

Interrogative Yēn 焉 and Ān 安 in Jwāngdǔ

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Abstract. Pulleyblank **Outline** 9-10, 56, 79 notes that postverbal yēn 焉 equals, but is not a contraction of, yú jī 於之. Kennedy **Study** 73 had argued that the second element is phonetic -an, noting (p78) the parallels 於... 焉 and 如... 然, where both 焉 and 然 seem to contain -an. I suggest that “an” did exist, and that 於安 “in there” in preverbal position (as interrogative “in where”) could lose its initial consonant, so that the covert -an emerged, and was written arbitrarily as 安. If so, then interrogative 焉 and 安 are alternates: ±y +an. Does this phonetic variation convey any meaning? From the behavior of initial yēn and ān in Jwāngdǔ and in some contemporary texts, I propose that the shorter ān is *less formal*.

Data Set. The complete roster of interrogative yēn/ān in Jwāngdǔ is:

Interrogative 安 in Jwāngdǔ

1:6	安所困苦哉	Jwāngdǔ (text spokesman)
5:3a	安知夫子之猶若是也	No-Toes (text spokesman)
5:3c	安可解	No-Toes (spokesman; Lǎudǔ disciple)
9:1	安取仁義	Text expository voice
	安用禮樂	Text expository voice
13:1b	安取道	Text expository voice
	安能治人	Text expository voice
13:7	輪人安得議乎	Hwān-gūng (actual ruler)
14:7	安能化人	Confucius (spokesman; Lǎudǔ disciple)
17:2	吾安用足哉	Snake (a mere character in the story)
17:7	安知魚之樂	Hwèidǔ (opponent of Jwāngdǔ)
	安知我不知魚之樂	Jwāngdǔ (text spokesman)
	汝安知魚樂	Jwāngdǔ (text spokesman)
18:4	吾安能棄南面王樂	Skull (text spokesman)
20:2a	安得而至焉	Lǔ-hóu (actual ruler)
20:9	安往而不愛哉	Yángdǔ (text spokesman)
22:11	安化安不化	Confucius (text spokesman)
	安與之相靡	Confucius (text spokesman)
23:1c	我安逃此而可	Nánrúng Jū (disciple of Lǎudǔ)
25:8	士民安去不僞	Bwó Jyù (Lǎudǔ disciple > spokesman)
26:8b	吾安得夫忘言之人	Jwāngdǔ (text spokesman)

Interrogative 焉 in Jwāngdǔ

11:3	焉知曾史之不爲...	Text expository voice
19:2a	物焉得而止焉	Gwān Yǐn (text spokesman)
20:7	焉知其所終	Confucius (text spokesman)
	焉知其所始	Confucius (text spokesman)
23:2a	焉能容人	Text expository voice

Possible Explanations

Dialect. In JZ, yēn is the rarer form (5x of 27, or 19% of all occurrences). Of these, 2x are in *chapters*, and 3x in *passages*, where ān is absent. Is the difference dialectal? If so, JZ 20 and 23 are dialectically mixed, which is not a very attractive possibility.

Rhetorical Force. Many uses of ān/yēn are in rhetorical questions. Some (9x of 27, or 33%) cluster at the end of a passage, which is often a rhetorical climax point. Most cases of 安 (and all 5x of 焉) are used by what might be called by authority figures: 6x by the text narrator, 14x by a spokesman for the text viewpoint, and 2x by a ruler, a total of 22x (81%). In another 2x (23:1c, 25:8) the speaker, though not the text spokesman, is a disciple of Lǎudǔ (in 2x, the speaker *is* the text spokesman). But in 17:7 (the Jwāngdǔ/Hwèidǔ fish story), the authority figure *and his opposite* both use ān, and in 17:2 the speaker is simply a snake. The authority hypothesis thus seems not always to distinguish the yēn-using personages from the others. And to the extent that it does succeed, the authority hypothesis perhaps succeeds too easily: most JZ passages could be read as somehow expressing “the viewpoint of the text.”

Influence. In JZ 20:7, the user of 焉 is Confucius. Confucius in the Analects mostly uses 焉, rarely 安 (the one example of 安 is the atypically laid-back Confucius of LY *11:24, c0294). The Mencius, more consistent, uses *only* 焉, never 安. Might literary precedent, reinforcing yēn in at least some areas of JZ, operate in these cases?

Suggested Solution

Tone. I believe the proper statement, which is already implicit in some of the above suggestions, is that the full form 於+安=焉 is formal, and thus nearly invariable in staid LY/MC, and that 安 is less formal, and thus common in zany JZ. The effect of the dropped initial y- might be not unlike that of a dropped initial h- in substandard British. Such a difference of tone would explain 安 in LY 11:24, where “Confucius” shows a remarkably uncharacteristic lack of concern for official position, and instead advocates the simpler pleasures. Nor need it be thought problematic that the primitivist spokesman of JZ 11 uses the more formal 焉; the literary primitivism of these Jwāngdǔ philosophical “Primitivists” should not be exaggerated.

As to the JZ chapters with *both* forms, it may suffice to note, of the various chapter spokesmen in JZ 20, that it is the intruder Confucius, bringing with him diction with which he is elsewhere associated, who uses 焉, not the more recognizably “Dàuist” figures such as Yáng Jū (all 安). In JZ 23, we have a text spokesman (using 焉) contrasting with a more recognizably “Dàuist” figure: the Lǎudǔ disciple Nánrúng Jū (using 安). Whether one or both forms are used in a given JZ chapter, then, we may reasonably conclude that there is a formality differential between the two.¹

¹In the 04c and later, preverbal yēn, if itself preceded by a topic or conditional clause, can be a relative rather than an interrogative, since in that context its pronominal ān element has a previous referent. This usage has a sonority perhaps analogous to that of the archaic resuming pronoun shì 是 in the Shī and elsewhere. Thus MZ 14 (c0385): 必知亂之所自起, 焉能治之 “[The Sage who would make it his business to bring order to the world] must understand where disorder comes from; *from that* he will be able to bring order to it.”

Grammar. We may verify that interrogative 安 still has a locative sense (“from where,” not simply “how”). In LY *11:24 we have “Where did you ever see . . .” And Jwāngdǔ, standing with Hwèidǔ by the Háu River in JZ 17:7, is asked where his knowledge of the happiness of fish *comes from*. Having lost the ensuing logical duel, Jwāngdǔ restarts the argument: “Let’s go back to the beginning. You asked me *from where* [from what evidence] I knew what fish like, so you knew *that* I knew it when you asked me. I got to know it *from right here* above the Háu River 我知之濠上也.” One adverb of “place from which” is met by another adverb of “place from which.” It is a brilliant effect.²

Conclusion. The Jwāngdǔ 焉 examples cluster around culturally “high” figures, especially Confucius. The use of less formal 安 by such figures gives them a markedly laid-back character. And the use of casual 安 by *already low* figures in the Jwāngdǔ may well have verged on the comic: Thus, the perfectly ambulatory JZ 17:2 snake, who moves by wriggling his backbone, asks, 吾安用足也 “Where would I use *feet*?”

Postscript

E Bruce Brooks (WSW, 5 Oct 1998)

It might have seemed a defect in the above argument that the distribution pattern for 焉 and 安, both in Jwāngdǔ and in Warring States texts generally, is asymmetrical. Both interrogative and relative variants occur preverbally (with unvoiced ingress; modern yēn/ān), but only 焉 postverbally (voiced ingress, modern yén). It is tempting to notice that the Gwōdyèn 郭店 texts uniformly write 安 in both positions. But the very uniformity of Gwōdyèn scribal practice seems to forbid our assuming that postverbal relative yēn (“in it”) might also be elided to phonetic ān.³ The voicing of the initial of 於 in that position may be because the sentence, and the speaker’s vocal chords, are already in motion, and this factor may inhibit the loss of the initial itself.⁴ As to what Gwōdyèn orthography may imply about the phonetics or grammar of that language, that is beyond the scope of the present note.

Works Cited

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 George A Kennedy. A Study of the Particle Yen. A: Its Meaning, JAOS v60 #1 (March 1940) 1-22; B: Its Form, JAOS v60 #2 (June 1940) 193-207; in Selected Works, Far Eastern (1964) 27-56 and 57-78
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²For a parallel instance, which has also been widely unrecognized, see Brooks **Adverbial**.

³The Gwōdyèn texts provide further examples of the preverbal (but not sentence initial) relative pronoun mentioned above; thus DDJ 18 (Gwōdyèn): 大道廢, 安有仁義 “When the Great Way is abandoned, *then* we get [the Confucian virtues] rín and yì.”

⁴In the Chǔ ruler’s speech in DJ 7/12:2 暴而不戢, 安能保大? 猶有晉在, 焉得定功, the tone is exalted throughout, but there may be a rhetorical climax, with the more sonorous form reserved for the end: “Cruel yet not disarming, *how* 安 could I be able to preserve the Great [Mandate]? While Jin yet abides, *wherein* 焉 should I succeed in securing my achievements?”