

Duke Huan said, “The states of Lu and Liang are [as close] to Qi as the grain and the path running between fields, as the bee and its sting, or as teeth and lips. Now I wish to subjugate Lu and Liang. How should I carry this out?”

Guanzi replied, “The people of Lu and Liang have traditionally produced a coarse, greenish-black *ti* silk. Your grace should wear this silk and order his officials of the left and right to do the same. The people will then follow along and wear it also. Your Grace should then issue another order prohibiting people in Qi from producing *ti* silk but requiring them to rely on Lu and Liang for their supply. The people of Lu and Liang will consequently abandon their agricultural work to produce it.”

“Agreed,” said the duke and began wearing *ti* silk in the area south of Mount Tai.

After the duke had worn it for ten days, Guanzi addressed traders from Lu and Liang, saying, “If you gentlemen will deliver a thousand bolts of *ti* silk, we will give you three hundred catties of gold. If you can make ten times that, we will give you three thousand catties of gold. In such a way, Lu and Liang will have sufficient fiscal resources without levying taxes on its people.” When the princes of Lu and Liang heard this, they instructed their people to produce *ti* silk.

Thirteen months later, Guanzi sent men to Lu and Liang [who reported back] that people jamming the cities and suburbs there were so numerous that the roads were blanketed with flying dust and one could not see more than ten paces ahead. People could only shuffle along, following in each other’s footsteps. The wheel hubs of carts bumped against each other like a mouth full of teeth, and those on horseback could only move forward like a column of cavalry.

“Lu and Liang may now be subjugated,” said Guanzi.

“How?” asked the duke.

“It would be best if you were to wear fine white *po* silk and lead your people in rejecting *ti* silk. You should also close the border and not permit Lu and Liang to send in their emissaries.”

“Agreed,” said the duke.

Ten months later, Guanzi again sent men to Lu and Liang who reported back that the people of Lu and Liang were suffering from unending hunger, and they no longer had the means to pay taxes, which they once paid the instant the request for them was made known. The princes of Lu and Liang had ordered their people to abandon *ti* silk and restore agricultural production, but it would be three months before any grain could be gained from it. The men of Lu and Liang were being forced to pay a thousand cash for grain, which the men of Qi would sell for only ten.

By the twenty-fourth month, 60 percent of the people of Lu and Liang had fled to Qi, and by the third year, the princes of Lu and Liang asked to surrender.