 we have 及至五家三代，紹而明之 “and the Five Emperors and Three Dynasties handed it down and displayed it,” the “it” being the astrological interpretation of events.² This is not the sense given the phrase in SJ 130. Given that verbal link, the astrology chapter SJ 27 may be attributed to Tán. SJ 17 contains the line 臣遷謹記 “Your servant Chyēn has carefully recorded” (803:15). This tells us that (1) Chyēn wrote that line and (2) made the following table of feudal kings down to the Tàichū period, 0104, (3) in his official capacity, and (4) anticipating Wǔ-dì as his reader.

The Tán Taboo. Chyēn in SJ 130 refers to his father as Tán. Elsewhere, he avoids using tán 談 in any other sense. Commentators note that for tán in a source text, he usually substitutes tóng 同. No later contributor to SJ would have felt this need, so these avoidances are unambiguous Chyēn markers. They occur in SJ 43 (1796:3), 46 (1895:12f, avoiding the phrase 談天 “discuss Heaven”), 76 (2369:8), and 100 (2732:6). Apart from two occurrences in the addenda of Chǔ Shàu-sūn (SJ 126 3205:3 and 127 3221:8), instances of *unavoided* tán suggest Tán himself. They are SJ 39 (1682:1), 70 (2286:14), 74 (2348:4), 83 (2473:11 and 2479:11), 87 (25563:1), 117 (3064:13) 126 (2197:4, initial TSG), and 127 (3219:10).

Contacts like the long-lived general Lǐ Gwǎng 李廣, who was “once seen” by the author of SJ 109, could imply either Tán or Chyēn. But Wáng Gwó-wéi argued that the informants in SJ 86 刺客列傳 (The Assassins), 95 樊鄴滕灌列傳 (Fán Lì and Tíng Gwàn), and 97 酈生陸賈列傳 (Master Lì and Lù Jyǎ), died too early to have been plausible as informants for Chyēn. Gù Jyé-gāng added SJ 102 張釋之馮唐列傳 (Jāng Shì-jī and Fíng Táng) and with it SJ 43 趙世家, and 124 游俠列傳 (The Avengers). Gù took 0135 as Chyēn's birth year, but his argument for these chapters remains valid even if, with many others, we accept Wáng's date of 0145 for Chyēn's birth.³

Travels. Chyēn in SJ 130 mentions a long journey which he took at age 20, visiting historic sites and spending time at the Confucian centers in Chí and Lú. This trip is usually assigned to the years 0126-0125.⁴ Observations probably made at this time are referred to at several points in the SJ.

²Watson Ssu-ma 210 n62. The phrase in SJ 130 may originally have been identical to that in SJ 27; the HS 62 (2717:1) parallel is 有能紹而明之 (Takigawa, ad loc).

³See the careful chronology in Durrant **Cloudy** 149f.

⁴Jǐng Hù-shǐng **Nyén-pǔ** 32-42.

By Wáng's argument, the SJ 95 TSG statement "I once visited Fvng and Pèi 吾適豐沛" must be by Tán, even though (by SJ 130) Chyēn had also been in that area. SJ 130 does not record travels by Tán, but we must nevertheless assume some. Travel as such is thus not a firm Chyēn marker.

Among the remarks probably by Chyēn is that in SJ 75 TSG, implying trouble with the roughnecks of Sywē 薛; a similar hint is in SJ 130.

In SJ 130 Chyēn says that his father was too ill to attend the Imperial sacrifices of 0110. The author of SJ 28 封單書 (the chapter on those sacrifices) accompanied the Emperor on a subsequent tour of the north; this can only be Chyēn. Places on that tour are mentioned in SJ 1, 28, and 88, which would thus also seem to be by Chyēn. Chyēn's studies in Lǚ are referred to in the TSG to SJ 47 孔子世家: Confucius). Less distinctive are travels mentioned in SJ 29, 32, 44, 47, 75, 77, 78, 84, and 92.

Updates. Mention of events after Tán's death in 0110 ought to mark a chapter as Chyēn's. Updating by Chyēn or later SJ contributors can blur this criterion. Thus, the reference at the end of SJ 104 田叔列傳 to the role of Tyén Shú's son Tyén Rv́n 田仁 in the Heir Apparent's rebellion of 091 is seemingly validated by the TSG comment: "[Tyén Shú's] son Rv́n was a good friend of mine 與余善, so I have also discussed him 并論之." But the SJ 104 paragraphs which mention the rebellion *reintroduce* Tyén Rv́n, who had already figured in the anecdote preceding. The last paragraphs in that part of the chapter, and the last line in the TSG, look like additions by Chyēn.

Another Chyēn update is at the end of the first section of SJ 103 (the part dealing with Shí Fv́n 石奮, 2767:8-2768:11). It begins with an incident of 0122 (which had been Tán's cutoff date) and goes on to narrate the family's loss of the virtue for which the preceding text had most praised them: filial piety. The last specific date is 0103. This later-dated part seems to quote official documents, to which Chyēn's grandson Yáng Yǔn is less likely to have had access, so the best inference is that it is by Chyēn. It reverses the values of the preceding material, which is thus probably by Tán.

Structure. The SJ's Shì-jyā 世家 or Local Rulers section includes 30 chapters. The three sections preceding, the Bv́n-jì 實紀 or Basic Chronicles [of the universal rulers], the Byǎu 表 Tables and Shū 書 Treatises, together comprise 30 chapters. The total is 60 chapters, a calendrological number. This is probably an intended structure, but there are signs that it has suffered distortion. All Local Rulers chapters are accounts of the one or two lineages named in their titles, ending with a joint TSG comment. SJ 35a, on the fiefs of the early Jōu figures Gwǎn-shú and Tsàt-shú, describes them and follows with a TSG statement. Then comes SJ 35b, a description of the Tsáu lineage, with its own TSG. This looks like an originally separate chapter which was later pushed together with SJ 35. Both originals may be ascribed to Tán.

Hán Fēi Elsewhere in SJ

Other places where the Tán and Chyēn view of Hán Fēi may be distinguished are:

SJ 6 秦始皇世家. At one point Chín prepared to attack Hán, and “the King of Hán was concerned about it, and with Hán Fēi made a plan to weaken Chín” (230:7). This does not violate SJ 63 # 12 (Tán), which is probably based on HFZ 2. Later on, “Hán Fēi came as an envoy to Chín, but Chín, following a plan of Lǐ Sǐ, detained Fēi, and Fēi died in [the palace of] Yǔn-yáng” (232:3). The role of Lǐ Sǐ in Fēi’s death is not that of SJ 63 #13a (intrigue; Chyēn), but that of SJ 63 #12-13 and HFZ 2 (political opposition; Tán). SJ 6 in these details is thus consistent with the Tán part of SJ 63.

SJ 14 十二諸侯年表. The prefatory note refers to the writings of Sywǎndǐ, Mencius, and Hán Fēi as documentary. Perhaps likelier to be Tán than Chyēn.

SJ 15 六國年表. Under the date of 0233, in the Chín row of the table, we read “Hán sent Hán Fēi. We put Fēi to death, and the King of Hán asked to become our servant.” This does not conflict with the Tán part of SJ 63 or with SJ 6, above.

SJ 45 韓世家 ends with a statement equivalent to that found in SJ 15, and is likewise compatible with the Tán part of SJ 63. We may assign this too to Tán.

SJ 79 范雎蔡澤列傳. The TSG comment quotes as by “Hándǐ” a couplet from HFZ 49 “Five Maggots.” From SJ 63 (#8) we know that Tán admired this chapter.

SJ 87 李斯列傳. As noted, SJ 87 does not see Hán Fēi as Lǐ Sǐ’s fellow student. Further, in SJ 87 Lǐ Sǐ mentions Fēi to the Second Emperor as an earlier thinker like Shǔn Bù-hà. This does not go beyond the idea of Fēi expressed in Tán’s part of SJ 63. The two endings are also compatible. Tán in SJ 63 grieved that Fēi had not avoided the perils of office. Lǐ Sǐ is made to grieve in SJ 87 for his own end. As he is led to his execution, he says to his son, “If I now wanted to go out the east gate of Shàng-tsài with you, leading our yellow dog to hunt the elusive hare, how could I manage it?” Like Hán Fēi, Sǐ had lingered too long amid the dangers of governmental power.⁵ Also in favor of Tán’s authorship is that SJ 87 includes the word tán 談 (2564:12), whose use was filially improper for Chyēn,⁶ but not for Tán himself.⁷ The two versions of the Lǐ Sǐ memorial prohibiting Confucian writings have been discussed above; they assign the SJ 6 version to Chyēn, leaving Tán responsible for SJ 87 in its entirety.

SJ 108 韓長孺列傳. Hán Cháng-rú is said to have studied the works of Hándǐ. The *title* specifies Hán Cháng-rú, but the *chapter* speaks of Hán Ān-gwó 韓安國. This tiny anomaly is most easily explained if the outline (SJ 130; presumably Tán) specified Cháng-rú, but the writer (Chyēn) preferred Ān-gwó. The TSG summary supports this supposition by mentioning Chyēn’s colleague Hú Swèi 壺遂.

⁵We are reminded of the Dàuist maxim “when your work is done, don’t linger” (see DDJ 2 功成而弗居; compare DDJ 77 功成而弗處. This expresses Tán’s entire philosophy of life.

⁶The taboo was not on the father’s name (used by Chyēn in SJ 130), but on *all other* uses of the word tán 談. Chyēn changed all such occurrences to Túng 同 (SJ 43, 46, 76, 100).

⁷Bodde **Unifier** 111 regards the Tán passage in SJ 87 as an interpolation, because it contains inaccuracies inconceivable in a “careful historian.” The argument is circular.

SJ 124 游俠列傳 opens with a quote from HFZ 49, saying that the Confucians with their culture violate the law, while the avengers with their valor transgress the regulations. It implies that the Confucians are the greater transgressors, and that even within Confucian tradition there is countenance for “gentleman of independent action” 獨行君子. HFZ 49 was singled out by Tán in SJ 63 (#8) and the criticism of the Confucians there and in SJ 124 are unlikely for Chyēn. We may assign it to Tán.

SJ 130 太史公自序. “Hán Fēi was imprisoned in Chín, [hence the] Difficulty of Persuasion and the Lonely Frustration.” This is a different motivation for the HFZ 49 chapter than is given in SJ 63 #8 (Tán). SJ 130 contains Tán’s Six Schools essay, and perhaps other material deriving from Tán, but Chyēn is surely its final author. The idea that great writing arises from suffering (apart from the motif of imprisonment, which Chyēn also suffered) is likely to be one of Chyēn’s major themes.⁸ We have here both a departure from the SJ 63 view of Fēi and the likely final authorship of Chyēn.

The above survey includes all mentions of Hán Fēi in the SJ text. The pattern is that when an SJ mention is clearly compatible with SJ 63 or its HFZ source, there is often other evidence for Tán’s authorship. Wherever the Hán Fēi mention conflicts with the main narrative of SJ 63, and agrees with the interpolations in that narrative, there are other grounds for concluding that Chyēn is the author.

Some Shǐ Jì Doublets

Apart from SJ 6 and 87, discussed above, there are other places in SJ where conflicting treatment of a subject suggests the presence of two authors. I will notice a few such passages as a further extension of the SJ 63 investigation.

SJ 39 晉 and **43** 趙 tell the story of Jàu Dùn 趙盾, who presided over the murder of one Jìn ruler and the installation of another. Both depart from the Dzwǒ Jwàn prototype. SJ 39 limits itself to the facts of the transition. SJ 43 emphasizes the guilt of Jàu Dùn. From the precedent of Lǐ Sǐ, we might feel that the matter-of-fact SJ 39 account is by Tán, and that the SJ 43 focus on historical judgement suggests Chyēn. SJ 39 is supported as Tán’s by the presence of the word tán 談 (682, 2x).⁹ SJ 43 may be assigned to Chyēn because of the *avoidance* of tán 談 (1796:3; replaced by 同).¹⁰

⁸Chyēn suffered castration in 098 for defending general Lǐ Líng before the Emperor.

⁹Bodde **Unifier** 103 wonders why Szmǎ Chyēn should have added the personal name Tán for a man earlier than Jàu Dùn, which is not given in the probable source (Dzwǒ Jwàn sv 0573). The question applies equally to Tán, and thus does not decide between the two.

¹⁰The SJ 43 TSG says its author heard from Fýng Wáng-sūn 馮王孫 a certain tale of Jàu. This is the formal name of Fýng Swèi 馮遂, son of Fýng Táng 馮塘 who is included in SJ 102. SJ 102 speaks of friendship with Fýng Swèi (2761:2). Gù Jyé-gāng argued that Swèi was at least 60 in the first year of Wǔ-dì (0140), when Chyēn (in his view, born 0135) did not yet exist. The friendship implies Tán, who must thus be the author of SJ 102. This holds even if, with later scholars, we date Chyēn’s birth to 0145. Gù further argues that the SJ 43 author must also have been Tán. This does not follow. A young man in his teens, versed in the old script and probably helping with his father’s project, might well have “heard something from” an older man in his late sixties, who he quite properly calls by his formal name Wáng-sun. No friendship is implied, and there is no contradiction with the word-avoidance evidence for Chyēn in SJ 43.

SJ 67 仲尼弟子列傳 and **SJ 121** 儒林列傳 give incompatible accounts of the death of Confucius's disciple Dǔ-lù. SJ 67 says that Dǔ-lù predeceased Confucius. This is not from the Dìdǔ Jì 弟子籍, on which SJ 67 is based,¹¹ but is loosely derived from a story in DJ 12/15:5, in which Dǔ-lù dies defending his lord. The context is martial, and we have seen that Tán is comfortable with the martial ethos. SJ 67 contains a transmission genealogy for the Yì, down to Tán's teacher Yáng Hú 楊何, implying Tán's authorship, whereas SJ 121 has transmission genealogies for many Shī, Shū, and Chūn/Chyōu schools, things that Chyēn with his exposure to the Confucians of Chí and Lǔ is more likely to have known. Then SJ 67 is by Tán, and SJ 121 by Chyēn.

SJ 74 孟子荀卿 and **46** 田敬仲完 both contain an account of the Jì-syà 稷下 enterprise in Chí. Of them, that in SJ 74 is modest, and that in SJ 46 grandiose. The outline of SJ 74 in SJ 130 had promised a summary of Sywǎndzian and Mencian theories of the rise and fall of states. It is not provided in our SJ 74, much of which seems to derive from someone familiar with Chí thought and thinkers. SJ 74 is supported as Tán's work by the presence of the word tán 談 at 2348:11. SJ 46 seems to avoid 談 in the phrase 談天 at 1895:12. This is a Chyēn marker.

SJ 117 司馬相如. Szmǎ Syàng-rú's last work was a poem on the fēng 封 and shàn 禪 sacrifices, a matter of surpassing interest to Tán. His authorship of SJ 117 is supported by the unavoided word tán 談 at 3064:13.

Other Possible Attributions

WSWG Note 85 (10 Aug 95); WSW (3-4 Mar 2005)

SJ 47 孔子世家 and **SJ 63** 老子韓非列傳 both give Lǎudǔ's parting words to Confucius. SJ 47 is gentler (聰明深察而近於死者，好議人者也, 1905:10), and SJ 63 rougher (去子之驕氣與欲，態色與淫志，是皆無益於子之身, 2140:10), but both disapprove of Confucius's desire for office. SJ 63 (Lǎudǔ) is marked as Tán's by nonavoidance of tán 談. Within what was prudent in an officially Confucian period, SJ 47 (Confucius) is also subtly negative. One is the phrase yě hǔ 野合 "coupled in the wilds" for the marriage of Confucius's parents; ironic for Confucius the ritual expert. Confucius's official failures are narrated at length; his only successes come when he uses force in office.¹² The admiring TSG refers to a Lǔ visit which from SJ 130 we know Chyēn made, and that part must be by Chyēn. But the body of the chapter has all the marks of a Dàuiist hatchet job by Tán.¹³

¹¹For a reconstruction, see Brooks *Analects* 274-283.

¹²He has singers killed at a meeting of the Chí and Lǔ rulers (1915:13); he executes an unruly noble in Lǔ (1917:13). The phrase used to describe public morality under his governance (塗不拾遺) echoes cruel Lord Shāng (SJ 66, 2231:12 道不拾遺). This is a Legalist Confucius, probably the only Confucius which Tán found tolerable in a works meant for the ages. For Tán's considerable tolerance of Legalist practices, see the above discussion of SJ 87.

¹³SJ 47 is anomalous in the Shì-jyā or ruler lineages section. It was probably moved there to honor Confucius as an "uncrowned king" (秦王), presumably by Chyēn, who pushed together SJ 35 and 35a (see above) to make room for it. The original position of SJ 47 was probably after SJ 63 (Lǎudǔ), with which it would have made a pair; if SJ 47 is returned to that place, SJ 64 on Szmǎ Ráng-jyǔ and SJ 65 on Sündǔ, two generals, would also make a pair.

It has been said that Chyēn respected Lăudž, an example being SJ 61, where hope for posthumous fame suggests Chyēn's search for justification after his punishment. After several Analects quotes in SJ 61 comes “when the world is in turmoil, the pure gentleman appears” 舉世混濁，清士乃見 (2126:12). Szm̄ Jŷn refers this to DDJ 18; Durrant (**Cloudy** 162 n83) notes a closer parallel, in a SJ 84 line attributed to Chyŵ Ywān (舉世混濁而我獨清, 2486:2). A similar line is attributed in SJ 90 (2589:5) to Jōu Shĕ 周市.¹⁴ There is thus no Lăudž here, and Chyēn's authorship is indeed likely.

SJ 127 日者列傳. Given Tán's association with Lăudž, in Tán's Six Schools essay and in chapters which on other grounds can be assigned to Tán, and given the lack of evidence that Chyēn, with his Confucian training, held Lăudž in equal regard, and given the citation of the Madman of Chŭ (Jwāngdž 莊子 4:7) against Confucius's search for office in Tán's SJ 47, we may see in the Jwāngdzian SJ 127 tirade against officeholding, which bristles with unmistakable Lăudž quotes, a touch of Tán's brush. This impression is confirmed by an unavoided Tán 談 (3219:10) in that chapter.

These largely confirm earlier conclusions. I now consider other chapters where Lăudž appears as an authoritative figure.

SJ 4 周本紀. In 0780, Bwó-yáng Fŭ 伯陽甫 (identified by Táng Gù 唐固 as Lăudž) predicts the end of Jōu within a decade; next year, reading the Jōu records (called shǐ jì 史記, “archival records”), he says that Jōu is finished. In 0374, Dăn, the Tàishĕ of Jōu, predicts the rise of a strong ruler seventeen years after the rejoining of sundered Jōu; an omen of the Chín unification. The same Tàishĕ Dăn story is told in Tán's SJ 63. Legend (SJ 130) has the Szm̄ family obtaining that name under Jōu Sywān-wāng (reign ended 0781), and for then generations keeping records (史記) of Jōu. If so, the record interpreted by Bwó-yáng Fŭ in 0779 *was made by an ancestor of Tán*. The match with Tán's ancestral claims seem to justify attributing SJ 4 to Tán.

SJ 9 呂太后本紀 does not cite Lăudž as such, but it ends its account of palace cruelties and factional wars with a TSG comment saying that after the turmoil of the protracted war, Empress Lŵ's reign again brought peace and prosperity, through the method of inactive government (wú-wéi 無爲) recommended by Tán's essay.

SJ 47 孔子世家. Confucius sees the senior figure Lăudž and accepts his advice. It was suggested above that, save for its TSG summary, this is a Tán chapter.

SJ 54 曹相國世家. On taking office in Chí, Tsáu Shŷn 曹參 rejects Confucian advice and follows that of a Hwáng/Lău student, who counsels noninterference. Years of peace follow. When he is made prime minister of Hàn in 0193, Shŷn dismisses subordinates who apply the law strictly, and spends his own time mostly in drinking. After his death, his Dăuist “purity and quiescence” are celebrated in a popular song. The TSG summary praises Tsáu for governing by wú-wéi. All this is Tán territory.

¹⁴SJ 90 (天下昏亂，忠臣乃見) is closer than SJ 61 to DDJ 18 (the Măwāngdwēi B version reads 國家闖亂，安有貞臣), but commentaries notwithstanding, the SJ 90 attribution to Jōu Shĕ must govern. None of these quotes has the ironic quality of DDJ 18. For the anti-Chín rebel Jōu Shĕ (or Jōu Fŭ), see SJ 8 (352:1f).

SJ 55 留侯世家. One commentator, quoting the Shī apocrypha, suggests that the old man who gave Jāng Lyáng a book of strategy was the tutor of the Yellow Emperor, transformed as Lǎudž (2049:7). It is unclear if the author of SJ 55 had that in mind, but the career of Jāng Lyáng, who tried to exit his responsibilities and seek for longer life under Empress Lǚ, agrees with recommendations of Tán in several other chapters.

SJ 56 陳丞相世家. The TSG comment notes that Chv̄n Píng was fond of the arts (shù 術) of Lǎudž and the Yellow Emperor. His schemes on behalf of Hàn Gāudzǔ and his house always succeeded, and at the end he relinquishes chief power to another, “a good beginning and a good end.” The motif of surrendering power before too late is again reminiscent of Tán as we see him in SJ 63 and 87.

SJ 62 管晏列傳. In Tán’s time the “Gwǎn Jùng” theorists were recommending a state-manipulated economy; the opposite of the Dàuist laissez-faire economy. SJ 62 uses a tale not in the Gwǎndž (where Gwǎn Jùng advises Chí Hwán-gūng to keep a promise, made under duress, to return territory to Lǔ), and approves of him in the words of DDJ 36 (將欲奪之，必固與之 “if you plan to take, you must first give”), which as it happens appear as a condensed quote in GZ 1. That part of GZ 1 (四順 “Four Things to be Followed”) does advocate giving the people what they want, in order to gain their civil and military loyalty. Of our two candidates, Tán seems better equipped for this tour de force: quoting the Gwǎndž without departing from the boundaries of the Lǎudž.

SJ 63 老子韓非列傳 has previously been attributed to Tán.

SJ 67 仲尼弟子列傳, like SJ 47, is full of Analects quotes. It also contains matter not found in the Analects *or* in the Dìdž Jì source text which is demeaning of Confucius, such as his respect for Lǎu-láudž 老萊子 in addition to Lǎudž. The saga of Dž-gùng as an interstate persuader is unique to SJ 67 and lacks support in other Confucian tradition; it is negative in view of Tán’s criticism of the interstate persuader Jāng Yí 張儀 in SJ 70 (which is shown to be Tán’s by an unavowed tán 談 in a quoted text). No true Analects student would identify Shv̄n Lyáu 申繚 (Dìdž Jì #71) with Confucius’s enemy Gūngbwó Lyáu, as SJ 67 does, and then quote the Analects 14:36 passage documenting the enmity. As above, one senses here the hand of Tán.

SJ 80 樂毅 ends by noting that Ywè Chv̄n-gūng 樂臣公, a descendant of the Yēn general Ywè Yì, was a student of Hwáng-dì and Lǎudž, which he had from previous teachers and passed on to others, including Tsáu Shv̄n (above) in early Hàn. This information on Dàuist transmission genealogies, true or false, is more likely to have been possessed by Tán, said in SJ 130 to have been a formal student of Dàuism.

SJ 103 萬石君張叔列傳. The main figure in the chapter is Shí Fv̄n 石奮. Of Fv̄n’s son Shí Chìng 石慶 as minister of Chí, it is said that he said nothing, and Chí was well governed 大治, the basic wú-wéi situation. Jí Bù-yí 直不疑 is said (2771:9) to have been a student of Lǎudž. His character and career show the reluctance to advance or defend himself that Tán elsewhere admires. The chapter as a whole can easily be construed as propaganda for the good influence of Lǎudž’s teachings on officials. Except for an addendum at the end of the Shí Fv̄n segment, which mentions dates after Tán’s death in 0110 and must be by Chyēn, the rest of SJ 103 is probably by Tán.

SJ 105 扁鵲倉公列傳 ends with an intentional variant of DDJ 31 (2817:12), where “beauty” and technical skill, not weapons, are said to be inauspicious tools. They endanger the civil servant. The danger of office, as above noted, is a Tán theme.

I note in passing that SJ 105 and **SJ 83** 魯仲連鄒陽列傳 have in common another saying, which begins 女無美惡，入宮見妒 “whether pretty or plain, a woman will encounter jealousy on entering the palace.” In SJ 83 (2473:1) it occurs unattributed, simply as a current saying, in a letter making up most of the Dzōu Yáng part of the chapter. The TSG summary in SJ 105 begins with the same saying (2817:11, varying 入宮 to 居宮). That SJ 83 is by Tán is shown by an unavoided tán 談 (2476:11). That Tán noticed the saying in transcribing the Dzōu Yáng letter, and then remembered it in summing SJ 105 (which also consists almost entirely of transcribed documents), is perhaps likelier than the Chyēn alternative.

SJ 127 日者列傳. The Lǎudž quotes in this chapter were noted above.

SJ 129 貨殖列傳. These sketches of various successful investors are prefaced by an extensive Lǎudž quote, the peaceful and prosperous village of DDJ 80, where the people “find their food tasty and their clothes pretty” and all their lives never think of leaving it. TSG remarks that he does not know about remote antiquity, but people now want to satisfy their desires, and good government will let them. It justifies the Dàuist laissez-faire economy,¹⁵ prefaced by a classical Dàuist rejection of such an economy. No mere votary of profit would make this detour into Lǎudž, and Tán seems indicated.

No chapters in this survey *both* contain a Lǎudž quotation or reference *and* have unambiguous marks of Chyēn’s authorship. Several have marks of Tán’s authorship. All are developed compatibly with a Dàuist view of history.

There is also some direct testimony to Tán’s authorship.

SJ 27 天官書 (Astronomy). Chyēn in SJ 130 quotes as Tán’s a remark from the TSG statement of this chapter. Mention of an informant from before Chyēn’s time in that TSG also implies Tán.

Overview of Authorship Criteria

Certain motifs seem to be characteristic of Tán or Chyēn:

Tán: Regret at failure of an able person to protect himself from injury, especially by not withdrawing from office in time: SJ 55, 56, 63 (Hán Fēi), 65 (Sündž), 87 (Lǐ Sǐ).

Chyēn. The travels which Chyēn lists in SJ 130 mark him biographically. These chapters refer to them (chapters previously identified as Chyēn’s are parenthesized): SJ 1, (13, 17, 18), 28, 29, 32, (43), 44, (46), 47 TSG, (63 additions, 76), 77, 85, 88, 92, 95, (100, 108, 121, 130).

There is also the motif of enduring humiliation for the sake of later triumph: SJ 0, 00, 00, . . .

¹⁵Spelled out in SJ 30, for which there is no obvious evidence against Tán’s authorship.

Conclusion: Szmǎ Tán

With due caution, at the end of an inevitably preliminary study, we may note a few implications of material here identified as the Tán authorial corpus (SJ 4, 6, 9, 14, 15, 16, 19, 27, 30, 35, 39, 45, 47 less TSG, 55, 56, 62, 63 less additions, 67, 70, 74, 79, 83, 86, 87, 95, 97, 102, 103, 105, 117, 124, 127, 129). The main implication is that there *is* a Tán authorial corpus, and that Tán must be recognized, not only as the designer of the SJ, but as the executor of a substantial part of it. Chyēn comes later, both adding and rearranging, and at some points rethinking.

In filling in his outline of the SJ, Tán did not begin with chapter 1. He skipped around, if anything concentrating on Lyè-jwàn chapters. One reason for this may have been to apportion source material (before Chyēn's interpolation, neither Lǐ Sǎ's book suppression memorial nor his foreign advisor memorial appeared in SJ 6; both were only in SJ 87). The notices of the courtier Dzōu Yáng (SJ 83B) and the physician Chún'yw Yì (SJ 105B) consist largely of copied documents. Distributing documents among the "personal" chapters may have been a first step, clearing the way for a less cluttered recounting of court history such as we see in SJ 6 and its neighbors.

It is clear from SJ 130 that Tán was a Dàuist, an astrologer, and an Yì specialist, while Chyēn, born a generation later in the Confucianizing court ethos of middle Hàn, was a Confucian by training. This ideological difference manifests itself as contrasting advocacy, Tán giving the Hàn founding fathers a Dàuist slant, and Chyēn blackening the hated Legalist Lǐ Sǎ (SJ 63, 87) and rescuing his hero Confucius (SJ 67).

SJ readers may be unprepared for the chapter on Assassins (SJ 86), and still less the one on Avengers (SJ 124).¹⁶ They indeed make no sense in terms of the persona usually attributed to Chyēn, and for that reason may be anomalous as Chyēn's work. We know from SJ 130 that when the Szmǎ family scattered from Jōu to other states in early Spring and Autumn, they found jobs not as record keepers, but as military leaders and swordsmen. SJ 86 and 124, and several other chapters of the Tán corpus, celebrate the desperate personal loyalty that is central to the ethos of the swordsman. There is after all no contradiction; rather, there is continuity.

¹⁶Nor was Chyēn. In SJ 130 (3295:12), Chyēn quotes Tán's list of those whose deeds he wished to preserve: enlightened rulers 明主, wise lords 賢君, loyal ministers 忠臣, and officers ready to die for principle 死義之士. The last are the desperadoes. Later, replying to Hú Swèi, he gives his own version of the deeds his father's command required him to include as the great virtues of the enlightened sages 明聖 and the doings of the loyal ministers 功臣 and hereditary nobles 世家賢大夫. There is nothing to correspond to Tán's fourth category, the men of principle. There is also no direct mention of rulers other than the Emperor. The Hàn worldview has here replaced an earlier one, in which Warring States realities were still somewhat real.

A grand astrologically defined continuous Chinese sovereignty culminating in Hàn is part of the design of the Shǐ Jì, and that design is undoubtedly due to Tán. But Tán took a dim view of Confucian careerism, and of the Hàn court itself. The Jwāngdzian satire SJ 127, with its emblematic spokesman Szmǎ Jì-jǔ, shows Tán to be a stylist, not a mere document assembler. It also shows him to be a critic of Hàn. He advocated a certain public policy, ultimately based on Dàuism and the Yì, which favored economic nonintervention, mild rather than strict law enforcement, peace rather than war at the borders, and wariness in office. By the time he gained office, and conceived the idea of a history as a platform for this message, these values were out of favor, and a heavy government policy of expansion at the edges was in place. Tán propounded his message anyway, and used his literary skills to camouflage it sufficiently to retain Imperial favor. The uneventful course of his tenure of the office of Grand Astrologer shows that he applied his practical advice to his own situation with evident success. Tán, on the record, was an adroit survivor in the deadly game of Hàn court politics. Chyēn, neglecting these lessons, maneuvered less successfully in that perilous arena.

Finally, in SJ 67 and 102, Tán proves himself just as capable of free composition and cavalier treatment of sources as does Chyēn in SJ 6 and 63. The plus side is that, with knowledge of the doctrinal predilections of each, the literary quirks of both may be better quarantined by those who in our day still go to the Shǐ Jì for information.

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Appendix
Tán and Chyēn in the Shǐ Jì
As so far identified

Annals 本記	Rulers 世家	Accounts 列傳	
001	031	061 Chyēn	101
002	032 Chyēn?	062 Tán	102 Tán
003	033	063 Tán, Chyēn	103 Tán, Chyēn
004 Tán	034	064	104 Tán, Chyēn
005	035 Tán	065	105 Tán
006 Tán, Chyēn	036	066	106
007	037	067 Tán	107
008	038	068	108 Tán, Chyēn
009 Tán	039 Tán	069	109
010	040	070 Tán	110
011	041	071	111
012 Tán, Chyēn	042	072	112
	043 Chyēn	073	113
Tables 表	044 Chyēn?	074 Tán	114
013	045 Tán	075 Chyēn?	115
014 Tán?	046 Chyēn	076 Chyēn	116
015 Tán	047 Tán, Chyēn	077 Chyēn	117 Tán
016	048	078 Chyēn?	118
017 Chyēn	049	079 Tán	119
018	050	080 Tán	120
019	051	081	121 Chyēn
020	052	082	122
021	053	083 Tán	123
022	054 Tán	084 Chyēn?	124 Tán
	055 Tán	085	125
Treatises 書	056 Tán	086 Tán	126 TSG Tán
023	057	087 Tán	127 Tán
024	058	088	128
025	059	089	129 Tán
026	060	090	130 Tán, Chyēn
027 Tán		091	
028 Chyēn		092 Chyēn?	
029 Chyēn?		093	
030		094	
		095 Tán	
		096	
		097 Tán	
		098	
		099	
		100 Chyēn	