

Identification with the Superior I

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English translation: *W. P. Mei* [?](#)

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| Mozi said: In the beginning of human life, when there
| was yet no law and government, the custom was
| "everybody according to his own idea." Accordingly
| each man had his own idea, two men had two
(different ideas and ten men had ten different ideas --
(the more people the more different notions. And
| everybody approved of his own view and
| disapproved the views of others, and so arose
(mutual disapproval among men. As a result, father
| and son and elder and younger brothers became
(enemies and were estranged from each other, since
| they were unable to reach any agreement.
| Everybody worked for the disadvantage of the others
| with water, fire, and poison. Surplus energy was not
| spent for mutual aid; surplus goods were allowed to
| rot without sharing; excellent teachings (Dao) were
(kept secret and not revealed. The disorder in the
((human) world could be compared to that among
| birds and beasts.

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t Yet all this disorder was due to the want of a ruler.
i Therefore (Heaven) chose the virtuous in the world
(and crowned him emperor. Feeling the insufficiency
r of his capacity, the emperor chose the virtuous in the
w world and installed them as the three ministers. The
i emperor and the three ministers, seeing the
t vastness of the empire and the difficulty of attending
l to matters of right and wrong and profit and harm
t among peoples of far countries, divided the empire
l into feudal states and assigned them to feudal lords.
(Feeling the insufficiency of their capacity, the feudal
{ lords, in turn, chose the virtuous of their states and
t appointed them as their officials.

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When the rulers were all installed, the emperor issued a mandate to all the people, saying: "Upon hearing good or evil one shall report it to a superior. What the superior thinks to be right all shall think to be right; what the superior thinks to be wrong all shall think to be wrong. When the superior is at fault there shall be good counsel, when the subordinates show virtue there shall be popular recommendation. To identify one's self with the superior and not to unite one's self with the subordinates - this is what deserves encouragement from above and praise from below." On the other hand, if upon hearing good or evil one should not report to a superior; if what the superior thought to be right one should not think to be right; if what the superior thought to be wrong one should not think to be wrong; if when the superior was at fault there should be no good counsel if when the subordinates showed virtue there should be no popular recommendation; if there should be common cause with subordinates and no identification with the superior - this is what deserves punishment from above and condemnation from below." The superior made this the basis of reward and punishment. He was clear-sighted and won his people's confidence.

r or evil you shall report it to the lord. What the lord
 f thinks to be right all shall think to be right, what he
 i thinks to be wrong all shall think to be wrong.
 f Remove from your speech that which is not good
 i and learn his good speech. Take away from your
 c conduct that which is not good and learn his good
 z conduct. How then can there be disorder in the
 f state?" Now, how was order brought about in the
 i feudal state? There was order in the state because
 c the feudal lord could unify the standards in the state.

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l The lord of the state was the most high-minded and
 c tender-hearted man of the state. He notified the
 c people of the state, saying: "Upon hearing good or
 r evil you shall report it to the emperor. What the
 f emperor thinks to be right all shall think to be right;
 i what the emperor thinks to be wrong all shall think to
 f be wrong. Take away from your speech that which is

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Therefore, Mozi said: The sage-kings of old devised the five punishments to rule the people in order to be able to lay hands on those who did not identify themselves with their superiors - a device of the same nature as threads are tied into skeins and a net is controlled by a main rope.

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Identification with
the Superior...:

Knowing the cause of the confusion to be in the absence of a ruler who could unify the standards in the world, (Heaven) chose the virtuous, sagacious, and wise in the world and crowned him emperor, charging him with the duty of unifying the wills in the empire. Having been crowned, the emperor, realizing the impossibility of unifying the world just by his own senses of hearing and sight, chose the understanding, virtuous, sagacious, and wise of the world and installed them as the three ministers, sharing with them the duty of unifying the standards in the empire. The emperor and the three ministers being in office, they felt the vastness of the empire and the difficulty of unifying all the peoples in mountains and woods and those far distant. Therefore they systematically divided up the empire, and appointed numerous feudal lords, charging these with the duty of unifying the standards in each state. The feudal lords in turn felt the difficulty of unifying the standards in their states just by their own senses of hearing and sight. Therefore they chose the virtuous of the state to be their ministers and secretaries and all the way down to the heads of districts and villages, sharing with them the duty of unifying the standards in the state.

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Identification with
the Superior...:

When the lords of the country and the heads of the people had been appointed, the emperor issued mandates, instructing the people: "Discovering good you must report it to your superior, discovering evil you must report it to your superior. What the superior thinks to be right all shall think to be right; what the superior thinks to be wrong all shall think to be wrong. When there is virtue among the people there shall be popular recommendation; when the superior is at fault

there shall be good counsel. You shall identify yourself with the superior and not associate with your subordinates. So doing, one deserves encouragement from his superiors and praise from the people. "On the other hand, if upon discovering good you should not report it and upon discovering evil you should not report it; if you should not think to be right what the superior thinks to be right, and wrong what the superior thinks to be wrong; if there should be no recommendation when there is virtue among the people and no good counsel when the superior is at fault; and if you should unite with the subordinates but differ from the superior - you deserve heavy punishment from your superiors and condemnation from the people." Therefore the sage-kings of old were very judicious and faithful in their punishments and rewards.

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Identification with the Superior...:

And so all the people aspired to the rewards and commendation from the superior and dreaded his condemnation and punishment. Thereupon, in accord with the policy of the emperor, the village head proceeded to unify the purposes in the village. Having accomplished this, he led the people of the village to identify themselves with the head of the district, saying: "All you people of the village are to identify yourselves with the head of the district, and are not to unite with the subordinates. What the head of the district thinks to be right all shall think to be right; what he thinks to be wrong all shall think to be wrong. Put away your evil speech and learn his good speech; put away your evil conduct and learn his good conduct. For the head of the district is naturally the (most) virtuous of the district. If all the people in the district follow the example of their head, how then can the district be disorderly?" Now, how is it that the head of the district was so successful in governing the district? It was just because he could unify the purposes of the whole district that the district was so orderly.

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Identification with
the Superior...:

Having accomplished this he in turn led the people of his district to identify themselves with the feudal lord, saying: "All you people of the district shall identify yourselves with the lord of the state, and shall not unite with the subordinates. What the lord thinks to be right all shall think to be right; what he thinks to be wrong all shall think to be wrong. Put away your evil speech and learn his good speech; put away your evil conduct and learn his good conduct. For the lord of the state is naturally the (most) virtuous of the state. If all the people in the state follow the example of their lord, how then can the state be in disorder?" Now, why was the feudal lord so successful in governing the state? It was just because he could unify the purposes in the state that the state is orderly.

Identification with
the Superior...:

Having accomplished this he in turn led the people of his state to identify themselves with the emperor, saying: "All you people of the state shall identify yourselves with the emperor and shall not unite with the subordinates. What the emperor thinks to be right all shall think to be right; what he thinks to be wrong all shall think to be wrong. Put away your evil speech and learn his good speech; put away your evil conduct and learn his good conduct. For the emperor is naturally the (most) high-minded and tender-hearted man of the empire. If all the people of the empire follow his example, how then can the state be disorderly?" Now, why was the emperor so successful in governing the empire? It was just because he could unify the purposes in the empire that the empire is orderly.

Identification with
the Superior...:

People might then ask: At the present time rulers are not absent from the empire, why then is there disorder in the empire? Mozi said: The political leaders of the present day are quite different from those of old. The case is parallel to that of the Five Punishments with the Prince of Miao. In ancient times, the sage-kings made the code of the Five Punishments and put the empire in order. But when the Prince of Miao established the Five Punishments they unsettled his empire. Can it be that the Punishments are at fault? Really the fault lies in their application. The "Penal Code of Lu" among the books of the ancient kings, says: "Among the people of Miao punishments were applied without employing instruction and admonition. They made a code of five tortures and called it law." This is to say, those who know how to apply punishments can govern the people with them. And those who do not know, make five tortures out of them. Can it be that the punishments are at fault? Only, when their application is not to the point do they become five tortures. And, also, "Shu Ling", among the books of the ancient kings, says: "The same mouth can produce friendship or produce war." This is to say that he who can use the mouth well will produce friendship, and he who cannot will stir up the enemies and the besieging barbarians. Can it be that the mouth is at fault? The fault really lies in its use which stirs up the enemies and the besieging barbarians.

Identification with
the Superior...:

Hence the installing of the ruler in the ancient days was intended to govern the people. Just as there is one thread to hold together the others in a skein and a main rope to a fishing net, so the ruler is to hold together all the evil and wicked in the empire and bring their purposes into harmony (with their superiors). Thus "Xiang Nian", among the books of the ancient kings, says: "Now the empire is established and the capital is located: (Heaven) installed the emperor, kings, and lords not in order to make them proud, and (Heaven) appointed the ministers and the officials not in order to make them idle - it was to apportion duties among them and charge them with the maintenance of the Heavenly justice." This is to say that when God and the spirits in the past established the capital and installed the rulers, it was not to make their ranks high, and their emoluments substantial, and to give them wealth and honour, and let them live in comfort and free of care. It was really to procure benefits and eliminate adversities for the people, and to enrich the poor and increase the few, and to bring safety where there is danger and to restore order where there is confusion - it was for this that the political leaders were appointed. And so the ancient sage-kings administered their government accordingly.

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Identification with
the Superior...:

The lords at the present, however, do just the reverse. Administration is carried on to court flattery. Fathers and brothers and other relatives and friends are placed at the right and left and appointed rulers of the people. Knowing that the superior appointed the rulers not for the welfare of the people, the people all kept aloof and would not identify themselves with the superior. Therefore purposes of the superior and the subordinates are not unified. This being so,

rewards and commendations would not encourage the people to do good, and punishments and fines would not restrain them from doing evil. How do we know this would be so?

11

Identification with the Superior...:

In governing the country, the ruler proclaims "Whoever deserves reward I will reward." Suppose the purposes of the superior and the subordinates are different, whoever is rewarded by the superior would be condemned by the public. And in community life the condemnation of the public is supreme. Though there is reward from the superior, it will not be an encouragement. In governing the country, again, the ruler proclaims: "Whoever deserves punishment I will punish." Suppose the purposes of the superior and the subordinates are different, whoever is punished by the superior would be applauded by the public. And in community life the approval of the public is supreme. Though there is punishment from the superior, it will not be an obstruction. Now, in governing the country and ruling the people, if rewards cannot encourage the people to do good and punishments cannot restrain them from doing evil, is this not just the same as in the beginning of human life when there were no rulers? If it is the same with rulers or without them, it is not the way to govern the people and unify the multitude.

12

尚同中：

故古者聖王唯而
審¹以尚同，以為正長，是
故²上下情請為通。上有隱事遺利，下得而利
之；下有蓄怨積害，上得而除之。是以數千
萬里之外，有為善者，其室人未遍知，鄉里
未遍聞，天子得而賞之。數千萬里之外，有
為不善者，其室人未遍知，鄉里未遍聞，天
子得而罰之。是以舉天下之人皆恐懼振動惕

慄，不敢為淫暴，曰：「天子之視聽也神。」先王之言曰：「非神也，夫唯能使人之耳目助己視聽，使人之吻助己言談，使人之心助己思慮，使人之股肱助己動作」。助之視聽者眾，則其所聞見者遠矣；助之言談者眾，則其德音之所撫循者博矣；助之思慮者眾，則其談謀度速得矣；助之動作者眾，即其舉事速成矣。故古者聖人之所以濟事成功，垂名於後世者，無他故異物焉，曰唯能以尚同為政者也。

Identification with the Superior...:

As the ancient sage-kings could observe the principle of Identification with the Superior, when they became rulers the purposes of the superior and the subordinates became interchangeable. If the superior reserved for himself special facilities the subordinates could share them. If the people had any unrighted wrongs or accumulated injuries, the superior would remove them. Therefore, if there was a virtuous man thousands of li away, though his clansmen did not all know it (the fact) and people in the same district did not all know it, the emperor could reward him. And if there was an evil man thousands of li away, though his clansmen did not all know it (the fact) and people in the same village did not all know it, the emperor could punish him. Thereupon all the people in the world were astonished, and carefully avoided doing evil, saying: "The emperor is like a spirit in his hearing and sight." But the ancient kings said: "It was no spirit but only the ability to make use of others' ears and eyes to help one's own hearing and sight, to make use of others' lips to help one's own speech, to make use of others' minds to help one's own thought, to make use of others' limbs to help one's own actions." When there are many to help one's hearing and sight then of course one can hear and see far; when there are many to help one's speech then one's good counsel can comfort many; when there are many to help one's thought then one's plans can be shaped speedily; when there are many to help one's actions then one can accomplish one's undertaking quickly. So there was no other reason for the success and great fame of the ancient sages than that they could carry out the principle of Identification with the Superior in their administration.

1. 審：Inserted.
2. 故：Inserted.

尚同中：

是以先王之書《周頌》之道之曰：「載來見彼王，聿求厥章。」則此語古者國君諸侯之以春秋來朝聘天子之廷，受天子之嚴教，退而治國，政之所加，莫敢不賓。當此之時，本無有敢紛天子之教者。《詩》曰：「我馬維駟，六轡沃若，載馳載驅，周爰咨度。」又曰：「我馬維騏，六轡若絲，載馳載驅，周爰咨謀。」即此語也。古者國君諸侯之聞見善與不善也，皆馳驅以告天子，是以賞當賢，罰當暴，不殺不辜，不失有罪，則此尚同之功也。」

Identification with the Superior...:

One of the "Eulogies of Zhou" among the works of the ancient kings says: "They came to see his Majesty. Daily they sought the code of propriety." This describes how in times of old, the feudal lords came to the emperor's court both spring and autumn to receive strict instructions from the emperor and ruled their states accordingly when they returned; and there was none among those who came under such an administration that dared not submit completely. And, at that time, none dared to confuse the instructions from the emperor. And thus runs an Ode: "My team is of white horses with black manes. The six reins look luxuriant. They trot and gallop. The considerations (of the emperor) are all-inclusive." Further: "My team is of dark grey horses. The six reins look like silk. They trot and gallop. The plans (of the emperor) are all-inclusive." This is to say that upon discovering either good or evil the ancient feudal lords always hurriedly drove to the emperor and reported it to him. Therefore rewards fell upon the virtuous and punishment upon the wicked. The innocent was not prosecuted and the guilty was not set free. And all this is the result of practising the principle of Identification with the Superior.

Identification with the Superior...:

Therefore, Mozi said: Now, if the rulers and the gentlemen of the world sincerely desire to enrich their country and multiply

their people, and to put the government and jurisdiction in order and stabilize the state - if so, then they cannot afford to fail to understand the principle of Identification with the Superior, which is the foundation of government.

Identification with the Superior III»

1

Identification with the Superior...: Mozi said: The interest of the wise (ruler) lies in carrying out what makes for order among the people and avoiding what makes for confusion. But what is it that makes for order among the people? When the administration of the ruler answers to the desires of the people there will be order, otherwise there will be confusion. How do we know it is so? When the administration of the ruler answers to the desires of the subjects, it manifests an understanding of the approvals and disapprovals of the people. When there is such an understanding, the good will be discovered and rewarded and the bad will be discovered and punished, and the country will surely have order. When the administration of the ruler does not answer to the desires of the subjects, it shows a lack of understanding of the approvals and disapprovals of the subjects. When there is no such understanding then the good will not be discovered and rewarded and the bad will not be discovered and punished. With the good unrewarded and the evil unpunished, such a government will surely put the country into disorder. Therefore when rewards and punishments do not answer to the desires of the people, the matter has to be carefully looked into.

2

Identification with the Superior...: But how can the desires of the people (being so many and various) be met? Therefore Mozi said: It can be done only by adopting the principle of Identification with the Superior in government. How do we know the principle of Identification with the Superior can govern the empire? Why not then examine the administration and the theory of government of the ancient times? In the beginning there was no ruler and everybody was independent. Since every one was independent, there would be one purpose when there was one man, ten purposes when there were ten men, a hundred purposes when there were a hundred men, a thousand purposes when there were a thousand men and so on until the number of men became innumerable and the number of different purposes became innumerable with it. And all of them approved their own ideas and disapproved those of others. And there was strife among the strong and struggle among the weak. Thereupon Heaven wished to unify the standards in the world. The virtuous was selected and made emperor. Conscious of the insufficiency of his power alone to govern the empire, the emperor chose the next best (in virtue and wisdom) and honoured them to be the three ministers. Conscious of the insufficiency of their powers alone to assist the emperor, the three ministers in turn divided the empire into feudal states and assigned them to feudal lords. Conscious of the insufficiency of his power alone to govern all that were within his four borders, the feudal lord in turn selected his next best and commissioned them ministers and secretaries. Conscious of the insufficiency of their power alone to assist their feudal lord, the ministers and secretaries again selected their next best and appointed them district heads and clan patriarchs. Therefore, in appointing the three ministers, the feudal lords, the ministers and secretaries, and the district heads and clan patriarchs, the emperor was not selecting them for wealth and honour, leisure and ease. It was to employ them to help in administration and jurisdiction. Hence, when Heaven established the empire and located the capital and commissioned the sovereign, kings, lords, and dukes, and appointed secretaries, scholars, professors, and elders - it was not to give them ease, but only to divide up the task and let them help carry out the light of Heaven.

Identification with the Superior...: Why are the superiors now unable to govern their subordinates, and the subordinates unwilling to serve their superiors? It is because of a mutual disregard. What is the reason for this? The reason is a difference in standards. Whenever standards differ there will be opposition. The ruler may think a man good and reward him. The man, though rewarded by the ruler, yet by the same act provokes the condemnation of the people. Therefore those who do good are not necessarily encouraged by rewards. The ruler may think a man evil and punish him. This man, though punished by the ruler, yet at the same time receives the approval of the people. Therefore those who do evil are not necessarily obstructed by punishments. Thus reward and honour from the ruler cannot encourage the good and his denunciation and punishment cannot prevent the evil. What is the reason for this? The reason is a difference in standards.

4

Identification with the Superior...: But how can the standards in the world be unified? Mozi said: Why not let each member of the clan organize his purposes and identify them with those of the patriarch? And let the patriarch give laws and proclaim to the clan: "Whoever discovers a benefactor to the clan shall report it; whoever discovers a malefactor to the clan shall report it. Whoever reports the benefactor of the clan upon seeing one is equivalent to benefiting the clan himself. Knowing him the superior will reward him, hearing of him the group will praise him. Whoever fails to report a malefactor of the clan upon seeing one is equivalent to doing evil to the clan himself. Knowing him the superior will punish him, hearing of him the group will condemn him." Thereupon all the members of the clan wish to obtain reward and honor and avoid denunciation and punishment from their superior. Seeing the good they will report; seeing the evil they will report. And the patriarch can reward the good and punish the evil. With the good rewarded and the evil punished, the clan will surely have order. Now, why is it that the clan becomes orderly? Just because the administration is based on the principle of Identification with the Superior.

Identification with the Superior...: Now that the clan is in order, is that all there is of the way of governing the feudal state? By no means. The state is composed of many clans. They all like their own clan and dislike other clans. And there is strife among the strong and struggle among the weak. Therefore the clan patriarchs should again organize the purposes in the clan and identify them with those of the feudal lord. The feudal lord also should give laws and should proclaim to the state: "Whoever discovers a benefactor of the state shall report it; whoever discovers a malefactor of the state shall report it. Whoever reports a benefactor of the state upon seeing one is equivalent to benefiting the state himself. Knowing him the superior will reward him, hearing of him the people will praise him. Whoever fails to report a malefactor of the state upon seeing one is equivalent to doing evil to the state himself. Knowing him the superior will punish him, hearing of him the people will condemn him." Thereupon all people in the state wish to obtain reward and honour and avoid denunciation and punishment from their superior. Seeing the good they will report, seeing the evil they will report. And the feudal lord can reward the good and punish the evil. With the good rewarded and the evil punished, the feudal state will surely have order. Now, why is it that the state becomes orderly? Just because the administration is based on the principle of Identification with the Superior.

1. 義：Inserted. 孫詒讓《墨子閒詁》

¹，天下必治矣。然計天下之所以治者何也？唯而以尚同一義為政故也。

Identification with the Superior...: Now that the feudal state is in order, is that all there is to the way of governing the empire? By no means. The empire is composed of many states. They all like their own state and dislike other states. And there is strife among the strong and struggle among the weak. Therefore the feudal lord should again organize the purposes in the state and identify them with those of the emperor. The emperor also should give laws and should proclaim to the empire: "Whoever discovers a benefactor of the empire shall report it; whoever discovers a malefactor of the empire shall report it. Whoever reports a benefactor of the empire upon seeing one is equivalent to benefiting the state himself. Knowing him the superior will reward him, hearing of him the people will praise him. Whoever fails to report a malefactor upon seeing one is equivalent to doing evil to the empire himself. Knowing him the superior will punish him, hearing of him the people will condemn him." Thereupon all the people in the empire will wish to obtain reward and honour and avoid denunciation and punishment from their emperor. Seeing the good and the evil they will report. And the emperor can reward the good and punish the evil. With the good rewarded and the evil punished, the empire will surely have order. Now why is it that the empire becomes orderly? Just because the administration is based on the principle of Identification with the Superior.

7

Identification with the Superior...: Now that the empire becomes orderly, the emperor will further organize the purposes in the empire and identify them with the Will of Heaven. Therefore Identification with the Superior as a principle can govern the empire when used by the emperor, it can govern the state when used by the feudal lord, and it can govern the clan when used by the clan patriarch. To be found not wanting when used on a large scale to govern the empire, and not useless when employed on a small scale to govern a clan - this is said of such a principle.

8

Identification with the Superior...: Hence the proverb: "To govern the world-empire is the same as to rule a single family clan; to command all the people in the world is the same as to order a single individual." Does any one think that all this is just a fancy of Mozi, and that this teaching did not exist among the sage-kings of old? Really they were of the same opinion. All the sage-kings administered their government by the principle of Identification with the Superior, therefore the world became orderly. How do we know it is so? It is recorded in the "Grand Oath" among the books of the ancient kings: "If an unscrupulous man discovers a case of intrigue and deception and fails to make it known, he shall be punished equally." This is to say that whoever discovers any crime and does not report it will be taken as committing a crime of the same order.

9

Identification with the Superior...: Therefore in governing the empire, the ancient sage-kings chose only the excellent for the outposts as well as for the offices near him. As there were many to help him see and bear, he succeeded before others in planning, and completed before others in executing, and his good name was spread before others. Just because he could trust his staff in the administration, the benefits were as we have stated. There is an ancient proverb saying: "The sight of one eye cannot compare with that of two, the hearing of one ear cannot compare with that of two, the grasp of one hand cannot compare with that of two." Now, just because he could trust his staff in the administration the sage-king received such benefits. Therefore during the reign of the ancient sage-king over the empire, if there was a virtuous man more than a thousand li away he could reward him before the people in the same district and village all got to know it. And if there was a wicked man about a thousand li away he could punish him before the people in the same district and village all got to know it. Though it may be supposed that the sage-king was keen in hearing and sight, how could he see all that is beyond a thousand li at one look, how could he hear all that is beyond a thousand li at one hearing? In fact the sage-king could see without going there and hear without being near. Yet what kept the thieves, robbers, bandits, and highwaymen moving all over the empire without being able to find refuge anywhere? There is the beauty of adopting the principle of Identification with the Superior in government.

10

Identification with the Superior...: Therefore Mozi said: Whoever orders his people to identify themselves with their superior must love them dearly. For the people will not obey orders except when they are ordered with love and held in confidence. Lead them with wealth and honour ahead, and push them with just punishments from behind. When government is carried on like this, even though I wanted to have some one not to identify himself with me, it would be impossible.

Identification with the Superior...: Therefore Mozi said: If the kings, dukes, and important personages of the world now sincerely want to practise magnanimity and righteousness and be superior men, if they want to attain the way of the sage-kings on the one hand and contribute toward the benefit of the people on the other, they cannot leave the principle of Identification with the Superior unexamined and un-understood. Identification with the Superior is, indeed, the foundation of government and essence of orderliness.