The Complete Works of Zhuangzi

Translated by Burton Watson

THE COMPLETE WORKS OF ZHUANGZI

TRANSLATIONS FROM THE ASIAN CLASSICS

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FROM THE
ASIAN CLASSICS

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Zhuangzi

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TRANSLATED BY

Burton Watson

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INTRODUCTION

All we know about the identity of Zhuangzi, or Master Zhuang, are the few facts recorded in the brief notice given him in the *Shiji* or *Records of the Historian* (ch. 63) by Sima Qian (145?–89? BCE). According to this account, his personal name was Zhou, he was a native of a place called Meng, and he once served as "an official in the lacquer garden" there. Sima Qian adds that he lived at the same time as King Hui (370–319 BCE) of Liang and King Xuan (319–301 BCE) of Qi, which would make him a contemporary of Mencius, and that he wrote a work in 100,000 words or more that was "mostly in the nature of fable." A certain number of anecdotes concerning Zhuangzi appear in the book that bears his name, though it is difficult, in view of the deliberate fantasy that characterizes the book as a whole, to regard these as reliable biography.

Scholars disagree as to whether "lacquer garden" is the name of a specific location or simply means lacquer groves in general, and the location of Meng is uncertain, though it was probably in present-day Henan, south of the Yellow River. If this last supposition is correct, it means that Zhuang Zhou was a native of the state of Song, a fact that may have important implications.

When the Zhou people of western China conquered and replaced the Shang or Yin dynasty around the eleventh century BCE, they enfeoffed the descendants of the Shang kings as rulers of the region of Song in eastern Henan, in order that they might carry on the sacrifices to their illustrious ancestors. Though Song was never an important state, it managed to maintain its existence

throughout the long centuries of the Zhou dynasty until 286 BCE, when it was overthrown by three of its neighbors and its territory divided up among them. It is natural to suppose that both the ruling house and many of the citizens of Song were descended from the Shang people and that they preserved to some extent the rites, customs, and ways of thought that had been characteristic of Shang culture. The *Book of Odes*, it may be noted, contains five "Hymns of Shang" that deal with the legends of the Shang royal family and that scholars agree were either composed or handed down by the rulers of the state of Song. Song led a precarious existence, constantly invaded or threatened by more powerful neighbors, and in later centuries its weakness was greatly aggravated by incessant internal strife. The ruling house of Song possessed a history unrivaled for its bloodiness, even in an age of disorder. Its inhabitants, as descendants of the conquered Shang people, were undoubtedly despised and oppressed by the more powerful states that belonged to the lineage of the Zhou conquerors, and the "man of Song" appears in the literature of late Zhou times as a stock figure of the ignorant simpleton.

All these facts of Song life—the preservation of the legends and religious beliefs of the Shang people, the political and social oppression, the despair born of weakness and strife—may go far to elucidate the background from which Zhuangzi's thought sprang and to explain why, in its skepticism and mystical detachment, it differs so radically from Confucianism, the basically optimistic and strongly political-minded philosophy that developed in the Zhou lineage states of Lu and Qi. But since we know so little about the life and identity of Zhuang Zhou or his connection with the book that bears his name, it is perhaps best not to seek too assiduously to establish a direct causal connection between the background and the philosophy.

Whoever Zhuang Zhou was, the writings attributed to him bear the stamp of a brilliant and original mind.

Instead of speculating on the possible sources from which this mind drew its ideas, let us turn to an examination of the ideas themselves. I shall simply state that from here on, when I speak of Zhuangzi, I am referring not to a specific individual known to us through history but to the mind, or group of minds, revealed in the text called *Zhuangzi*, particularly the first seven sections of that text.

The central theme of the *Zhuangzi* may be summed up in a single word: freedom. Essentially, all the philosophers of ancient China addressed themselves to the same problem: how is man to live in a world dominated by chaos, suffering, and absurdity? Nearly all of them answered with some concrete plan of action designed to reform the individual, to reform society, and eventually to free the world from its ills. The proposals put forward by the Confucians, the Mohists, and the Legalists, to name some of the principal schools of philosophy, all are different but all are based on the same kind of commonsense approach to the problem, and all seek concrete social, political, and ethical reforms to solve it. Zhuangzi's answer, however, the answer of one branch of the Daoist school, is radically different from these and is grounded on a wholly different type of thinking. It is the answer of a mystic, and in attempting to describe it here in clear and concrete language, I shall undoubtedly be doing violence to its essentially mystic and indescribable nature. Zhuangzi's answer to the question is: free yourself from the world.

What does he mean by this? In section 23 he tells the story of a man named Nanrong Zhu who went to visit the Daoist sage Laozi in hopes of finding some solution to his worries. When he appeared, Laozi promptly inquired, "Why did you come with all this crowd of people?" The man whirled around in astonishment to see if there was someone standing behind him. Needless to say, there was not; the "crowd of people" that he came with was the baggage of old ideas, the conventional concepts of right and wrong, good and bad, life and death, that he lugged about with him wherever he went.

It is this baggage of conventional values that man must first of all discard before he can be free. Zhuangzi saw the same human sufferings that Confucius, Mozi, and Mencius saw. He saw the man-made ills of war, poverty, and injustice. He saw the natural ills of disease and death. But he believed that they were ills only because man recognized them as such. If man would once forsake his habit of labeling things good or bad, desirable or undesirable, then the man-made ills, which are the product of man's purposeful and value-ridden actions, would disappear, and the natural ills that remain would no longer be seen as ills but as an inevitable part of the course of life. Thus in Zhuangzi's eyes, man is the author of his own suffering and bondage, and all his fears spring from the web of values created by himself alone. Zhuangzi sums up this whole diseased, fear-struck condition of mankind in the macabre metaphor of the leper woman who "when she gives birth to a child in the deep of the night, rushes to fetch a torch and examine it, trembling with terror lest it look like herself" (sec. 12).

But how is one to persuade the leper woman that disease and ugliness are mere labels that have no real validity? It is no easy task, and for this reason the philosophy of Zhuangzi, like most mystical philosophies, has seldom been fully understood and embraced in its pure form by more than a small minority. Most of the philosophies of ancient China are addressed to the political or intellectual elite; Zhuangzi's is addressed to the spiritual elite.

Difficult though the task may be, however, Zhuangzi employs every resource of rhetoric in his efforts to awaken the reader to the essential meaninglessness of conventional values and to free him from their bondage. One device he uses to great effect is the pointed or paradoxical anecdote, the non sequitur or apparently nonsensical remark that jolts the mind into awareness of a truth outside the pale of ordinary logic—a device familiar to Western readers of Chinese and Japanese Zen literature. The other device most common in his writings is the pseu-

dological discussion or debate that starts out sounding completely rational and sober and ends by reducing language to a gibbering inanity. These two devices are found in their purest form in the first two sections of the *Zhuangzi*, which together constitute one of the fiercest and most dazzling assaults ever made, not only on man's conventional system of values, but on his conventional concepts of time, space, reality, and causation as well.

Finally, Zhuangzi uses throughout his writings that deadliest of weapons against all that is pompous, staid, and holy: humor. Most Chinese philosophers employ humor sparingly—a wise decision, no doubt, in view of the serious tone they seek to maintain—and some of them seem never to have heard of it at all. Zhuangzi, on the contrary, makes it the very core of his style, for he appears to have known that one good laugh would do more than ten pages of harangue to shake the reader's confidence in the validity of his pat assumptions.

In Zhuangzi's view, the man who has freed himself from conventional standards of judgment can no longer be made to suffer, for he refuses to recognize poverty as any less desirable than affluence, to recognize death as any less desirable than life. He does not in any literal sense withdraw and hide from the world—to do so would show that he still passed judgment on the world. He remains within society but refrains from acting out of the motives that lead ordinary men to struggle for wealth, fame, success, or safety. He maintains a state that Zhuangzi refers to as *wuwei*, or inaction, meaning by this term not a forced quietude but a course of action that is not founded on purposeful motives of gain or striving. In such a state, all human actions become as spontaneous and mindless as those of the natural world. Man becomes one with Nature, or Heaven, as Zhuangzi calls it, and merges himself with Dao, or the Way, the underlying unity that embraces man, Nature, and all that is in the universe.

To describe this mindless, purposeless mode of life, Zhuangzi turns most often to the analogy of the artist or

craftsman. The skilled woodcarver, the skilled butcher, the skilled swimmer does not ponder or ratiocinate on the course of action he should take; his skill has become so much a part of him that he merely acts instinctively and spontaneously and, without knowing why, achieves success. Again, Zhuangzi employs the metaphor of a totally free and purposeless journey, using the word *you* (to wander, or a wandering) to designate the way in which the enlightened man wanders through all of creation, enjoying its delights without ever becoming attached to any one part of it.

But like all mystics, Zhuangzi insists that language is, in the end, grievously inadequate to describe the true Way, or the wonderful freedom of the man who has realized his identity with it. Again and again, he cautions that he is giving only a "rough" or "reckless" description of these things and what follows is usually a passage of highly poetic and paradoxical language that in fact conveys little more than the essential ineffability of such a state of being.

These mystical passages, with their wild and whirling words, need not puzzle the reader if he recognizes them for what they are, but there is one aspect of them that calls for comment. Often Zhuangzi describes the Daoist sage or enlightened man in terms suggesting that he possesses magical powers, that he moves in a trancelike state, that he is impervious to all harm and perhaps even is immortal. In these descriptions, Zhuangzi is probably drawing on the language of ancient Chinese religion and magic, and there were undoubtedly men in his day, as there were in later centuries, who believed that such magical powers, including the power to become immortal, were attainable. I am inclined to believe that Zhuangzi—that is, the author of the most profound and penetrating portions of the book that bears his name—intended these descriptions to be taken metaphorically. But there is evidence elsewhere in the *Zhuangzi* that they were taken literally, and countless followers of the Daoist school in later

ages certainly interpreted them that way. Perhaps, as Arthur Waley says, the best approach is not to attempt to draw any sharp line between rationalism and superstition, between philosophy and magic, but to be prepared to find them mingled and overlapping. After all, it is the drawing of forced and unnatural distinctions that Zhuangzi most vehemently condemns. In the end, the best way to approach Zhuangzi, I believe, is not to attempt to subject his thought to rational and systematic analysis, but to read and reread his words until one has ceased to think of what he is saying and instead has developed an intuitive sense of the mind moving behind the words, and of the world in which it moves.

Zhuangzi, along with Laozi, or Lao Dan, has long been revered as one of the founders of the Daoist school. Because it was believed that Laozi was a contemporary of Confucius and that he was the author of the book known as the *Laozi*, or *Daodejing*, he has long been honored as the prime patriarch of the school, and Zhuangzi, as a later disciple and continuer of his doctrines. Most scholars now agree that it is impossible to say whether Laozi ever lived or, if he did, to determine exactly when. He appears in the pages of the *Zhuangzi* as one of a number of Daoist sages, but this signifies very little, since so many of the figures in Zhuangzi's writings are clearly fictitious. Zhuangzi at no point makes any reference to the *Daodejing*; there are a few places where he uses language that is similar to or identical with that of the *Daodejing*, but these do not prove that one text is earlier than the other or that there is any direct connection between them. Moreover, Zhuangzi's brand of Daoism, as is often pointed out, is in many respects quite different from that expounded in the *Daodejing*. Therefore, though the two may have drawn on common sources and certainly became fused in later times, it seems best to consider them separately—which is why I have not discussed the philosophy of the *Daodejing* here. There is much disagreement among scholars as to when

the *Daodejing* attained its present form, though it is safe to assume, I believe, that both the *Zhuangzi* and the *Daodejing* circulated in something like their present form from the second century BCE on, that is, from the beginning of the Han dynasty (202 BCE–220 CE).

In the early years of the Han dynasty, the *Daodejing*, probably because of its brevity and relative simplicity of language, seems to have enjoyed greater popularity than the *Zhuangzi*. It is repeatedly quoted or alluded to in the literature of the period, and several influential statesmen of the time, including a strong-willed empress dowager, advocated its doctrines. The court official Sima Tan (d. 110 BCE), father of the historian Sima Qian, wrote a brief essay, "A Discussion of the Essentials of the Six Schools," in which he reviewed the doctrines of the most important philosophical schools of the time and came out strongly in favor of Daoism. The *Huainanzi*, an eclectic work compiled by scholars of the court of Liu An (d. 122 BCE), the king of Huainan, dates from the same period; it includes many excerpts from the *Zhuangzi* and *Laozi* and, like Sima Tan, reserves the highest praise for the teachings of the Daoist school.

In spite of this relative popularity, however, Daoism was gradually overshadowed by Confucianism, which won official recognition from the Han emperor toward the end of the second century BCE and was declared the orthodox philosophy of the state, with a government university set up in the capital to teach its doctrines to prospective officials. This did not mean that Daoist writings were in any way suppressed. People were still free to read and study them, and we may be sure that educated men of the Han continued to savor the literary genius of Zhuangzi and Laozi as they had in the past. It simply meant that Daoist writings were not accorded any official recognition as the basis for decisions on state and public affairs.

In the intellectual world of late Zhou times, a number of rival doctrines had contended for supremacy, and the thinkers of the age had frequently attacked one another

with vigor and asperity. Mozi had denounced Confucianism; Mencius and Xunzi had denounced Mohism; and the Legalist philosopher Han Feizi had denounced both doctrines. Zhuangzi had spent a certain amount of time attacking the philosophers of other schools—the pompously moralistic Confucians and Mohists, the Logicians Hui Shi and Gongsun Long with their hairsplitting semantics—though his customary weapon was parody and ridicule rather than polemic.

But by the first century BCE, many of the old sharp differences of opinion had been forgotten or softened by time. Mohism and the School of Logic had all but disappeared from the intellectual scene, and the principal battle was between the two rival philosophies of government: Confucianism, nominally the official doctrine of the state, with its emphasis on moral guidance of the people, and Legalism, which stressed regimentation through stern and detailed laws and held a strong attraction for the totalitarian-minded rulers and statesmen of the time. Daoism, being basically apolitical, remained in the background, to be drawn on by either side, though in Han times it was more often the Confucian scholars who utilized the Daoist concept of inaction to oppose the state monopolies and other large-scale government enterprises advocated by the Legalist-minded officials.[1]

One should therefore think of Confucianism and Daoism in Han times not as rival systems demanding a choice for one side or the other but rather as two complementary doctrines, an ethical and political system for the conduct of public and family life, and a mystical philosophy for the spiritual nourishment of the individual, with the metaphysical teachings of the *Book of Changes* acting as a bridge between the two.

This approach is well exemplified in the lives of two scholars, Shu Guang and his nephew Shu Shou, students of the Confucian classics who served as tutors to the heir apparent of Emperor Xuan (r. 74–49 BCE), instructing him in the *Analects* and the *Classic of Filial Piety*. When Shu

1. See, for example, the *Yantie lun,* or *Debates on Salt and Iron,* sec. 57, where the Confucian literati quote Laozi to support their ideal of laissez-faire government. Similarly, they quote or refer to Mohist teachings when they wish to emphasize frugality and the need to reduce government expenditures.

Guang felt he had reached the pinnacle of success and honor, he announced, in the words of Laozi, that "he who knows what is enough will not be shamed; he who knows where to stop will not be in danger." He and his nephew then petitioned the emperor for release from their official duties and, when it had been granted, retired to the country (*Hanshu* 71).

Or, to turn from officialdom to the world of private citizens, we may note the case of a scholar named Yan Junping of the region of Sichuan, who made his living as a diviner in the marketplace of Chengdu. He admitted that this was a rather lowly occupation but explained that he pursued it "because I can thereby benefit the common people. When men come to me with questions about something that is evil or improper, I use the oracle as an excuse to advise them on what is right. I advise sons to be filial, younger brothers to be obedient, subjects to be loyal, utilizing whatever the circumstances may be to lead the people to what is right—and more than half of them follow my advice!" So Yan Junping spent his days instructing the people in this ingenious fashion, in the dictates of conventional morality. But when he had made enough money for one day, "he shut up his stall, lowered the blinds, and gave instruction in the *Laozi*" (*Hanshu* 72). He was the author of a work, which was based on the doctrines of Laozi and Zhuangzi, and was a teacher of the most eminent Confucian philosopher of the time, Yang Xiong (53 BCE–18 CE). So compatible did the two doctrines seem, in fact, that one eulogist of the period went so far as to describe the ruling house of the Eastern Han as "pondering Confucius's injunction to 'master self,' practicing Laozi's ideal of 'constant sufficiency'" (Zhang Heng [78–139 CE], "*Fu* on the Eastern Capital").

Thus, like so many Chinese of later centuries, these men of the Han were both Confucians and Daoists by turns, depending on which doctrine was appropriate to their particular activities or phase of life, and in this way

they contrived, with considerable success, to enjoy the best of two superb philosophies.

Confucianism continued to receive official support and to dominate the intellectual life of China during the remaining centuries of the Han dynasty. With the decay and final collapse of the dynasty in 220 CE, the empire split into three rival kingdoms and entered an era of strife and disunion, aggravated by repeated foreign invasion, that was to last until the Sui once more unified China in 581 CE. Though Daoism had by no means been forgotten during the long years of the Han, the shock occasioned by the downfall of the dynasty and the political disorder that ensued led men to reexamine the texts of Daoism and the other ancient schools of philosophy with fresh interest to see if their teachings could be used in some way to supplement or correct the tenets of Confucianism, which had to some extent been discredited or called into doubt by the fall of the dynasty that had espoused them. The gradual spread of Buddhism during these same centuries helped foster this revival of interest in Daoism, often referred to as Neo-Daoism, because so many of the doctrines of the Indian religion appeared, on the surface at least, to be strikingly similar to those of Laozi and Zhuangzi.

At this time, the philosophy of Zhuangzi came to be studied and appreciated to a degree unknown before. Its unconventionality and skepticism appealed to an age of disorder in which conventional moral standards seemed to have lost all validity; its implications of a spiritual elite who could transcend the bonds of the world and wander in a realm beyond life and death—whether such release was interpreted metaphorically or literally—appealed to a society dominated by aristocratic tastes. It was an age of ferment, of widening intellectual horizons, in many ways like that of Zhuangzi himself, and one in which Zhuangzi's mystic vision of freedom seemed to make better sense than it ever had during the staid and stable years

of the Han empire. It was also, to note its grimmer side, an age of political peril and violent reversal of fortune, and Zhuangzi's assurances that death is as much to be desired as life must have brought comfort to the numerous officials and intellectual leaders of the time who, victims of some sudden shift of power, were obliged to face the executioner's ax.

Our present version of the *Zhuangzi* dates from this period and was edited by Guo Xiang (d. 312 CE), one of the leaders of the Neo-Daoist movement. Guo Xiang appended a commentary to the text, the oldest commentary now in existence, which may in part be the work of a predecessor, Xiang Xiu, who lived in the first half of the third century CE. In any event, it is the text and commentary of Guo Xiang's edition of the *Zhuangzi* that form the basis for all our present versions of the work.

The bibliography compiled at the end of the first century BCE and preserved in the "Treatise on Literature" of the *Hanshu* lists a *Zhuangzi* in fifty-two sections. When Guo Xiang compiled his edition some three centuries later, he discarded a number of sections that he considered to be inferior and of patently spurious nature and settled on a text consisting of thirty-three sections. These he divided into three groups in the following order: seven sections called *neipian* or "inner chapters," fifteen sections called *waipian* or "outer chapters," and eleven sections called *zapian* or "miscellaneous chapters." The titles of the "inner chapters" are descriptive of the theme of the chapter as a whole and were probably affixed by the writer himself. Those of the "outer" and "miscellaneous" chapters, on the other hand, are taken from the opening words of the chapter and often have little to do with the chapter as a whole, suggesting that they were added later and that in some cases, these chapters are more in the nature of collections of fragments.

It is generally agreed that the seven "inner chapters," all of which are translated here, constitute the heart of the Zhuangzi. They contain all the important ideas, are writ-

ten in a brilliant and distinctive—though difficult—style, and are probably the earliest in date, though so far no way has been found to prove this last assumption. Whether they are the work of the man called Zhuang Zhou we do not know, but they are certainly in the main the product of a superbly keen and original mind, though they may contain brief interpolations by other hands. The remainder of the *Zhuangzi* is a mixture, sections of which may be as old—they are at times almost as brilliant—as the "inner chapters," sections of which may date from as late as the third or fourth centuries CE. In places these remaining sections seem to represent a deliberate imitation or reworking of passages and ideas found in the "inner chapters." Earlier scholars, who believed that the *Zhuangzi* was mainly, if not entirely, the work of a single writer, suggested that Zhuangzi fashioned these later chapters to act as "commentaries" or "explications" of his basic text, the seven "inner chapters," and this view is by no means untenable, though it seems more likely that they are the work of somewhat later writers.

Some parts of the "outer" and "miscellaneous" chapters, for example, sections 8–11, seem, by their style and philosophical vocabulary, definitely to date from a period later than that of the "inner chapters." They contain a number of passages that closely parallel the *Daodejing* of Laozi, and it has been suggested that they represent the efforts of a writer or writers belonging to a "Laozi" wing of the Daoist school to bring about a fusion between the philosophies of Zhuangzi and Laozi, which, as we have seen, were at first quite separate. They are particularly insistent in their view of history as a steady devolution from the simplicity of high antiquity, a view characteristic of the *Daodejing*, and attack all man's inventions, all human civilization and culture, with a shrill, almost pathological fury that is unlike anything found in the "inner chapters."

Other passages, for example, the final part of section 11, appear to be attempts to combine the ideals of the Daoist, Confucian, Mohist, and Legalist schools into a single

hierarchical system of values, the type of sweeping syncretism so common in philosophical works of the Qin and early Han periods.

Sections 28–31 of the "miscellaneous chapters" have long been eyed with suspicion, for reasons of both style and content. Section 30 is particularly suspect because it lacks any commentary by Guo Xiang and has little or nothing to do with the philosophy of the *Zhuangzi*. These four sections, though of little originality in thought, are important to the study of Chinese literature because of the skill with which the rather elaborate settings of the anecdotes are handled, particularly in section 29. They represent an intermediate stage between the pure philosophical anecdote of early times such as is found in the "inner chapters," which has little or no narrative or descriptive framework, and the fully developed "tale" of later centuries. If we could determine their date of composition—my own guess would be early Han, since they are so close in form and style to such works as the "Diviners of Lucky Days" chapter in the *Shiji*[2]—we might fit them into their proper place in the history of the development of Chinese fiction.

2. *Shiji* 127; see the translator's *Records of the Grand Historian* (New York, Columbia University Press, 1961), II, 468–75. It should be noted that the *Shiji*, in its account of Zhuangzi, mentions two of these sections by name, sec. 29, "Robber Zhi," and sec. 31, "The Old Fisherman," though of course we cannot be certain that the texts of these sections we have today are the ones that Sima Qian knew.

It was customary in the compiling of early Chinese books to place at the end of such material as we in the West place at the beginning, that is, a table of contents, a summary of the work as a whole, biographical information on the author and his aims, and so forth. Section 32 probably owes its present position as the next to last chapter in the text to the fact that it contains an anecdote dealing with the funeral of Zhuangzi and thus in a sense represents the conclusion of his "biography." Section 33, with which the *Zhuangzi* ends, differs in nature from all the other chapters. Entitled "The World," it is a survey of the world of Chinese philosophy in late Zhou times, containing descriptions of most of the major thinkers and philosophical schools, including that of Zhuangzi himself. It is the earliest such description we have and is of enormous value in the study of Chinese thought, particularly

as it contains accounts of thinkers whose writings no longer survive. Exactly what relation it is intended to bear to the rest of the *Zhuangzi* is uncertain; we can only be thankful that because of its inclusion in that work, it has survived the centuries.

Waley, in his discussion of the authorship of the *Zhuangzi*, states that "some parts are by a splendid poet, others are by a feeble scribbler" (*Three Ways of Thought in Ancient China*, p. 255). In my earlier selected translation, *Zhuangzi: Basic Writings*, I tried to avoid the feeble scribbler, presenting only sections 1–7, 17–19, and 26. The present work, however, is a complete translation of the *Zhuangzi*, and the reader must take the dull parts with the good. I have already noted how the thought of the "outer" and "miscellaneous" chapters sometimes merely apes, at other times departs from, or even contradicts, that of the "inner chapters." The same may be said of the style. The "inner chapters" are characterized by a wealth of lively and witty anecdotes, and anecdotes of a similar excellence may be found in the other chapters as well, among them some of the most famous passages in the *Zhuangzi*. But this high level is not always maintained, and one also finds anecdotes that are long-winded, clumsy in construction, or even seem to lack any point, though these defects may be due in part to faulty transmission of the text. Passages in which the writer sermonizes in his own words, relatively few in the "inner chapters," increase in length and frequency, sometimes occupying a whole chapter, and are often marred by wearisome prolixity. Even the techniques of wordplay and paradox, so brilliantly exploited in the "inner chapters," tend at times to deteriorate into mere mannerism, and the pure poetry of the Dao gives way to Daoist jargon and cant. All this is hardly to be wondered at in a work composed by various hands over a considerable period of time; I mention it here only to prepare the reader for the unevenness he will encounter and to encourage him to push on to the delights that lie ahead.

Though a considerable amount of critical work has been done on the text of the *Zhuangzi*, and there are an almost endless number of commentaries, the meaning of many passages remains a matter of doubt. There are two reasons for this: the intrinsic difficulty of Zhuangzi's language and thought, and the textual corruption that has arisen, almost inevitably we may suppose, in the transmission of such a difficult text.

Zhuangzi, as I have said, rejects all conventional values, and as a result, like so many mystical writers, he rejects the conventional values of words as well, deliberately employing them to mean the opposite of what they ordinarily mean in order to demonstrate their essential meaninglessness. When a writer does this, he of course invites misunderstanding, no matter how dazzling the literary effect he achieves. This is what has happened to Zhuangzi. His grammar is regular enough; his sentence patterns are, for the most part, like those of other writers of the period; but because what he says is so often the direct opposite of what anyone else would say, commentators have again and again been led to wonder if he really does not mean something other than what he says or if the text is perhaps corrupt.

In order to pry men loose from their conventional concepts of goodness and beauty, for example, Zhuangzi deliberately glorifies everything that to ordinary eyes appears sordid, base, or bizarre—ex-criminals who have suffered mutilating punishments, men who are horribly ugly or deformed, creatures of grotesque shape or size. As an illustration—and because the passage is so important to Daoist philosophy—let me quote one of Zhuangzi's most famous descriptions of the Dao or the Way:

> Master Dongguo asked Zhuangzi, "This thing called the Way—where does it exist?"
>
> Zhuangzi said, "There's no place it doesn't exist."
>
> "Come," said Master Dongguo, "you must be more specific!"

"It is in the ant."
"As low a thing as that?"
"It is in the panic grass."
"But that's lower still!"
"It is in the tiles and shards."
"How can it be so low?"
"It is in the piss and shit." (sec. 22)

But in Zhuangzi's language, if ugly stands for beautiful, or something beyond both beauty and ugliness, and bad stands for good, or something beyond it, then what do beautiful and good stand for? In other words, since Zhuangzi deliberately turns the values of words upside down, how are we ever to know for certain when he is sincerely praising something? This is the most serious problem one encounters in the interpretation of Daoist writings, as it is in the interpretation of the writings of Zen Buddhism. In any given passage, is the writer, regardless of what words he uses, describing a state of affairs that is in his eyes commendable or uncommendable? Depending on how one answers this question, the interpretation of the entire passage will differ radically. (An example of this problem is pointed out in note 4 to section 3.)

As has already been suggested, Zhuangzi, though he writes in prose, uses words in the manner of a poet, particularly in the lyrical descriptions of the Way or the Daoist sage, where meaning often takes second place to sound and emotive force. In the broader sense of the word, his work is in fact one of the greatest poems of ancient China. For this reason, it seems to me particularly important to stick as closely as possible to the precise wording and imagery of the Chinese. For example, in section 5 there is a passage in which Confucius is pictured discussing the need to harmonize with and delight in all the manifold ups and downs of human existence, to "master them and never be at a loss for joy," adding that one should "make it be spring with everything." This last phrase, literally, "with things make spring," is an example

of the highly poetic language that Zhuangzi employs in such passages and for which he is justly admired. To render the phrase as "live in peace with mankind" (Giles), or "be kind with things" (Feng Youlan) not only blurs the image of the original beyond recognition but suggests that Zhuangzi is mouthing platitudes when in fact he is using the Chinese language as it had never been used before. No other text of early times, with the possible exception of the *Zuozhuan*, so fully exploits the beauties of ancient Chinese—its vigor, its economy, its richness and symmetry—and it is for this reason that I have chosen to render the wording of the original as closely as possible, even though the English that results may at times sound somewhat strange. Zhuangzi uses words in unconventional ways, and he deserves a translation that at least attempts to do justice to his imaginativeness.

I have not hesitated to make free use of colloquialisms—a great part of the *Zhuangzi* is in the form of informal dialogues—or of slang; I do so, however, not in order to create a "jazzy" effect but because such words or constructions seem to me to get closer to the original than more formal English could. I have also tried to suggest some of the auditory effects and wordplays of the original. Frequently Zhuangzi takes a single word such as "knowledge," or a pair such as "Heaven" and "man," and plays at great length on their various usages and shades of meaning, employing them now as nouns, later as verbs. In order to follow the continuity of such passages, the reader must realize that it is a single word that is being played with, and I have therefore worked to preserve this unity in translation, though it may lead at times to a certain amount of awkwardness and pleonasm. The alliterative and rhyming binomes that contribute so much to the vividness of ancient Chinese I have tried to suggest by the use of similar devices in English, though I have employed them with somewhat less frequency than has the original, lest they become obtrusive. I have not attempted to reproduce the occasional rhymed passages, merely pointing out their existence in notes,

since rhyme in present-day English, unless used with great skill, has a tendency, it seems to me, to sound either ironic or facetious, and I do not believe that was its effect in ancient Chinese. Whenever I have substantially added to the wording of the original in translation, I have enclosed the added words in brackets.

Needless to say, for all my zeal to render the literal meaning of the original, I could not do so until I had first decided what it was, and in this sense my translation is as much an interpretation, and as tentative in many places, as any other. Waley remarks that translations of the *Zhuangzi* often tend to be "translations of the commentaries rather than of the text," because "the text itself is so corrupt as to be frequently quite unintelligible" (*Three Ways of Thought*, p. 199). In his own study of Zhuangzi, he attempts to get around this difficulty by translating at times not from the *Zhuangzi* itself but from parallel passages found in the *Huainanzi*, a work of the second century BCE already mentioned, and the *Liezi*, a Daoist work of uncertain date, whose text is more intelligible. These passages in the *Huainanzi* and *Liezi* may in fact represent the original version of passages that later became corrupt in the *Zhuangzi* itself. On the other hand, however, they may represent emended and rewritten versions created by the compilers of the *Huainanzi* and *Liezi* because they could not understand the *Zhuangzi* text itself.

What, then, are we to do with the passages that, in Waley's words, are "quite unintelligible"? If they are not to be omitted entirely, emendation would seem to be the only solution. But here we must note some of the dangers involved. First of all, is the passage in fact really unintelligible? Often, in the case of ancient Chinese, a different punctuation of the text or a different interpretation of the words makes sense of what at first glance seemed nonsense. In the *Han Feizi* translation I did some years ago, for example, I allowed myself at one point to be awed by the flat assertion of the Chinese commentator I was following that the text made no sense as it stood, and I

adopted the emendation he suggested; it has since been pointed out to me that the sentence makes perfectly good sense *when properly understood* and can even be supported by examples of the same usage in other works of the period. In this case, the commentator was too quick in emending, and I, too uncritical in accepting his judgment that emendation was necessary.

Again, what seems like a garble in the text may be unintelligible only because we lack sufficient knowledge of early Chinese society, customs, or religion. This is apt to be particularly true with a text like the *Zhuangzi*, which makes such frequent reference to folk beliefs and scenes of everyday life. Let me give an example, not from the *Zhuangzi*, but from the Confucian classic known as the *Shujing*, or *Book of Documents*, traditionally supposed to have been compiled and edited by Confucius himself. In the first section, the "Canon of Yao," near the beginning, there is a passage describing certain ritual and governmental activities associated with each of the four directions. Four times a brief sentence appears that begins "Its people. . . . " Thanks to information gained from the study of Shang period oracle bone inscriptions, we now know that the characters that follow the word "people" are the names of deities associated with each of the four directions, and of the winds of those directions. But by the time the first commentaries on the text were written, this fact was no longer known, and commentators had no choice but to struggle valiantly in an effort to interpret the names of the wind gods as verbs or adjectives descriptive of the people of the four directions. Now that we know the solution to the riddle, their struggles seem pathetic; but the point to note is that because of the sanctity of the text, they did not resort to facile emendation, and so the riddle continued to remain soluble until such time as the right data could be brought to bear on it. With examples such as these in mind, one may well shudder at the very thought of emendation.

Nevertheless, there are cases when emendation seems justifiable. Like Theobald's famous "a' babbled of green fields" emendation in *Henry V*, they may or may not represent what the author wrote, but they make beautiful sense of what was gibberish before and allow us to get on to the next line. Moreover, with a few notable exceptions such as the closing sentence of section 2, these garbles in the *Zhuangzi*, as the reader will see from my notes, appear for the most part not in places that are crucial to the overall philosophical import of the text but in the anecdotes or homely analogies with which Zhuangzi illustrates his ideas. Even if emended or interpreted incorrectly, therefore, they will not greatly affect the meaning of the whole. The real peril here is that commentators who are inclined by nature to emendation are seldom content to emend only those passages that are real gibberish but, giddy with their own ingenuity, go on to suggest ways to "improve" the reading of what is already intelligible, albeit a bit awkward or strange. The translator, if he is not to be seduced into following them in this beguiling but indefensible pastime, must constantly ask himself, is this emendation necessary?

As I trust I have made clear, the *Zhuangzi* confronts the translator with countless passages in which, in order to make sense, he must choose from a wide variety of interpretations and/or suggestions for emendation—more, probably, than any other full-length text of ancient China—and of course, critics may in turn question each of his choices if they feel it was not wisely made. There is no end to this game. In the note on bibliography at the end of this introduction, I mention briefly the commentaries and translations that I have drawn on. But the result inevitably represents my own interpretation of the text and will not be quite like that of anyone else. With a work of such difficulty, there can never be anything like a definitive translation, because there is no such thing as a definitive interpretation. Every translator who takes up the text will produce his own *Zhuangzi*, and the more that are available for the reader to enjoy and compare, the better.

As I have said, much of the *Zhuangzi* consists of anecdotes, often two or three anecdotes in a row that illustrate the same general theme and appear to be hardly more than different versions of a single story. In these anecdotes a variety of historical and semihistorical personages appear, as well as a delightful assortment of gods, mythical heroes, and talking trees, birds, insects, and other creatures. One such historical figure, the logician philosopher Hui Shi or Huizi, who seems to have been a friend of Zhuangzi, always represents the same viewpoint: that of "intellectuality as opposed to imagination," as Waley puts it (*Three Ways of Thought*, p. 12). But there is no consistency in the variety of viewpoints which the other figures are made to expound. Thus Confucius sometimes preaches conventional Confucian morality, while at other times he speaks in the words of a true Daoist sage, and even Zhuangzi himself appears on occasion in the role of the convention-ridden fool. The reader must learn to expect any opinion whatsoever from any source, to savor the outrageous incongruities, and to judge for himself which of the opinions offered represents the highest level of enlightenment.

In closing, I may add a word on the translation of certain key philosophical terms in the *Zhuangzi*. The term *Dao* I have translated throughout as "the Way," in order to remain consistent with the practice adopted in my earlier translations from other Chinese philosophers of the late Zhou. It is perfectly true that Zhuangzi means by this word something quite different from what Mozi, Xunzi, or Han Feizi meant. But all of them used the same Chinese word, and the reader may easily judge for himself how they interpreted it by observing the ways in which they used it. For the same reason, I have rendered *Tian* as "Heaven" or "heavenly" in nearly all cases. Zhuangzi uses the word to mean Nature, what pertains to the natural, as opposed to the artificial, or as a synonym for the Way. This, too, is very different from what Mozi or Xunzi meant by the word *Tian*, but again the reader may judge

the differences for himself. In nearly all cases I have rendered *de* as "virtue" except when it has the meaning of a favor or good deed done for someone. This word presents certain difficulties in Zhuangzi. Sometimes he employs it to mean conventional virtue—that is, virtue in the Confucian or Mohist sense—in which case it has bad connotations; at other times he employs it in a good sense to mean the true virtue or vital power that belongs to the man of Dao. (Compare Waley's rendering of the title *Daodejing* as *The Way and Its Power*). I prefer not to try to distinguish these two usages in the translation because I do not wish to impose on the English a distinction that is not explicit in the original. The reader should keep in mind, incidentally, that the words "virtue" (*de*) and "gain" or "to get" (*de*) are homophones, and this fact is the basis of frequent puns and wordplays—that is, the man of true Daoist virtue is one who, as we would say in English, has "got it." As already mentioned, I render *wuwei* as "inaction" and *you* as "to wander" or "wandering." In addition to inventing legendary figures with amusing and often significant names, Zhuangzi invents a variety of mysterious and high-sounding pseudotechnical terms to refer to the Way or the person who has made himself one with it. I have given a literal translation of such terms and capitalized them in order to indicate their special character—for example, Great Clod, Supreme Swindle, True Man. The reader need not puzzle over their precise meaning, since in the end they all refer to essentially the same thing—the inexpressible Absolute.

I used as the basis of my translation the *Zhuangzi buzheng* of Liu Wendian (Shanghai, 1947), principally because of its magnificent legibility, though I did not always follow its punctuation. It would be impractical to list all the commentaries I drew on directly or indirectly; I mention by name in my notes the commentator I followed in questionable passages, and the reader may identify the works by consulting the exhaustive bibliography of *Zhuangzi* commentaries in Guan Feng's modern-language translation and

study, *Zhuangzi neipian yijie he pipan* (Peking, 1961), pp. 370–403. Two works have been of particular assistance to me: one is the modern Chinese translation by Guan Feng just cited; the other is the Japanese translation by Fukunaga Mitsuji, *Sōshi*, in the Chūgoku kotensen series. The former is confined to the "inner chapters," the first seven sections of the text; the latter, a complete translation, is in three volumes, *Naihen* (Tokyo, 1956), *Gaihen* (1966), and *Zappen* (1967). Both works draw on all the important recent studies and contain invaluable notes and explanation. I have also consulted the complete modern Japanese translation by Hara Tomio, *Gendaigoyaku Sōshi* (Tokyo, 1962). Three works of the philosophy of Zhuangzi may be noted here: the *Zhuangzi zhexue taolun ji* (Peking, 1962), a collection of essays by Feng Youlan, Kuan Feng, and other Zhuangzi experts; and *Sōshi* (Tokyo, 1964) by Fukunaga Mitsuji, a study of Zhuangzi's thought intended for the general reader. Also of aid to the student and translator of Zhuangzi is the *Concordance to Chuang Tzu*, Harvard-Yenching Institute Sinological Index Series, Supplement No. 20 (1947).

I have consulted several earlier English translations: that by Herbert A. Giles, *Chuang Tzu: Mystic, Moralist, and Social Reformer* (London, 1889); that by James Legge in *The Sacred Books of the East*, vols. XXXIX–XL; that by James R. Ware, *The Sayings of Chuang Chou* (New York, New American Library [Mentor], 1963); that by Yu-lan Fung (Feng Youlan), *Chuang Tzu* (Shanghai, 1933); and the excerpts translated by Arthur Waley in *Three Ways of Thought in Ancient China* (London, 1939), and by Lin Yutang in *The Wisdom of Laotse* (Modern Library, 1948). The first three are complete translations of the *Zhuangzi*; the fourth is a translation of the "inner chapters"; while the last two contain excerpts from many different sections.

Giles, who produced the first complete English translation, is very free in his rendering and again and again substitutes what strike me as tiresome Victorian clichés for the complex and beautiful language of the original. In spite of

his offensive "literary" tone, however, he generally gets at what appears to me to be the real meaning of the text. Legge, whose translation appeared in 1891, is far more painstaking in reproducing the literal meaning, but perhaps because of his long years of work on the Confucian texts, he seems to miss Zhuangzi's point rather often and to labor to make common sense out of paradox and fantasy. Professor Ware's translation is marked by the peculiar terminology and unconventional interpretations characteristic of his other translations from early Chinese philosophy—for example, he describes Zhuangzi as a member of the "progressive, dynamic wing of Confucianism"—and for this reason, and because it lacks notes or adequate introductory material, it is of questionable value. Youlan Feng's work is important today mainly because it contains translations from the Guo Xiang commentary. Lin Yutang's *The Wisdom of Laotse* contains a great many well-translated anecdotes and isolated passages from the *Zhuangzi*, but they have been chopped up and completely rearranged to serve as a commentary on the *Daodejing*, making it impossible to appreciate the form and relationship that they have in the original. To my mind, by far the most readable and reliable of the *Zhuangzi* translations to date are those by Arthur Waley, though unfortunately they represent only a fraction of the text. Readers interested in the literary qualities of the text should also look at the "imitations" of passages in the *Zhuangzi* prepared by Thomas Merton on the basis of existing translations in Western languages, in his *The Way of Chuang Tzu* (New York, New Directions, 1965). They give a fine sense of the liveliness and poetry of Zhuangzi's style and are actually almost as close to the original as the translations on which they are based.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank Dr. D. C. Lau, translator of *Lao Tzu: Tao Te Ching* (Penguin Books, 1963), for his careful reading and criticisms of my *Chuang Tzu: Basic Writings* (Columbia University Press, 1964). I have availed myself of many of his suggestions in revising my earlier translations.

OUTLINE OF EARLY CHINESE HISTORY

(Dates and entries before 841 BCE are traditional)

BCE	*Dynasty*		
2852		Culture Heroes	Fu Xi, inventor of writing, fishing, trapping
2737			Shennong, inventor of agriculture, commerce
2697			Yellow Emperor
2357		Sage Kings	Yao
2255			Shun
2205	Xia Dynasty		Yu, virtuous founder of dynasty
1818			Jie, degenerate terminator of dynasty
1766	Shang or Yin Dynasty		King Tang, virtuous founder of dynasty
[ca. 1300]			[Beginning of archaeological evidence]
1154			Zhou, degenerate terminator of dynasty
Three Dynasties			
1122		Western Zhou	King Wen, virtuous founder of dynasty
1115			King Wu, virtuous founder of dynasty
			King Cheng, virtuous founder of dynasty
			(Duke of Zhou, regent to King Cheng)
878	Zhou Dynasty		King Li
781			
771			King You
722		Eastern Zhou	Spring and Autumn period (722–481)
551			Period of the "hundred philosophers" (551–ca. 233): Confucius, Mozi, Laozi (?), Mencius, Zhuangzi, Hui Shi, Shang Yang, Gongsun Long, Xunzi, Han Feizi
403			Warring States period (403–221)
4th to 3rd cent.			Extensive wall-building and waterworks by Qin and other states
249			Lu Buwei, prime minister of Qin
221	Qin Dynasty		The First Emperor, Li Si, prime minister
214	(221–207 BCE)		The Great Wall completed

THE COMPLETE WORKS OF ZHUANGZI

1

FREE AND EASY WANDERING

In the northern darkness there is a fish and his name is Kun.[1] The Kun is so huge I don't know how many thousand *li* he measures. He changes and becomes a bird whose name is Peng. The back of the Peng measures I don't know how many thousand *li* across, and when he rises up and flies off, his wings are like clouds all over the sky. When the sea begins to move,[2] this bird sets off for the southern darkness, which is the Lake of Heaven.

The *Universal Harmony*[3] records various wonders, and it says: "When the Peng journeys to the southern darkness, the waters are roiled for three thousand *li*. He beats the whirlwind and rises ninety thousand *li*, setting off on the sixth-month gale." Wavering heat, bits of dust, living things blown about by the wind—the sky looks very blue. Is that its real color, or is it because it is so far away and has no end? When the bird looks down, all he sees is blue, too.

If water is not piled up deep enough, it won't have the strength to bear up a big boat. Pour a cup of water into a hollow in the floor, and bits of trash will sail on it like boats. But set the cup there, and it will stick fast, for the water is too shallow and the boat too large. If wind is not piled up deep enough, it won't have the strength to bear up great wings. Therefore when the Peng rises ninety thousand *li*, he must have the wind under him like that. Only then can he mount on the back of the wind, shoulder the blue sky, and nothing can hinder or block him. Only then can he set his eyes to the south.

The cicada and the little dove laugh at this, saying, "When we make an effort and fly up, we can get as far as

1. *Kun* means fish roe. So Zhuangzi begins with a paradox—the tiniest fish imaginable is also the largest fish imaginable.

2. Probably a reference to some seasonal shift in the tides or currents.

3. Identified variously as the name of a man or the name of a book. Probably Zhuangzi intended it as the latter and is poking fun at the philosophers of other schools who cite ancient texts to prove their assertions.

the elm or the sapanwood tree, but sometimes we don't make it and just fall down on the ground. Now how is anyone going to go ninety thousand *li* to the south!"

If you go off to the green woods nearby, you can take along food for three meals and come back with your stomach as full as ever. If you are going a hundred *li*, you must grind your grain the night before; and if you are going a thousand *li*, you must start getting the provisions together three months in advance. What do these two creatures understand? Little understanding cannot come up to great understanding; the short-lived cannot come up to the long-lived.

How do I know this is so? The morning mushroom knows nothing of twilight and dawn; the summer cicada knows nothing of spring and autumn. They are the short-lived. South of Chu there is a caterpillar that counts five hundred years as one spring and five hundred years as one autumn. Long, long ago there was a great rose of Sharon that counted eight thousand years as one spring and eight thousand years as one autumn. They are the long-lived. Yet Pengzu[4] alone is famous today for having lived a long time, and everybody tries to ape him. Isn't it pitiful!

Among the questions of Tang to Qi we find the same thing.[5] In the bald and barren north, there is a dark sea, the Lake of Heaven. In it is a fish that is several thousand *li* across, and no one knows how long. His name is Kun. There is also a bird there, named Peng, with a back like Mount Tai and wings like clouds filling the sky. He beats the whirlwind, leaps into the air, and rises up ninety thousand *li*, cutting through the clouds and mist, shouldering the blue sky, and then he turns his eyes south and prepares to journey to the southern darkness.

The little quail laughs at him, saying, "Where does he think *he's* going? I give a great leap and fly up, but I never get more than ten or twelve yards before I come down fluttering among the weeds and brambles. And that's the best kind of flying, anyway! Where does he think *he's* going?" Such is the difference between big and little.

4. Said to have lived to an incredible old age. See p. 46, n. 12.

5. The text may be faulty at this point. The *Beishanlu*, a work written around 800 CE by the monk Shenqing, contains the following passage, said by a Tang commentator on the *Beishanlu* to be found in the *Zhuangzi*: "Tang asked Qi, 'Do up, down, and the four directions have a limit?' Qi replied, 'Beyond their limitlessness there is still another limitlessness.'" But whether this passage was in the original *Zhuangzi* or whether, if it was, it belongs at this point in the text, are questions that cannot be answered.

Therefore a man who has wisdom enough to fill one office effectively, good conduct enough to impress one community, virtue enough to please one ruler, or talent enough to be called into service in one state, has the same kind of self-pride as these little creatures. Song Rongzi[6] would certainly burst out laughing at such a man. The whole world could praise Song Rongzi and it wouldn't make him exert himself; the whole world could condemn him and it wouldn't make him mope. He drew a clear line between the internal and the external and recognized the boundaries of true glory and disgrace. But that was all. As far as the world went, he didn't fret and worry, but there was still ground he left unturned.

Liezi[7] could ride the wind and go soaring around with cool and breezy skill, but after fifteen days he came back to earth. As far as the search for good fortune went, he didn't fret and worry. He escaped the trouble of walking, but he still had to depend on something to get around. If he had only mounted on the truth of Heaven and Earth, ridden the changes of the six breaths, and thus wandered through the boundless, then what would he have had to depend on?

Therefore I say, the Perfect Man has no self; the Holy Man has no merit; the Sage has no fame.[8]

Yao wanted to cede the empire to Xu You. "When the sun and moon have already come out," he said, "it's a waste of light to go on burning the torches, isn't it? When the seasonal rains are falling, it's a waste of water to go on irrigating the fields. If you took the throne, the world would be well ordered. I go on occupying it, but all I can see are my failings. I beg to turn over the world to you."

Xu You said, "You govern the world and the world is already well governed. Now if I take your place, will I be doing it for a name? But name is only the guest of reality—will I be doing it so I can play the part of a guest? When the tailorbird builds her nest in the deep wood, she uses no more than one branch. When the mole drinks at the

6. Referred to elsewhere in the literature of the period as Song Jian or Song Keng. According to the last section of the *Zhuangzi*, he taught a doctrine of social harmony, frugality, pacifism, and the rejection of conventional standards of honor and disgrace.

7. Lie Yukou, a Daoist philosopher frequently mentioned in the *Zhuangzi*. The *Liezi*, a work attributed to him, is of uncertain date and did not reach its present form until the third or fourth centuries CE.

8. Not three different categories but three names for the same thing.

river, he takes no more than a bellyful. Go home and forget the matter, my lord. I have no use for the rulership of the world! Though the cook may not run his kitchen properly, the priest and the impersonator of the dead at the sacrifice do not leap over the wine casks and sacrificial stands and go take his place."[9]

9. Or following another interpretation, "the priest and the impersonator of the dead do not snatch his wine casks and chopping board away from him and take his place."

Jian Wu said to Lian Shu, "I was listening to Jie Yu's talk—big and nothing to back it up, going on and on without turning around. I was completely dumbfounded at his words—no more end than the Milky Way, wild and wide of the mark, never coming near human affairs!"

"What were his words like?" asked Lian Shu.

"He said that there is a Holy Man living on faraway Gushe Mountain, with skin like ice or snow and gentle and shy like a young girl. He doesn't eat the five grains but sucks the wind, drinks the dew, climbs up on the clouds and mist, rides a flying dragon, and wanders beyond the four seas. By concentrating his spirit, he can protect creatures from sickness and plague and make the harvest plentiful. I thought this all was insane and refused to believe it."

"You would!" said Lian Shu. "We can't expect a blind man to appreciate beautiful patterns or a deaf man to listen to bells and drums. And blindness and deafness are not confined to the body alone—the understanding has them, too, as your words just now have shown. This man, with this virtue of his, is about to embrace the ten thousand things and roll them into one. Though the age calls for reform, why should he wear himself out over the affairs of the world? There is nothing that can harm this man. Though floodwaters pile up to the sky, he will not drown. Though a great drought melts metal and stone and scorches the earth and hills, he will not be burned. From his dust and leavings alone, you could mold a Yao or a Shun! Why should he consent to bother about mere things?"

A man of Song who sold ceremonial hats made a trip to Yue, but the Yue people cut their hair short and tattooed their bodies and had no use for such things. Yao brought order to the people of the world and directed the government of all within the seas. But he went to see the Four Masters of the faraway Gushe Mountain, [and when he got home] north of the Fen River, he was dazed and had forgotten his kingdom there.

Huizi[10] said to Zhuangzi, "The king of Wei gave me some seeds of a huge gourd. I planted them, and when they grew up, the fruit was big enough to hold five piculs. I tried using it for a water container, but it was so heavy I couldn't lift it. I split it in half to make dippers, but they were so large and unwieldy that I couldn't dip them into anything. It's not that the gourds weren't fantastically big—but I decided they were of no use, and so I smashed them to pieces."

Zhuangzi said, "You certainly are dense when it comes to using big things! In Song there was a man who was skilled at making a salve to prevent chapped hands, and generation after generation his family made a living by bleaching silk in water. A traveler heard about the salve and offered to buy the prescription for a hundred measures of gold. The man called everyone to a family council. 'For generations we've been bleaching silk, and we've never made more than a few measures of gold,' he said. 'Now, if we sell our secret, we can make a hundred measures in one morning. Let's let him have it!' The traveler got the salve and introduced it to the king of Wu, who was having trouble with the state of Yue. The king put the man in charge of his troops, and that winter they fought a naval battle with the men of Yue and gave them a bad beating.[11] A portion of the conquered territory was awarded to the man as a fief. The salve had the power to prevent chapped hands in either case; but one man used it to get a fief, while the other one never got beyond silk

10. The logician Huizi who, as Waley pointed out, in the *Zhuangzi* "stands for intellectuality as opposed to imagination."

11. Because the salve, by preventing the soldiers' hands from chapping, made it easier for them to handle their weapons.

bleaching—because they used it in different ways. Now you had a gourd big enough to hold five piculs. Why didn't you think of making it into a great tub so you could go floating around the rivers and lakes, instead of worrying because it was too big and unwieldy to dip into things! Obviously you still have a lot of underbrush in your head!"

Huizi said to Zhuangzi, "I have a big tree called a *shu*. Its trunk is too gnarled and bumpy to apply a measuring line to, its branches too bent and twisty to match up to a compass or square. You could stand it by the road, and no carpenter would look at it twice. Your words, too, are big and useless, and so everyone alike spurns them!"

Zhuangzi said, "Maybe you've never seen a wildcat or a weasel. It crouches down and hides, watching for something to come along. It leaps and races east and west, not hesitating to go high or low—until it falls into the trap and dies in the net. Then again there's the yak, big as a cloud covering the sky. It certainly knows how to be big, though it doesn't know how to catch rats. Now you have this big tree, and you're distressed because it's useless. Why don't you plant it in Not-Even-Anything Village or the field of Broad-and-Boundless, relax and do nothing by its side, or lie down for a free and easy sleep under it? Axes will never shorten its life, nothing can ever harm it. If there's no use for it, how can it come to grief or pain?"

2

DISCUSSION ON MAKING ALL THINGS EQUAL

Ziqi of South Wall sat leaning on his armrest, staring up at the sky and breathing—vacant and far away, as though he'd lost his companion.[1] Yan Cheng Ziyou, who was standing by his side in attendance, said, "What is this? Can you really make the body like a withered tree and the mind like dead ashes? The man leaning on the armrest now is not the one who leaned on it before!"

Ziqi said, "You do well to ask the question, Yan. Now I have lost myself. Do you understand that? You hear the piping of men, but you haven't heard the piping of earth. Or if you've heard the piping of earth, you haven't heard the piping of Heaven!"

Ziyou, "May I venture to ask what this means?"

Ziqi said, "The Great Clod belches out breath, and its name is wind. So long as it doesn't come forth, nothing happens. But when it does, then ten thousand hollows begin crying wildly. Can't you hear them, long drawn out? In the mountain forests that lash and sway, there are huge trees a hundred spans around with hollows and openings like noses, like mouths, like ears, like jugs, like cups, like mortars, like rifts, like ruts. They roar like waves, whistle like arrows, screech, gasp, cry, wail, moan, and howl, those in the lead calling out *yeee!*, those behind calling out *yuuu!* In a gentle breeze they answer faintly, but in a full gale the chorus is gigantic. And when the fierce wind has passed on, then all the hollows are empty again. Have you never seen the tossing and trembling that goes on?"

Ziyou said, "By the piping of earth, then, you mean simply [the sound of] these hollows, and by the piping of

1. The word "companion" is interpreted variously to mean his associates, his wife, or his own body.

man, [the sound of] flutes and whistles. But may I ask about the piping of Heaven?"

Ziqi said, "Blowing on the ten thousand things in a different way, so that each can be itself—all take what they want for themselves, but who does the sounding?"[2]

Great understanding is broad and unhurried; little understanding is cramped and busy. Great words are clear and limpid;[3] little words are shrill and quarrelsome. In sleep, men's spirits go visiting; in waking hours, their bodies hustle. With everything they meet they become entangled. Day after day they use their minds in strife, sometimes grandiose, sometimes sly, sometimes petty. Their little fears are mean and trembly; their great fears are stunned and overwhelming. They bound off like an arrow or a crossbow pellet, certain that they are the arbiters of right and wrong. They cling to their position as though they had sworn before the gods, sure that they are holding on to victory. They fade like fall and winter—such is the way they dwindle day by day. They drown in what they do—you cannot make them turn back. They grow dark, as though sealed with seals—such are the excesses of their old age. And when their minds draw near to death, nothing can restore them to the light.

Joy, anger, grief, delight, worry, regret, fickleness, inflexibility, modesty, willfulness, candor, insolence—music from empty holes, mushrooms springing up in dampness, day and night replacing each other before us, and no one knows where they sprout from. Let it be! Let it be! [It is enough that] morning and evening we have them, and they are the means by which we live. Without them, we would not exist; without us, they would have nothing to take hold of. This comes close to the matter. But I do not know what makes them the way they are. It would seem as though they have some True Master, and yet I find no trace of him. He can act—that is certain. Yet I cannot see his form. He has identity but no form.

The hundred joints, the nine openings, the six organs, all come together and exist here [as my body]. But which

2. Heaven is not something distinct from earth and man, but a name applied to the natural and spontaneous functioning of the two.

3. Reading *dan* instead of *yan*.

part should I feel closest to? I should delight in all parts, you say? But there must be one I ought to favor more. If not, are they all of them mere servants? But if they all are servants, then how can they keep order among themselves? Or do they take turns being lord and servant? It would seem as though there must be some True Lord among them. But whether or not I succeed in discovering his identity, it neither adds to nor detracts from his Truth.

Once a man receives this fixed bodily form, he holds on to it, waiting for the end. Sometimes clashing with things, sometimes bending before them, he runs his course like a galloping steed, and nothing can stop him. Is he not pathetic? Sweating and laboring to the end of his days and never seeing his accomplishment, utterly exhausting himself and never knowing where to look for rest—can you help pitying him? I'm not dead yet! he says, but what good is that? His body decays, his mind follows it—can you deny that this is a great sorrow? Man's life has always been a muddle like this. How could I be the only muddled one, and other men not muddled?

If a man follows the mind given him and makes it his teacher, then who can be without a teacher? Why must you comprehend the process of change and form your mind on that basis before you can have a teacher? Even an idiot has his teacher. But to fail to abide by this mind and still insist on your rights and wrongs—this is like saying that you set off for Yue today and got there yesterday.[4] This is to claim that what doesn't exist exists. If you claim that what doesn't exist exists, then even the holy sage Yu couldn't understand you, much less a person like me!

4. According to the last section of the *Zhuangzi*, this was one of the paradoxes of the logician Huizi.

Words are not just wind. Words have something to say. But if what they have to say is not fixed, then do they really say something? Or do they say nothing? People suppose that words are different from the peeps of baby birds, but is there any difference, or isn't there? What does the Way rely on,[5] that we have true and false? What do words rely on, that we have right and wrong? How can the Way go away and not exist? How can words exist and

5. Following the interpretation of Zhang Binglin. The older interpretation of yin here and in the following sentences is, "What is the Way hidden by," etc.

not be acceptable? When the Way relies on little accomplishments and words rely on vain show, then we have the rights and wrongs of the Confucians and the Mohists. What one calls right, the other calls wrong; what one calls wrong, the other calls right. But if we want to right their wrongs and wrong their rights, then the best thing to use is clarity.

Everything has its "that," everything has its "this." From the point of view of "that," you cannot see it; but through understanding, you can know it. So I say, "that" comes out of "this," and "this" depends on "that"—which is to say that "this" and "that" give birth to each other. But where there is birth, there must be death; where there is death, there must be birth. Where there is acceptability, there must be unacceptability; where there is unacceptability, there must be acceptability. Where there is recognition of right, there must be recognition of wrong; where there is recognition of wrong, there must be recognition of right. Therefore the sage does not proceed in such a way but illuminates all in the light of Heaven.[6] He, too, recognizes a "this" but a "this" that is also "that," a "that" that is also "this." His "that" has both a right and a wrong in it; his "this," too, has both a right and a wrong in it. So, in fact, does he still have a "this" and "that"? Or does he, in fact, no longer have a "this" and "that"? A state in which "this" and "that" no longer find their opposites is called the hinge of the Way. When the hinge is fitted into the socket, it can respond endlessly. Its right, then, is a single endlessness, and its wrong, too, is a single endlessness. So I say, the best thing to use is clarity.

6. *Tian*, which for Zhuangzi means Nature or the Way.

To use an attribute to show that attributes are not attributes is not as good as using a nonattribute to show that attributes are not attributes. To use a horse to show that a horse is not a horse is not as good as using a non-horse to show that a horse is not a horse;[7] Heaven and earth are one attribute; the ten thousand things are one horse.

7. A reference to the statements of the logician Gongsun Long, "A white horse is not a horse" and "Attributes are not attributes in and of themselves."

What is acceptable we call acceptable; what is unacceptable we call unacceptable. A road is made by people walking on it; things are so because they are called so. What makes them so? Making them so makes them so. What makes them not so? Making them not so makes them not so. Things all must have that which is so; things all must have that which is acceptable. There is nothing that is not so, nothing that is not acceptable.

For this reason, whether you point to a little stalk or a great pillar, a leper or the beautiful Xishi, things ribald and shady, or things grotesque and strange, the Way makes them all into one. Their dividedness is their completeness; their completeness is their impairment. No thing is either complete or impaired, but all are made into one again. Only the man of far-reaching vision knows how to make them into one. So he has no use [for categories] but relegates all to the constant. The constant is the useful; the useful is the passable; the passable is the successful; and with success, all is accomplished. He relies on this alone, relies on it and does not know he is doing so. This is called the Way.

But to wear out your brain trying to make things into one without realizing that they are all the same—this is called "three in the morning." What do I mean by "three in the morning"? When the monkey trainer was handing out acorns, he said, "You get three in the morning and four at night." This made all the monkeys furious. "Well, then," he said, "you get four in the morning and three at night." The monkeys all were delighted. There was no change in the reality behind the words, and yet the monkeys responded with joy and anger. Let them, if they want to. So the sage harmonizes with both right and wrong and rests in Heaven the Equalizer. This is called walking two roads.

The understanding of the men of ancient times went a long way. How far did it go? To the point where some of them believed that things have never existed—so far, to

the end, where nothing can be added. Those at the next stage thought that things exist but recognized no boundaries among them. Those at the next stage thought there were boundaries but recognized no right and wrong. Because right and wrong appeared, the Way was injured, and because the Way was injured, love became complete. But do such things as completion and injury really exist, or do they not?

There is such a thing as completion and injury—Mr. Zhao playing the lute is an example. There is such a thing as no completion and no injury—Mr. Zhao not playing the lute is an example.[8] Zhao Wen played the lute; Music Master Kuang waved his baton; Huizi leaned on his desk. The knowledge of these three was close to perfection. All were masters, and therefore their names have been handed down to later ages. Only in their likes were they different from him [the true sage]. What they liked, they tried to make clear. What he is not clear about, they tried to make clear, and so they ended in the foolishness of "hard" and "white."[9] Their sons, too, devoted all their lives to their fathers'[10] theories but, till their death, never reached any completion. Can these men be said to have attained completion? If so, then so have all the rest of us. Or can they not be said to have attained completion? If so, then neither we nor anything else has ever attained it.

The torch of chaos and doubt—this is what the sage steers by.[11] So he does not use things but relegates all to the constant. This is what it means to use clarity.

Now I am going to make a statement here. I don't know whether or not it fits into the category of other people's statements. But whether it fits into their category or whether it doesn't, it obviously fits into some category. So in that respect, it is no different from their statements. However, let me try making my statement.

There is a beginning. There is a not yet beginning to be a beginning. There is a not yet beginning to be a not yet

8. Zhao Wen was a famous lute (*qin*) player. But the best music he could play (i.e., complete) was only a pale and partial reflection of the ideal music, which was thereby injured and impaired, just as the unity of the Way was injured by the appearance of love—that is, man's likes and dislikes. Hence, when Mr. Zhao refrained from playing the lute, there was neither completion nor injury.

9. The logicians Huizi and Gongsun Long spent much time discussing the relationship between attributes such as "hard" and "white" and the thing to which they pertain.

10. Following Yu-lan Fung and Fukunaga, I read *fu* instead of *wen*.

11. He accepts things as they are, though to the ordinary person attempting to establish values, they appear chaotic and doubtful and in need of clarification.

beginning to be a beginning. There is being. There is nonbeing. There is a not yet beginning to be nonbeing. There is a not yet beginning to be a not yet beginning to be nonbeing. Suddenly there is being and nonbeing. But between this being and nonbeing, I don't really know which is being and which is nonbeing. Now I have just said something. But I don't know whether what I have said has really said something or whether it hasn't said something.

There is nothing in the world bigger than the tip of an autumn hair, and Mount Tai is little. No one has lived longer than a dead child, and Pengzu died young.[12] Heaven and earth were born at the same time I was, and the ten thousand things are one with me.

We have already become one, so how can I say anything? But I have just *said* that we are one, so how can I not be saying something? The one and what I said about it make two, and two and the original one make three. If we go on this way, then even the cleverest mathematician, much less an ordinary man, can't tell where we'll end. If by moving from nonbeing to being, we get to three, how far will we get if we move from being to being? Better not to move but to let things be!

The Way has never known boundaries; speech has no constancy. But because of [the recognition of a] "this," there came to be boundaries. Let me tell you what the boundaries are. There is left, there is right, there are theories, there are debates,[13] there are divisions, there are discriminations, there are emulations, and there are contentions. These are called the Eight Virtues.[14] As to what is beyond the Six Realms,[15] the sage admits it exists but does not theorize. As to what is within the Six Realms, he theorizes but does not debate. In the case of the *Spring and Autumn*,[16] the record of the former kings of past ages, the sage debates but does not discriminate. So [I say,] those who divide fail to divide; those who discriminate fail to discriminate. What does this mean, you ask? The sage

12. The strands of animal fur were believed to grow particularly fine in autumn; hence "the tip of an autumn hair" is a cliché for something extremely tiny. Pengzu, the Chinese Methuselah, appeared on p. 2.

13. Following the reading in the Cui text.

14. Many commentators and translators try to give the word *de* some special meaning other than its ordinary one of "virtue" in this context. But I believe Zhuangzi is deliberately parodying the ethical categories of the Confucians and Mohists.

15. Heaven, earth, and the four directions, that is, the universe.

16. Perhaps a reference to the *Spring and Autumn Annals*, a history of the state of Lu said to have been compiled by Confucius. But it may be a generic term referring to the chronicles of the various feudal states.

embraces things. Ordinary men discriminate among them and parade their discriminations before others. So I say, those who discriminate fail to see.

The Great Way is not named; Great Discriminations are not spoken; Great Benevolence is not benevolent; Great Modesty is not humble; Great Daring does not attack. If the Way is made clear, it is not the Way. If discriminations are put into words, they do not suffice. If benevolence has a constant object, it cannot be universal.[17] If modesty is fastidious, it cannot be trusted. If daring attacks, it cannot be complete. These five all are round, but they tend toward the square.[18]

Therefore understanding that rests in what it does not understand is the finest. Who can understand discriminations that are not spoken, the Way that is not a way? If he can understand this, he may be called the Reservoir of Heaven. Pour into it and it is never full, dip from it and it never runs dry, and yet it does not know where the supply comes from. This is called the Shaded Light.[19]

So it is that long ago Yao said to Shun, "I want to attack the rulers of Zong, Kuai, and Xuao. Even as I sit on my throne, this thought nags at me. Why is this?"

Shun replied, "These three rulers are only little dwellers in the weeds and brush. Why this nagging desire? Long ago, ten suns came out all at once, and the ten thousand things were all lighted up. And how much greater is virtue than these suns!"[20]

Nie Que asked Wang Ni, "Do you know what all things agree in calling right?"

"How would I know that?" said Wang Ni.

"Do you know that you don't know it?"

"How would I know that?"

"Then do things know nothing?"

"How would I know that? However, suppose I try saying something. What way do I have of knowing that if I say I know something I don't really not know it? Or what way do I have of knowing that if I say I don't know

17. Reading *zhou* instead of *cheng*.

18. All are originally perfect but may become "squared," that is, impaired, by the misuses mentioned.

19. Or according to another interpretation, "the Precious Light."

20. Here virtue is to be understood in a good sense, as the power of the Way.

something I don't really in fact know it? Now let me ask *you* some questions. If a man sleeps in a damp place, his back aches and he ends up half paralyzed, but is this true of a loach? If he lives in a tree, he is terrified and shakes with fright, but is this true of a monkey? Of these three creatures, then, which one knows the proper place to live? Men eat the flesh of grass-fed and grain-fed animals, deer eat grass, centipedes find snakes tasty, and hawks and falcons relish mice. Of these four, which knows how food ought to taste? Monkeys pair with monkeys, deer go out with deer, and fish play around with fish. Men claim that Maoqiang and Lady Li were beautiful; but if fish saw them, they would dive to the bottom of the stream; if birds saw them, they would fly away; and if deer saw them, they would break into a run. Of these four, which knows how to fix the standard of beauty for the world? The way I see it, the rules of benevolence and righteousness and the paths of right and wrong all are hopelessly snarled and jumbled. How could I know anything about such discriminations?"

Nie Que said, "If you don't know what is profitable or harmful, then does the Perfect Man likewise know nothing of such things?"

Wang Ni replied, "The Perfect Man is godlike. Though the great swamps blaze, they cannot burn him; though the great rivers freeze, they cannot chill him; though swift lightning splits the hills and howling gales shake the sea, they cannot frighten him. A man like this rides the clouds and mist, straddles the sun and moon, and wanders beyond the four seas. Even life and death have no effect on him, much less the rules of profit and loss!"

Ju Que said to Zhang Wuzi, "I have heard Confucius say that the sage does not work at anything, does not pursue profit, does not dodge harm, does not enjoy being sought after, does not follow the Way, says nothing yet says something, says something yet says nothing, and wanders beyond the dust and grime. Confucius himself regarded

these as wild and flippant words, though I believe they describe the working of the mysterious Way. What do you think of them?"

Zhang Wuzi said, "Even the Yellow Emperor would be confused if he heard such words, so how could you expect Confucius to understand them? What's more, you're too hasty in your own appraisal. You see an egg and demand a crowing cock, see a crossbow pellet and demand a roast dove. I'm going to try speaking some reckless words, and I want you to listen to them recklessly. How will that be? The sage leans on the sun and moon, tucks the universe under his arm, merges himself with things, leaves the confusion and muddle as it is, and looks on slaves as exalted. Ordinary men strain and struggle; the sage is stupid and blockish. He takes part in ten thousand ages and achieves simplicity in oneness. For him, all the ten thousand things are what they are, and thus they enfold one another.

"How do I know that loving life is not a delusion? How do I know that in hating death I am not like a man who, having left home in his youth, has forgotten the way back?

"Lady Li was the daughter of the border guard of Ai.[21] When she was first taken captive and brought to the state of Jin, she wept until her tears drenched the collar of her robe. But later, when she went to live in the palace of the ruler, shared his couch with him, and ate the delicious meats of his table, she wondered why she had ever wept. How do I know that the dead do not wonder why they ever longed for life?

21. She was taken captive by Duke Xian of Jin in 671 BCE and later became his consort.

"He who dreams of drinking wine may weep when morning comes; he who dreams of weeping may in the morning go off to hunt. While he is dreaming, he does not know it is a dream, and in his dream, he may even try to interpret a dream. Only after he wakes does he know it was a dream. And someday there will be a great awakening when we know that this is all a great dream. Yet the stupid believe they are awake, busily and brightly assuming they understand things, calling this man ruler, that one herdsman—how dense! Confucius and you both are

dreaming! And when I say you are dreaming, I am dreaming, too. Words like these will be labeled the Supreme Swindle. Yet after ten thousand generations, a great sage may appear who will know their meaning, and it will still be as though he appeared with astonishing speed.

"Suppose you and I have had an argument. If you have beaten me instead of my beating you, then are you necessarily right, and am I necessarily wrong? If I have beaten you instead of your beating me, then am I necessarily right, and are you necessarily wrong? Is one of us right and the other wrong? Are both of us right, or are both of us wrong? If you and I don't know the answer, then other people are bound to be even more in the dark. Whom shall we get to decide what is right? Shall we get someone who agrees with you to decide? But if he already agrees with you, how can he decide fairly? Shall we get someone who agrees with me? But if he already agrees with me, how can he decide? Shall we get someone who disagrees with both of us? But if he already disagrees with both of us, how can he decide? Shall we get someone who agrees with both of us? But if he already agrees with both of us, how can he decide? Obviously, then, neither you nor I nor anyone else can know the answer. Shall we wait for still another person?

"But waiting for one shifting voice [to pass judgment on] another is the same as waiting for none of them.[22] Harmonize them all with the Heavenly Equality, leave them to their endless changes, and so live out your years. What do I mean by harmonizing them with the Heavenly Equality? Right is not right; so is not so. If right were really right, it would differ so clearly from not right that there would be no need for argument. If so were really so, it would differ so clearly from not so that there would be no need for argument. Forget the years; forget distinctions. Leap into the boundless and make it your home!"

22. I follow the rearrangement of the text suggested by Lü Huiqing. But the text of this whole paragraph leaves much to be desired, and the translation is tentative.

Penumbra said to Shadow, "A little while ago you were walking, and now you're standing still; a little while ago

you were sitting, and now you're standing up. Why this lack of independent action?"

Shadow said, "Do I have to wait for something before I can be like this? Does what I wait for also have to wait for something before it can be like this? Am I waiting for the scales of a snake or the wings of a cicada? How do I know why it is so? How do I know why it isn't so?"[23]

23. That is, to ordinary men the shadow appears to depend on something else for its movement, just as the snake depends on its scales (according to Chinese belief) and the cicada on its wings. But do such causal views of action really have any meaning?

Once Zhuang Zhou dreamed he was a butterfly, a butterfly flitting and fluttering around, happy with himself and doing as he pleased. He didn't know he was Zhuang Zhou. Suddenly he woke up, and there he was, solid and unmistakable Zhuang Zhou. But he didn't know if he were Zhuang Zhou who had dreamed he was a butterfly or a butterfly dreaming he was Zhuang Zhou. Between Zhuang Zhou and a butterfly, there must be *some* distinction! This is called the Transformation of Things.

3

THE SECRET OF CARING FOR LIFE

Your life has a limit, but knowledge has none.[1] If you use what is limited to pursue what has no limit, you will be in danger. If you understand this and still strive for knowledge, you will be in danger for certain! If you do good, stay away from fame. If you do evil, stay away from punishments. Follow the middle; go by what is constant and you can stay in one piece, keep yourself alive, look after your parents, and live out your years.

1. The chapter is very brief and would appear to be mutilated.

Cook Ding was cutting up an ox for Lord Wenhui.[2] At every touch of his hand, every heave of his shoulder, every move of his feet, every thrust of his knee—zip! zoop! He slithered the knife along with a zing, and all was in perfect rhythm, as though he were performing the dance of the Mulberry Grove or keeping time to the Jingshou music.[3]

2. Identified as King Hui of Wei, who appeared on p. 5.

3. The Mulberry Grove is identified as a rain dance from the time of King Tang of the Shang dynasty, and the Jingshou music, as part of a longer composition from the time of Yao.

"Ah, this is marvelous!" said Lord Wenhui. "Imagine skill reaching such heights!"

Cook Ding laid down his knife and replied, "What I care about is the Way, which goes beyond skill. When I first began cutting up oxen, all I could see was the ox itself. After three years I no longer saw the whole ox. And now—now I go at it by spirit and don't look with my eyes. Perception and understanding have come to a stop, and spirit moves where it wants. I go along with the natural makeup, strike in the big hollows, guide the knife through the big openings, and follow things as they are. So I never touch the smallest ligament or tendon, much less a main joint.

"A good cook changes his knife once a year—because he cuts. A mediocre cook changes his knife once a

month—because he hacks. I've had this knife of mine for nineteen years and I've cut up thousands of oxen with it, and yet the blade is as good as though it had just come from the grindstone. There are spaces between the joints, and the blade of the knife has really no thickness. If you insert what has no thickness into such spaces, then there's plenty of room—more than enough for the blade to play about in. That's why after nineteen years, the blade of my knife is still as good as when it first came from the grindstone.

"However, whenever I come to a complicated place, I size up the difficulties, tell myself to watch out and be careful, keep my eyes on what I'm doing, work very slowly, and move the knife with the greatest subtlety, until—flop! the whole thing comes apart like a clod of earth crumbling to the ground. I stand there holding the knife and look all around me, completely satisfied and reluctant to move on, and then I wipe off the knife and put it away."[4]

"Excellent!" said Lord Wenhui. "I have heard the words of Cook Ding and learned how to care for life!"

When Gongwen Xuan saw the Commander of the Right,[5] he was startled and said, "What kind of man is this? How did he come to lose his foot? Was it Heaven? Or was it man?"

"It was Heaven, not man," said the commander. "When Heaven gave me life, it saw to it that I would be one-footed. Men's looks are given to them. So I know this was the work of Heaven and not of man. The swamp pheasant has to walk ten paces for one peck and a hundred paces for one drink, but it doesn't want to be kept in a cage. Though you treat it like a king, its spirit won't be content."

When Lao Dan[6] died, Qin Shi went to mourn for him, but after giving three cries, he left the room.

"Weren't you a friend of the Master?" asked Laozi's disciples.

4. Waley (*Three Ways of Thought in Ancient China*, p. 73) takes this whole paragraph to refer to the working methods of a mediocre carver and hence translates it very differently. There is a great deal to be said for his interpretation, but after much consideration I have decided to follow the traditional interpretation because it seems to me that the extreme care and caution that the cook uses when he comes to a difficult place is also a part of Zhuangzi's "secret of caring for life."

5. Probably the ex–Commander of the Right, as he has been punished by having one foot amputated, a common penalty in ancient China. It is mutilating punishments such as these that Zhuangzi has in mind when he talks about the need to "stay in one piece."

6. Laozi, the reputed author of the *Daodejing*.

"Yes."

"And you think it's all right to mourn him this way?"

"Yes," said Qin Shi. "At first I took him for a real man, but now I know he wasn't. A little while ago, when I went in to mourn, I found old men weeping for him as though they were weeping for a son, and young men weeping for him as though they were weeping for a mother. To have gathered a group like *that*, he must have done something to make them talk about him, though he didn't ask them to talk or make them weep for him, though he didn't ask them to weep. This is to hide from Heaven, turn your back on the true state of affairs, and forget what you were born with. In the old days, this was called the crime of hiding from Heaven. Your master happened to come because it was his time, and he happened to leave because things follow along. If you are content with the time and willing to follow along, then grief and joy have no way to enter. In the old days, this was called being freed from the bonds of God.

"Though the grease burns out of the torch, the fire passes on, and no one knows where it ends."[7]

7. The first part of this last sentence is scarcely intelligible, and there are numerous suggestions for how it should be interpreted or emended. I follow Zhu Guiyao in reading "grease" instead of "finger." For the sake of reference, I list some of the other possible interpretations as I understand them: "When the fingers complete the work of adding firewood, the fire passes on" (Guo Xiang); "Though the fingers are worn out gathering firewood, the fire passes on" (Yu Yue); "What we can point to are the fagots that have been consumed, but the fire is transmitted elsewhere" (Legge, Fukunaga).

4

IN THE WORLD OF MEN

Yan Hui went to see Confucius and asked permission to take a trip.[1]

"Where are you going?"

"I'm going to Wei."

"What will you do there?"

"I have heard that the ruler of Wei is very young. He acts in an independent manner, thinks little of how he rules his state, and fails to see his faults. It is nothing to him to lead his people into peril, and his dead are reckoned by swampfuls like so much grass.[2] His people have nowhere to turn. I have heard you say, Master, 'Leave the state that is well ordered and go to the state in chaos! At the doctor's gate are many sick men.' I want to use these words as my standard, in hopes that I can restore his state to health."

"Ah," said Confucius, "you will probably go and get yourself executed, that's all. The Way doesn't want things mixed in with it. When it becomes a mixture, it becomes many ways; with many ways, there is a lot of bustle; and where there is a lot of bustle, there is trouble—trouble that has no remedy! The Perfect Man of ancient times made sure that he had it in himself before he tried to give it to others. When you're not even sure what you've got in yourself, how do you have time to bother about what some tyrant is doing?

"Do you know what it is that destroys virtue and where wisdom comes from? Virtue is destroyed by fame, and wisdom comes out of wrangling. Fame is something to beat people down with, and wisdom is a device for wrangling. Both are evil weapons—not the sort of thing to bring

1. Yan Hui was Confucius's favorite disciple. Throughout this chapter Zhuangzi refers to a number of historical figures, many of whom appear in the *Analects*, though the speeches and anecdotes that he invents for them have nothing to do with history.

2. Omitting the *guo*, following Xi Tong. But there are many other interpretations of this peculiar sentence.

you success. Though your virtue may be great and your good faith unassailable, if you do not understand men's spirits, though your fame may be wide and you do not strive with others, if you do not understand men's minds but instead appear before a tyrant and force him to listen to sermons on benevolence and righteousness, measures and standards—this is simply using other men's bad points to parade your own excellence. You will be called a plaguer of others. He who plagues others will be plagued in turn. You will probably be plagued by this man.

"And suppose he is the kind who actually delights in worthy men and hates the unworthy—then why does he need you to try to make him any different? You had best keep your advice to yourself! Kings and dukes always lord it over others and fight to win the argument. You will find your eyes growing dazed, your color changing, your mouth working to invent excuses, your attitude becoming more and more humble, until in your mind you end by supporting him. This is to pile fire on fire, to add water to water, and is called 'increasing the excessive.' If you give in at the beginning, there will be no place to stop. Since your fervent advice is almost certain not to be believed, you are bound to die if you come into the presence of a tyrant.

"In ancient times Jie put Guan Longfeng to death, and Zhou put Prince Bi Gan to death. Both Guan Longfeng and Prince Bi Gan were scrupulous in their conduct, bent down to comfort and aid the common people, and used their positions as ministers to oppose their superiors. Therefore their rulers, Jie and Zhou, utilized their scrupulous conduct as a means to trap them, for they were too fond of good fame. In ancient times Yao attacked Congzhi and Xuao, and Yu attacked Youhu, and these states were left empty and unpeopled, their rulers cut down. It was because they employed their armies constantly and never ceased their search for gain. All were seekers of fame or gain—have you alone not heard of them? Even the sages cannot cope with men who are after fame or gain, much less a person like you!

"However, you must have some plan in mind. Come, tell me what it is."

Yan Hui said, "If I am grave and empty-hearted, diligent and of one mind, won't that do?"

"Goodness, how could *that* do? You may put on a fine outward show and seem very impressive, but you can't avoid having an uncertain look on your face, anymore than an ordinary man can.[3] And then you try to gauge this man's feelings and seek to influence his mind. But with him, what is called 'the virtue that advances a little each day' would not succeed, much less a great display of virtue! He will stick fast to his position and never be converted. Though he may make outward signs of agreement, inwardly he will not give it a thought! How could such an approach succeed?"

3. I follow Ma Xulun in taking this sentence to refer to Yan Hui. The older interpretation of Guo Xiang takes it to mean: "He [the ruler of Wei] puts on a fine outward show and is very overbearing; his expression is never fixed, and ordinary men do not try to oppose him."

"Well then, suppose I am inwardly direct, outwardly compliant, and do my work through the examples of antiquity? By being inwardly direct, I can be the companion of Heaven. Being a companion of Heaven, I know that the Son of Heaven and I are equally the sons of Heaven. Then why would I use my words to try to get men to praise me or to try to get them not to praise me? A man like this, people call The Child. This is what I mean by being a companion of Heaven.

"By being outwardly compliant, I can be a companion of men. Lifting up the tablet, kneeling, bowing, crouching down—this is the etiquette of a minister. Everybody does it, so why shouldn't I? If I do what other people do, they can hardly criticize me. This is what I mean by being a companion of men.

"By doing my work through the examples of antiquity, I can be the companion of ancient times. Though my words may in fact be lessons and reproaches, they belong to ancient times and not to me. In this way, though I may be blunt, I cannot be blamed. This is what I mean by being a companion of antiquity. If I go about it in this way, will it do?"

Confucius said, "Goodness, how could *that* do? You have too many policies and plans, and you haven't seen what is needed. You will probably get off without incurring any blame, yes. But that will be as far as it goes. How do you think you can actually convert him? You are still making the mind[4] your teacher!"

Yan Hui said, "I have nothing more to offer. May I ask the proper way?"

"You must fast!" said Confucius. "I will tell you what that means. Do you think it is easy to do anything while you have a mind? If you do, Bright Heaven will not sanction you."

Yan Hui said, "My family is poor. I haven't drunk wine or eaten any strong foods for several months. So can I be considered as having fasted?"

"That is the fasting one does before a sacrifice, not the fasting of the mind."

"May I ask what the fasting of the mind is?"

Confucius said, "Make your will one! Don't listen with your ears, listen with your mind. No, don't listen with your mind, but listen with your spirit. Listening stops with the ears, the mind stops with recognition, but spirit is empty and waits for all things. The Way gathers in emptiness alone. Emptiness is the fasting of the mind."

Yan Hui said, "Before I heard this, I was certain that I was Hui. But now that I have heard it, there is no more Hui. Can this be called emptiness?"

"That's all there is to it," said Confucius. "Now I will tell you. You may go and play in his bird cage but never be moved by fame. If he listens, then sing; if not, keep still. Have no gate, no opening,[5] but make oneness your house and live with what cannot be avoided. Then you will be close to success.

"It is easy to keep from walking; the hard thing is to walk without touching the ground. It is easy to cheat when you work for men but hard to cheat when you work for Heaven. You have heard of flying with wings, but you

4. Not the natural or "given" mind but the mind that makes artificial distinctions.

5. Following Zhang Binglin, I read *dou* instead of *du*.

have never heard of flying without wings. You have heard of the knowledge that knows, but you have never heard of the knowledge that does not know. Look into that closed room, the empty chamber where brightness is born! Fortune and blessing gather where there is stillness. But if you do not keep still—this is what is called sitting but racing around.[6] Let your ears and eyes communicate with what is inside and put mind and knowledge on the outside. Then even gods and spirits will come to dwell, not to speak of men! This is the changing of the ten thousand things, the bond of Yu and Shun, the constant practice of Fu Xi and Ji Qu.[7] How much more should it be a rule for lesser men!"

6. The body sits, but the mind continues to race.

7. Mythical sage rulers.

Zigao, duke of She,[8] who was being sent on a mission to Qi, consulted Confucius. "The king is sending me on a very important mission. Qi will probably treat me with great honor but will be in no hurry to do anything more. Even a commoner cannot be forced to act, much less one of the feudal lords. I am very worried about it. You once said to me, 'In all affairs, whether large or small, there are few men who reach a happy conclusion except through the Way. If you do not succeed, you are bound to suffer from the judgment of men. If you do succeed, you are bound to suffer from the yin and yang.[9] To suffer no harm whether or not you succeed—only the man who has virtue can do that.' I am a man who eats plain food that is simply cooked, so that no one ever complains of the heat in my kitchens.[10] Yet this morning I received my orders from the king and by evening I am gulping ice water—do you suppose I have developed some kind of internal fever? I have not even gone to Qi to see what the situation is like, and already I am suffering from the yin and yang. And if I do not succeed, I am bound to suffer from the judgment of men. I will have both worries. As a minister, I am not capable of carrying out this mission. But perhaps you have some advice you can give me. . . ."

8. A high minister of Chu and a relative of the king.

9. The excitement and worry of success will upset the balance of the yin and yang within the body and bring about sickness.

10. The latter part of the sentence is barely intelligible and the translation tentative. Legge's interpretation is ingenious though strained: "In my diet I take what is coarse, and do not seek delicacies,—a man whose cookery does not require him to be using cooling drinks."

Confucius said, "In the world, there are two great decrees: one is fate and the other is duty.[11] That a son should love his parents is fate—you cannot erase this from his heart. That a subject should serve his ruler is duty—there is no place he can go and be without his ruler, no place he can escape to between heaven and earth. These are called the great decrees. Therefore, to serve your parents and be content to follow them anywhere—this is the perfection of filial piety. To serve your ruler and be content to do anything for him—this is the peak of loyalty. And to serve your own mind so that sadness or joy does not sway or move it; to understand what you can do nothing about and to be content with it as with fate—this is the perfection of virtue. As a subject and a son, you are bound to find things you cannot avoid. If you act in accordance with the state of affairs and forget about yourself, then what leisure will you have to love life and hate death? Act in this way, and you will be all right.

11. *Yi*, elsewhere translated as "righteousness."

"I want to tell you something else I have learned. In all human relations, if the two parties are living close to each other, they may form a bond through personal trust. But if they are far apart, they must use words to communicate their loyalty, and words must be transmitted by someone. To transmit words that are either pleasing to both parties or infuriating to both parties is one of the most difficult things in the world. When both parties are pleased, there must be some exaggeration of the good points; and when both parties are angered, there must be some exaggeration of the bad points. Anything that smacks of exaggeration is irresponsible. Where there is irresponsibility, no one will trust what is said, and when that happens, the man who is transmitting the words will be in danger. Therefore the aphorism says, 'Transmit the established facts; do not transmit words of exaggeration.' If you do that, you will probably come out all right.

"When men get together to pit their strength in games of skill, they start off in a light and friendly mood but

usually end up in a dark and angry one, and if they go on too long, they start resorting to various underhanded tricks. When men meet at some ceremony to drink, they start off in an orderly manner but usually end up in disorder; and if they go on too long, they start indulging in various irregular amusements. It is the same with all things. What starts out being sincere usually ends up being deceitful. What was simple in the beginning acquires monstrous proportions in the end.

"Words are like wind and waves; actions are a matter of gain and loss. Wind and waves are easily moved; questions of gain and loss easily lead to danger. Hence anger arises from no other cause than clever words and one-sided speeches. When animals face death, they do not care what cries they make; their breath comes in gasps, and a wild fierceness is born in their hearts. [Men, too,] if you press them too hard, are bound to answer you with ill-natured hearts, though they do not know why they do so. If they themselves do not understand why they behave like this, then who knows where it will end?

"Therefore the aphorism says, 'Do not deviate from your orders; do not press for completion.' To go beyond the limit is excess; to deviate from orders or press for completion is a dangerous thing. A good completion takes a long time; a bad completion cannot be changed later. Can you afford to be careless?

"Just go along with things and let your mind move freely. Resign yourself to what cannot be avoided and nourish what is within you—this is best. What more do you have to do to fulfill your mission? Nothing is as good as following orders (obeying fate)—that's how difficult it is!"[12]

Yan He, who had been appointed tutor to the crown prince, son of Duke Ling of Wei, went to consult Ju Boyu.[13] "Here is this man who by nature is lacking in virtue. If I let him go on with his unruliness, I will endanger the state. If I try to impose some rule on him, I will

12. The phrase *zhiming* can be interpreted as either "following orders" or "obeying fate," and both meanings are almost certainly intended. Since for Zhuangzi, obeying fate is an extremely easy thing to do, the last part of the sentence is ironic. Throughout this passage Confucius, while appearing to give advice on how to carry out a diplomatic mission, is in fact enunciating Zhuangzi's code for successful behavior in general.

13. Yan He was a scholar of Lu, Ju Boyu a minister of Wei. The crown prince is the notorious Kuaikui, who was forced to flee from Wei because he plotted to kill his mother. He reentered the state and seized the throne from his son in 481 BCE.

endanger myself. He knows enough to recognize the faults of others, but he doesn't know his own faults. What can I do with a man like this?"

"A very good question," said Ju Boyu. "Be careful, be on your guard, and make sure that you yourself are in the right! In your actions, it is best to follow along with him, and in your mind, it is best to harmonize with him. However, these two courses involve certain dangers. Though you follow along, you don't want to be pulled into his doings, and though you harmonize, you don't want to be drawn out too far. If in your actions you follow along to the extent of being pulled in with him, then you will be overthrown, destroyed, wiped out, and brought to your knees. If in your mind you harmonize to the extent of being drawn out, then you will be talked about, named, blamed, and condemned. If he wants to be a child, be a child with him. If he wants to follow erratic ways, follow erratic ways with him. If he wants to be reckless, be reckless with him. Understand him thoroughly, and lead him to the point where he is without fault.[14]

"Don't you know about the praying mantis that waved its arms angrily in front of an approaching carriage, unaware that it was incapable of stopping it? Such was the high opinion it had of its talents. Be careful, be on your guard! If you offend him by parading your store of talents, you will be in danger!

"Don't you know how the tiger trainer goes about it? He doesn't dare give the tiger any living thing to eat for fear it will learn the taste of fury by killing it. He doesn't dare give it any whole thing to eat for fear it will learn the taste of fury by tearing it apart. He gauges the state of the tiger's appetite and thoroughly understands its fierce disposition. Tigers are a different breed from men, and yet you can train them to be gentle with their keepers by following along with them. The men who get killed are the ones who go against them.

"The horse lover uses a fine box to catch the dung and a giant clam shell to catch the stale. But if a mosquito or a

14. Waley (*Three Ways of Thought in Ancient China*, p. 109) translates, "And if you probe him, do so in a part where his skin is not sore," taking the verb *da*, which I have translated as "understand thoroughly," to refer to acupuncture.

fly lights on the horse and he slaps it at the wrong time, then the horse will break the bit, hurt its head, and bang its chest. The horse lover tries to think of everything, but his affection leads him into error. Can you afford to be careless?"

Carpenter Shi went to Qi and, when he got to Crooked Shaft, he saw a serrate oak standing by the village shrine. It was broad enough to shelter several thousand oxen and measured a hundred spans around, towering above the hills. The lowest branches were eighty feet from the ground, and a dozen or so of them could have been made into boats. There were so many sightseers that the place looked like a fair, but the carpenter didn't even glance around and went on his way without stopping. His apprentice stood staring for a long time and then ran after Carpenter Shi and said, "Since I first took up my ax and followed you, Master, I have never seen timber as beautiful as this. But you don't even bother to look, and go right on without stopping. Why is that?"

"Forget it—say no more!" said the carpenter. "It's a worthless tree! Make boats out of it and they'd sink; make coffins and they'd rot in no time; make vessels and they'd break at once. Use it for doors and it would sweat sap like pine; use it for posts and the worms would eat them up. It's not a timber tree—there's nothing it can be used for. That's how it got to be that old!"

After Carpenter Shi had returned home, the oak tree appeared to him in a dream and said, "What are you comparing me with? Are you comparing me with those useful trees? The cherry apple, the pear, the orange, the citron, the rest of those fructiferous trees and shrubs—as soon as their fruit is ripe, they are torn apart and subjected to abuse. Their big limbs are broken off, their little limbs are yanked around. Their utility makes life miserable for them, and so they don't get to finish out the years Heaven gave them but are cut off in mid-journey. They bring it on themselves—the pulling and tear-

ing of the common mob. And it's the same way with all other things.

"As for me, I've been trying a long time to be of no use, and though I almost died, I've finally got it. This is of great use to me. If I had been of some use, would I ever have grown this large? Moreover, you and I are both of us things. What's the point of this—things condemning things? You, a worthless man about to die—how do you know I'm a worthless tree?"

When Carpenter Shi woke up, he reported his dream. His apprentice said, "If it's so intent on being of no use, what's it doing there at the village shrine?"[15]

"Shhh! Say no more! It's only *resting* there. If we carp and criticize, it will merely conclude that we don't understand it. Even if it weren't at the shrine, do you suppose it would be cut down? It protects itself in a different way from ordinary people. If you try to judge it by conventional standards, you'll be way off!"

15. The shrine, or altar of the soil, was always situated in a grove of beautiful trees. So the oak was serving a purpose by lending an air of sanctity to the spot.

Ziqi of Nanbo was wandering around the Hill of Shang when he saw a huge tree there, different from all the rest. A thousand teams of horses could have taken shelter under it, and its shade would have covered them all. Ziqi said, "What tree is this? It must certainly have some extraordinary usefulness!" But looking up, he saw that the smaller limbs were gnarled and twisted, unfit for beams or rafters, and looking down, he saw that the trunk was pitted and rotten and could not be used for coffins. He licked one of the leaves, and it blistered his mouth and made it sore. He sniffed the odor, and it was enough to make a man drunk for three days. "It turns out to be a completely unusable tree," said Ziqi, "and so it has been able to grow this big. Aha!—it is this unusableness that the Holy Man makes use of!"

The region of Jingshi in Song is fine for growing catalpas, cypresses, and mulberries. But those that are more than one or two arm lengths around are cut down for people who want monkey perches; those that are three or

four spans around are cut down for the ridgepoles of tall roofs;[16] and those that are seven or eight spans are cut down for the families of nobles or rich merchants who want side boards for coffins. So they never get to live out the years Heaven gave them but are cut down in mid-journey by axes. This is the danger of being usable. In the Jie sacrifice,[17] oxen with white foreheads, pigs with turned-up snouts, and men with piles cannot be offered to the river. This is something all the shamans know, and hence they consider them inauspicious creatures. But the Holy Man, for the same reason, considers them highly auspicious.

16. Following Ma Xulun, I read *mian* (roof) in place of *ming*.

17. Probably a spring sacrifice for the "dispelling (*jie*) of sins," though there are other interpretations. Sacrifices of animals, and sometimes human beings, were made to the Lord of the River, the god of the Yellow River.

There's Crippled Shu—chin stuck down in his navel, shoulders up above his head, pigtail pointing at the sky, his five organs on the top, his two thighs pressing his ribs. By sewing and washing, he gets enough to fill his mouth; by handling a winnow and sifting out the good grain, he makes enough to feed ten people. When the authorities call out the troops, he stands in the crowd waving goodbye; when they get up a big work party, they pass him over because he's a chronic invalid. And when they are doling out grain to the ailing, he gets three big measures and ten bundles of firewood. With a crippled body, he's still able to look after himself and finish out the years Heaven gave him. How much better, then, if he had crippled virtue!

When Confucius visited Chu, Jie Yu, the madman of Chu, wandered by his gate crying, "Phoenix, phoenix, how has virtue failed! The future you cannot wait for; the past you cannot pursue. When the world has the Way, the sage succeeds; when the world is without the Way, the sage survives. In times like the present, we do well to escape penalty. Good fortune is as light as a feather, but nobody knows how to pick it up. Misfortune is as heavy as the earth, but nobody knows how to stay out of its way. Leave off, leave off—this teaching men virtue! Dangerous, dangerous—to mark off the ground and run! Fool,

fool—don't spoil my walking! I walk a crooked way—don't step on my feet. The mountain trees do themselves harm; the grease in the torch burns itself up. The cinnamon can be eaten, and so it gets cut down; the lacquer tree can be used, and so it gets hacked apart. All men know the use of the useful, but nobody knows the use of the useless!"[18]

18. Zhuangzi bases this passage on the somewhat similar anecdote and song of the madman Jie Yu in *Analects* XVIII, 5.

5

THE SIGN OF VIRTUE COMPLETE

In Lu there was a man named Wang Tai who had had his foot cut off.[1] He had as many followers gathered around him as Confucius.

1. As a penalty for some offense.

Chang Ji asked Confucius, "This Wang Tai who's lost a foot—how does he get to divide up Lu with you, Master, and make half of it his disciples? He doesn't stand up and teach, he doesn't sit down and discuss, yet they go to him empty and come home full. Does he really have some wordless teaching, some formless way of bringing the mind to completion? What sort of man is he?"

Confucius said, "This gentleman is a sage. It's just that I've been tardy and haven't gone to see him yet. But if I go to him as my teacher, how much more should those who are not my equals! Why only the state of Lu? I'll bring the whole world along, and we'll all become his followers!"

Chang Ji said, "If he's lost a foot and is still superior to the Master, then how far above the common run of men he must be! But if that's so, then what unique way does he have of using his mind?"

Confucius said, "Life and death are great affairs, and yet they are no change to him. Though heaven and earth flop over and fall down, it is no loss to him. He sees clearly into what has no falsehood and does not shift with things. He takes it as fate that things should change, and he holds fast to the source."

"What do you mean by that?" asked Chang Ji.

Confucius said, "If you look at them from the point of view of their differences, then there is liver and gall, Chu and Yue. But if you look at them from the point of view of their sameness, then the ten thousand things all are one.

A man like this doesn't know what his ears or eyes should approve—he lets his mind play in the harmony of virtue. As for things, he sees them as one and does not see their loss. He regards the loss of a foot as a lump of earth thrown away."

Chang Ji said, "In the way he goes about it, he uses his knowledge to get at his mind and uses his mind to get at the constant mind. Why should things gather around *him*?"

Confucius said, "Men do not mirror themselves in running water—they mirror themselves in still water. Only what is still can still the stillness of other things. Of those that receive life from the earth, the pine and cypress alone are best—they stay as green as ever in winter or summer. Of those that receive life from Heaven, Yao and Shun alone are best—they stand at the head of the ten thousand things. Luckily they were able to order their lives and thereby order the lives of other things. Proof that a man is holding fast to the beginning lies in the fact of his fearlessness. A brave soldier will plunge alone into the midst of nine armies. He seeks fame and can bring himself to this. How much more, then, is possible for a man who governs Heaven and earth, stores up the ten thousand things, lets the six parts of his body[2] be only a dwelling, makes ornaments of his ears and eyes, unifies the knowledge of what he knows, and in his mind never tastes death. He will soon choose the day and ascend far off. Men may become his followers, but how could he be willing to bother himself about things?"

2. The legs, arms, head, and trunk.

Shentu Jia, who had lost a foot, was studying under Bohun Wuren, along with Zichan of Zheng.[3] Zichan said to Shentu Jia, "If I go out first, you stay behind, and if you go out first, I'll stay behind."

3. Zichan (d. 522 BCE) was prime minister of the state of Zheng.

Next day the two of them were again sitting on the same mat in the same hall. Zichan said to Shentu Jia, "If I go out first, you stay behind, and if you go out first, I'll stay behind! Now I will go out. Are you going to stay

behind, or aren't you? When you see a prime minister, you don't even get out of the way—do you think you're the equal of a prime minister?"

Shentu Jia said, "Within the gates of the Master, is there any such thing as a prime minister? You take delight in being a prime minister and pushing people behind you. But I've heard that if the mirror is bright, no dust will settle on it; if dust settles, it isn't really bright. When you live around worthy men a long time, you'll be free of faults. You regard the Master as a great man, and yet you talk like this—it's not right, is it?"

Zichan said, "You, a man like this—and still you claim to be better than a Yao! Take a look at your virtue and see if it's not enough to give you cause to reflect!"

Shentu Jia said, "People who excuse their faults and claim they didn't deserve to be punished—there are lots of them. But those who don't excuse their faults and who admit they didn't deserve to be spared—they are few. To know what you can't do anything about and to be content with it as you would with fate—only a man of virtue can do that. If you play around in front of Archer Yi's target, you're right in the way of the arrows, and if you don't get hit, it's a matter of fate. There are lots of men with two feet who laugh at me for having only one. It makes me boil with rage, but I come here to the Master's place, and I feel calmed down again and go home. I don't know whether he washes me clean with goodness or whether I come to understand things by myself. The Master and I have been friends for nineteen years, and he's never once let on that he's aware I'm missing a foot. Now you and I are supposed to be wandering outside the realm of forms and bodies, and you come looking for me inside it[4]—you're at fault, aren't you?"

Zichan squirmed, changed his expression, and put a different look on his face. "Say no more about it," he said.

4. Following Wang Maohong's suggestion, I reverse the position of *nei* and *wai*.

In Lu there was a man named Shushan No-Toes who had had his foot cut off. Stumping along, he went to see Confucius.

"You weren't careful enough!" said Confucius. "Since you've already broken the law and gotten yourself into trouble like this, what do you expect to gain by coming to me now?"

No-Toes said, "I just didn't understand my duty and was too careless of my body, and so I lost a foot. But I've come now because I still have something that is worth more than a foot and I want to try to hold on to it. There is nothing that heaven doesn't cover, nothing that earth doesn't bear up. I supposed, Master, that you would be like heaven and earth. How did I know you would act like this?"

"It was stupid of me," said Confucius. "Please, sir, won't you come in? I'd like to describe to you what I have learned."

But No-Toes went out.

Confucius said, "Be diligent, my disciples! Here is No-Toes, a man who has had his foot cut off, and still he's striving to learn so he can make up for the evil of his former conduct. How much more, then, should men whose virtue is still unimpaired!"

No-Toes told the story to Lao Dan. "Confucius certainly hasn't reached the stage of a Perfect Man, has he? What does he mean coming around so obsequiously to study with you?[5] He is after the sham illusion of fame and reputation and doesn't know that the Perfect Man looks on these as so many handcuffs and fetters!"

Lao Dan said, "Why don't you just make him see that life and death are the same story, that acceptable and unacceptable are on a single string? Wouldn't it be good to free him from his handcuffs and fetters?"

No-Toes said, "When Heaven has punished him, how can you set him free?"

5. The meaning is doubtful. I follow Guo Xiang in taking it to be a reference to the legend that Confucius went to Laozi for instruction.

Duke Ai of Lu said to Confucius, "In Wei there was an ugly man named Ai Taituo. But when men were around him, they thought only of him and couldn't break away, and when women saw him, they ran begging to their fathers and mothers, saying, 'I'd rather be this gentleman's

concubine than another man's wife!'—there were more than ten such cases, and it hasn't stopped yet. No one ever heard him take the lead—he always just chimed in with other people. He wasn't in the position of a ruler in which he could save men's lives, and he had no store of provisions to fill men's bellies. On top of that, he was ugly enough to astound the whole world, chimed in but never led, and knew no more than what went on right around him. And yet men and women flocked to him. He certainly must be different from other men, I thought, and I summoned him so I could have a look. Just as they said—he was ugly enough to astound the world. But he hadn't been with me more than a month or so when I began to realize what kind of man he was, and before the year was out, I really trusted him. There was no one in the state to act as chief minister, and I wanted to hand over the government to him. He was vague about giving an answer, evasive, as though he hoped to be let off, and I was embarrassed, but in the end I turned the state over to him. Then, before I knew it, he left me and went away. I felt completely crushed, as though I'd suffered a loss and didn't have anyone left to enjoy my state with. What kind of man is he, anyway?"

Confucius said, "I once went on a mission to Chu, and as I was going along, I saw some little pigs nursing at the body of their dead mother. After a while, they gave a start, and all ran away and left her because they could no longer see their likeness in her; she was not the same. In loving their mother, they loved not her body but the thing that moved her body. When a man has been killed in battle and people come to bury him, he has no use for his medals. When a man has had his feet amputated, he doesn't care much about shoes. For both, the thing that is basic no longer exists. When women are selected to be consorts of the Son of Heaven, their nails are not pared and their ears are not pierced. When a man has just taken a wife, he is kept in posts outside [the palace] and is no longer sent on [dangerous] missions.[6] If so much care is taken to keep

6. The sentence is unclear. Another interpretation would be: "he is allowed to spend nights at home and is not required to sleep in the officials' dormitory."

the body whole, how much more in the case of a man whose virtue is whole? Now Ai Taituo says nothing and is trusted, accomplishes nothing and is loved, so that people want to turn over their states to him and are afraid only that he won't accept. It must be that his powers are whole, though his virtue takes no form."

"What do you mean when you say his powers are whole?" asked Duke Ai.

Confucius said, "Life, death, preservation, loss, failure, success, poverty, riches, worthiness, unworthiness, slander, fame, hunger, thirst, cold, heat—these are the alternations of the world, the workings of fate. Day and night they change place before us, and wisdom cannot spy out their source. Therefore, they should not be enough to destroy your harmony; they should not be allowed to enter the storehouse of spirit. If you can harmonize and delight in them, master them and never be at a loss for joy; if you can do this day and night without break and make it be spring with everything, mingling with all and creating the moment within your own mind—this is what I call being whole in power."

"What do you mean when you say his virtue takes no form?"

"Among level things, water at rest is the most perfect, and therefore it can serve as a standard. It guards what is inside and shows no movement outside. Virtue is the establishment of perfect harmony. Though virtue takes no form, things cannot break away from it."

Some days later, Duke Ai reported his conversation to Min Zi.[7] "At first, when I faced south and became ruler of the realm, I tried to look after the regulation of the people and worried that they might die. I really thought I understood things perfectly. But now that I've heard the words of a Perfect Man, I'm afraid there was nothing to my understanding—I was thinking too little of my own welfare and ruining the state. Confucius and I are not subject and ruler—we are friends in virtue, that's all."

7. A disciple of Confucius.

* * *

Mr. Lame-Hunchback-No-Lips talked to Duke Ling of Wei, and Duke Ling was so pleased with him that when he looked at normal men, he thought their necks looked too lean and skinny.[8] Mr. Pitcher-Sized-Wen talked to Duke Huan of Qi, and Duke Huan was so pleased with him that when he looked at normal men, he thought their necks looked too lean and skinny. Therefore, if virtue is preeminent, the body will be forgotten. But when men do not forget what can be forgotten but forget what cannot be forgotten—that may be called true forgetting.

8. Originally the text probably had some other phrase at this point referring to the walk, back, or lips of normal men, which dropped out and was replaced by the phrase from the parallel sentence that follows.

So the sage has his wanderings. For him, knowledge is an offshoot, promises are glue, favors are a patching up, and skill is a peddler. The sage hatches no schemes, so what use has he for knowledge? He does no carving, so what use has he for glue? He suffers no loss, so what use has he for favors? He hawks no goods, so what use has he for peddling? These four are called Heavenly Gruel. Heavenly Gruel is the food of Heaven, and if he's already gotten food from Heaven, what use does he have for men? He has the form of a man but not the feelings of a man. Since he has the form of a man, he bands together with other men. Since he doesn't have the feelings of a man, right and wrong cannot get at him. Puny and small, he sticks with the rest of men. Massive and great, he perfects his Heaven alone.

Huizi said to Zhuangzi, "Can a man really be without feelings?"

Zhuangzi: "Yes."

Huizi: "But a man who has no feelings—how can you call him a man?"

Zhuangzi: "The Way gave him a face; Heaven gave him a form—why can't you call him a man?"

Huizi: "But if you've already called him a man, how can he be without feelings?"

Zhuangzi: "That's not what I mean by feelings. When I talk about having no feelings, I mean that a man doesn't

allow likes or dislikes to get in and do him harm. He just lets things be the way they are and doesn't try to help life along."

Huizi: "If he doesn't try to help life along, then how can he keep himself alive?"

Zhuangzi: "The Way gave him a face; Heaven gave him a form. He doesn't let likes or dislikes get in and do him harm. You, now—you treat your spirit like an outsider. You wear out your energy, leaning on a tree and moaning, slumping at your desk and dozing—Heaven picked out a body for you and you use it to gibber about 'hard' and 'white'!"[9]

9. On "hard" and "white," see p. 12, n. 9. Zhuangzi's description of Huizi is rhymed in the original.

6

THE GREAT AND VENERABLE TEACHER

He who knows what it is that Heaven does, and knows what it is that man does, has reached the peak. Knowing what it is that Heaven does, he lives with Heaven. Knowing what it is that man does, he uses the knowledge of what he knows to help out the knowledge of what he doesn't know and lives out the years that Heaven gave him without being cut off midway—this is the perfection of knowledge.

However, there is a difficulty. Knowledge must wait for something before it can be applicable, and that which it waits for is never certain. How, then, can I know that what I call Heaven is not really man and what I call man is not really Heaven? There must first be a True Man[1] before there can be true knowledge.

1. Another term for the Daoist sage, synonymous with the Perfect Man or the Holy Man.

What do I mean by a True Man? The True Man of ancient times did not rebel against want, did not grow proud in plenty, and did not plan his affairs. A man like this could commit an error and not regret it, could meet with success and not make a show. A man like this could climb the high places and not be frightened, could enter the water and not get wet, could enter the fire and not get burned. His knowledge was able to climb all the way up to the Way like this.

The True Man of ancient times slept without dreaming and woke without care; he ate without savoring; and his breath came from deep inside. The True Man breathes with his heels; the mass of men breathe with their throats. Crushed and bound down, they gasp out their words as though they were retching. Deep in their passions and desires, they are shallow in the workings of Heaven.

The True Man of ancient times knew nothing of loving life, knew nothing of hating death. He emerged without delight; he went back in without a fuss. He came briskly, he went briskly, and that was all. He didn't forget where he began; he didn't try to find out where he would end. He received something and took pleasure in it; he forgot about it and handed it back again. This is what I call not using the mind to repel the Way, not using man to help out Heaven. This is what I call the True Man.

Since he is like this, his mind forgets;[2] his face is calm; his forehead is broad. He is chilly like autumn, balmy like spring, and his joy and anger prevail through the four seasons. He goes along with what is right for things, and no one knows his limit. Therefore, when the sage calls out the troops, he may overthrow nations, but he will not lose the hearts of the people. His bounty enriches ten thousand ages, but he has no love for men. Therefore he who delights in bringing success to things is not a sage; he who has affections is not benevolent; he who looks for the right time is not a worthy man; he who cannot encompass both profit and loss is not a gentleman; he who thinks of conduct and fame and misleads himself is not a man of breeding; and he who destroys himself and is without truth is not a user of men. Those like Hu Buxie, Wu Guang, Bo Yi, Shu Qi, Ji Zi, Xu Yu, Ji Tuo, and Shentu Di—all of them slaved in the service of other men, took joy in bringing other men joy, but could not find joy in any joy of their own.[3]

This was the True Man of old: his bearing was lofty and did not crumble; he appeared to lack but accepted nothing; he was dignified in his correctness but not insistent; he was vast in his emptiness but not ostentatious. Mild and cheerful, he seemed to be happy; reluctant, he could not help doing certain things; annoyed, he let it show in his face; relaxed, he rested in his virtue. Tolerant,[4] he seemed to be part of the world; towering alone, he could be checked by nothing; withdrawn, he seemed to prefer to

2. Reading *wang* instead of *zhi* in accordance with Wang Maohong's suggestion.

3. According to legend, these were men who either tried to reform the conduct of others or made a show of guarding their own integrity. All either were killed or committed suicide.

4. Following the Cui text, which reads *guang*.

cut himself off; bemused, he forgot what he was going to say.[5]

He regarded penalties as the body, rites as the wings, wisdom as what is timely, virtue as what is reasonable. Because he regarded penalties as the body, he was benign in his killing. Because he regarded rites as the wings, he got along in the world. Because he regarded wisdom as what is timely, there were things that he could not keep from doing. Because he regarded virtue as what is reasonable, he was like a man with two feet who gets to the top of the hill. And yet people really believed that he worked hard to get there.[6]

Therefore his liking was one, and his not liking was one. His being one was one, and his not being one was one. In being one, he was acting as a companion of Heaven. In not being one, he was acting as a companion of man. When man and Heaven do not defeat each other, then we may be said to have the True Man.

Life and death are fated—constant as the succession of dark and dawn, a matter of Heaven. There are some things that man can do nothing about—all are a matter of the nature of creatures. If a man is willing to regard Heaven as a father and to love it, then how much more should he be willing to do for that which is even greater![7] If he is willing to regard the ruler as superior to himself and to die for him, then how much more should he be willing to do for the Truth!

When the springs dry up and the fish are left stranded on the ground, they spew one another with moisture and wet one another down with spit—but it would be much better if they could forget one another in the rivers and lakes. Instead of praising Yao and condemning Jie, it would be better to forget both of them and transform yourself with the Way.

The Great Clod burdens me with form, labors me with life, eases me in old age, and rests me in death. So if I think well of my life, for the same reason I must think well of my death.[8]

5. There are many different interpretations of the words used to describe the True Man in this paragraph. I have followed those adopted by Fukunaga.

6. As Fukunaga pointed out, this paragraph, which describes the Daoist sage as a ruler who employs penalties, rites, wisdom, and virtue, seems out of keeping with Zhuangzi's philosophy as expressed elsewhere. Fukunaga suggests that it is an addition by a writer of the third or second centuries BCE who was influenced by Legalist thought.

7. Since Zhuangzi elsewhere uses *Tian* or Heaven as a synonym of the Way, this passage has troubled commentators. Some would emend the order of the words to read "If a man is willing to regard his father as Heaven" or would substitute *ren* for *Tian*, that is, "If a man is willing to regard another man as his father."

8. Or perhaps the meaning is "So if it makes my life good, it must for the same reason make my death good."

You hide your boat in the ravine and your fish net[9] in the swamp and tell yourself that they will be safe. But in the middle of the night, a strong man shoulders them and carries them off, and in your stupidity, you don't know why it happened. You think you do right to hide little things in big ones, and yet they get away from you. But if you were to hide the world in the world, so that nothing could get away, this would be the final reality of the constancy of things.

9. Following Yu Yue's interpretation.

You have had the audacity to take on human form, and you are delighted. But the human form has ten thousand changes that never come to an end. Your joys, then, must be uncountable. Therefore, the sage wanders in the realm where things cannot get away from him, and all are preserved. He delights in early death; he delights in old age; he delights in the beginning; he delights in the end. If he can serve as a model for men, how much more so that which the ten thousand things are tied to and all changes alike wait for!

The Way has its reality and its signs but is without action or form. You can hand it down, but you cannot receive it; you can get it, but you cannot see it. It is its own source, its own root. Before Heaven and earth existed, it was there, firm from ancient times. It gave spirituality to the spirits and to God; it gave birth to Heaven and to earth. It exists beyond the highest point, and yet you cannot call it lofty; it exists beneath the limit of the six directions, and yet you cannot call it deep. It was born before Heaven and earth, and yet you cannot say it has been there for long; it is earlier than the earliest time, and yet you cannot call it old.

Xiwei got it and held up heaven and earth.[10] Fu Xi got it and entered into the mother of breath. The Big Dipper got it and from ancient times has never wavered. The Sun and Moon got it and from ancient times have never rested. Kanpi got it and entered Kunlun. Pingyi got it and wandered in the great river. Jian Wu got it and lived in the great mountain.[11] The Yellow Emperor got it and ascended to

10. The figures in this paragraph all are deities or mythical beings, but the myths to which Zhuangzi refers are in many cases unknown, so that the translation is tentative in places.

11. Kanpi is the god of the mythical Kunlun Mountains of the west; Pingyi is the god of the Yellow River; and Jian Wu is the god of Mount Tai.

the cloudy heavens. Zhuan Xu got it and dwelled in the Dark Palace. Yuqiang got it and stood at the limit of the north. The Queen Mother of the West got it and took her seat on Shaoguang—nobody knows her beginning, nobody knows her end. Pengzu got it and lived from the age of Shun to the age of the Five Dictators.[12] Fu Yue got it and became minister to Wuding, who extended his rule over the whole world; then Fu Yue climbed up to the Eastern Governor, straddled the Winnowing Basket and the Tail, and took his place among the ranks of stars.[13]

12. The Yellow Emperor and Zhuan Xu are legendary rulers. The Queen Mother of the West is an immortal spirit who lives in the far west. Yuqiang is a deity of the far north. Pengzu's life span as given here extends, by traditional dating, from the twenty-sixth to the seventh centuries BCE.

13. Fu Yue is frequently mentioned as a minister to the Shang ruler Wuding (traditional dates 1324–1266 BCE), but little is known of the legend that he ascended to the sky and became a star.

Nanpo Zikui said to the Woman Crookback, "You are old in years, and yet your complexion is that of a child. Why is this?"

"I have heard the Way!"

"Can the Way be learned?" asked Nanpo Zikui.

"Goodness, how could that be? Anyway, you aren't the man to do it. Now there's Buliang Yi—he has the talent of a sage but not the Way of a sage, whereas I have the Way of a sage but not the talent of a sage. I thought I would try to teach him and see if I could really get anywhere near to making him a sage. It's easier to explain the Way of a sage to someone who has the talent of a sage, you know. So I began explaining and kept at him for three days,[14] and after that he was able to put the world outside himself. When he had put the world outside himself, I kept at him for seven days more, and after that he was able to put things outside himself. When he had put things outside himself, I kept at him for nine days more, and after that he was able to put life outside himself. After he had put life outside himself, he was able to achieve the brightness of dawn, and when he had achieved the brightness of dawn, he could see his own aloneness. After he had managed to see his own aloneness, he could do away with past and present, and after he had done away with past and present, he was able to enter where there is no life and no death. That which kills life does not die; that which gives life to life does not live.[15] This is the kind of thing it is: there's nothing it doesn't send off, nothing it doesn't

14. Following Wen Yiduo's suggestion, I reverse the position of *shou* and *gao*.

15. That is, that which transcends the categories of life and death can never be said to have lived or died; only that which recognizes the existence of such categories is subject to them.

welcome, nothing it doesn't destroy, nothing it doesn't complete. Its name is Peace-in-Strife. After the strife, it attains completion."

Nanpo Zikui asked, "Where did you happen to hear this?"

"I heard it from the son of Aided-by-Ink, and Aided-by-Ink heard it from the grandson of Repeated-Recitation, and the grandson of Repeated-Recitation heard it from Seeing-Brightly, and Seeing-Brightly heard it from Whispered-Agreement, and Whispered-Agreement heard it from Waiting-for-Use, and Waiting-for-Use heard it from Exclaimed-Wonder, and Exclaimed-Wonder heard it from Dark-Obscurity, and Dark-Obscurity heard it from Participation-in-Mystery, and Participation-in-Mystery heard it from Copy-the-Source!"[16]

16. Reading *nishi* instead of *yishi* for the last name. But these names are open to a variety of interpretations. The whole list, of course, is a parody of the filiations of the other schools of philosophy.

Master Si, Master Yu, Master Li, and Master Lai were all four talking together. "Who can look on nonbeing as his head, on life as his back, and on death as his rump?" they said. "Who knows that life and death, existence and annihilation, are all a single body? I will be his friend!"

The four men looked at one another and smiled. There was no disagreement in their hearts, and so the four of them became friends.

All at once, Master Yu fell ill. Master Si went to ask how he was. "Amazing!" said Master Yu. "The Creator is making me all crookedy like this! My back sticks up like a hunchback, and my vital organs are on top of me. My chin is hidden in my navel, my shoulders are up above my head, and my pigtail points at the sky. It must be some dislocation of the yin and yang!"

Yet he seemed calm at heart and unconcerned. Dragging himself haltingly to the well, he looked at his reflection and said, "My, my! So the Creator is making me all crookedy like this!"

"Do you resent it?" asked Master Si.

"Why no, what would I resent? If the process continues, perhaps in time he'll transform my left arm into a rooster. In that case I'll keep watch during the night. Or

perhaps in time he'll transform my right arm into a crossbow pellet, and I'll shoot down an owl for roasting. Or perhaps in time he'll transform my buttocks into cartwheels. Then, with my spirit for a horse, I'll climb up and go for a ride. What need will I ever have for a carriage again?

"I received life because the time had come; I will lose it because the order of things passes on. Be content with this time and dwell in this order, and then neither sorrow nor joy can touch you. In ancient times this was called the 'freeing of the bound.' There are those who cannot free themselves because they are bound by things. But nothing can ever win against Heaven—that's the way it's always been. What would I have to resent?"

Suddenly Master Lai grew ill. Gasping and wheezing, he lay at the point of death. His wife and children gathered round in a circle and began to cry. Master Li, who had come to ask how he was, said, "Shoo! Get back! Don't disturb the process of change!"

Then he leaned against the doorway and talked to Master Lai. "How marvelous the Creator is! What is he going to make out of you next? Where is he going to send you? Will he make you into a rat's liver? Will he make you into a bug's arm?"

Master Lai said, "A child, obeying his father and mother, goes wherever he is told, east or west, south or north. And the yin and yang—how much more are they to a man than father or mother! Now that they have brought me to the verge of death, if I should refuse to obey them, how perverse I would be! What fault is it of theirs? The Great Clod burdens me with form, labors me with life, eases me in old age, and rests me in death. So if I think well of my life, for the same reason I must think well of my death. When a skilled smith is casting metal, if the metal should leap up and say, 'I insist on being made into a Moye!'[17] he would surely regard it as very inauspicious metal indeed. Now, having had the audacity to take on human form once, if I should say, 'I don't want to be

17. A famous sword of King Helü (r. 514–496 BCE) of Wu.

anything but a man! Nothing but a man!' the Creator would surely regard me as a most inauspicious sort of person. So now I think of heaven and earth as a great furnace, and the Creator as a skilled smith. Where could he send me that would not be all right? I will go off to sleep peacefully, and then with a start, I will wake up."

Master Sanghu, Mengzi Fan, and Master Qinzhang, three friends, said to one another, "Who can join with others without joining with others? Who can do with others without doing with others? Who can climb up to heaven and wander in the mists, roam the infinite, and forget life forever and forever?" The three men looked at one another and smiled. There was no disagreement in their hearts, and so they became friends.

After some time had passed without event, Master Sanghu died. He had not yet been buried when Confucius, hearing of his death, sent Zigong to assist at the funeral. When Zigong arrived, he found one of the dead man's friends weaving frames for silkworms, while the other strummed a lute. Joining their voices, they sang this song:

Ah, Sanghu!
Ah, Sanghu!
You have gone back to your true form
While we remain as men, O!

Zigong hastened forward and said, "May I be so bold as to ask what sort of ceremony this is—singing in the very presence of the corpse?"

The two men looked at each other and laughed. "What does this man know of the meaning of ceremony?" they said.

Zigong returned and reported to Confucius what had happened. "What sort of men are they, anyway?" he asked. "They pay no attention to proper behavior, disregard their personal appearance and, without so much as changing the expression on their faces, sing in the very presence of the

corpse! I can think of no name for them! What sort of men are they?"

"Such men as they," said Confucius, "wander beyond the realm; men like me wander within it. Beyond and within can never meet. It was stupid of me to send you to offer condolences. Even now they have joined with the Creator as men to wander in the single breath of heaven and earth. They look on life as a swelling tumor, a protruding wen, and on death as the draining of a sore or the bursting of a boil. To men such as these, how could there be any question of putting life first or death last? They borrow the forms of different creatures and house them in the same body. They forget liver and gall, cast aside ears and eyes, turning and revolving, ending and beginning again, unaware of where they start or finish. Idly they roam beyond the dust and dirt; they wander free and easy in the service of inaction. Why should they fret and fuss about the ceremonies of the vulgar world and make a display for the ears and eyes of the common herd?"

Zigong said, "Well then, Master, what is this 'realm' that you stick to?"

Confucius said, "I am one of those men punished by Heaven. Nevertheless, I will share with you what I have."

"Then may I ask about the realm?"[18] said Zigong.

Confucius said, "Fish thrive in water, man thrives in the Way. For those that thrive in water, dig a pond, and they will find nourishment enough. For those that thrive in the Way, don't bother about them, and their lives will be secure. So it is said, the fish forget one another in the rivers and lakes, and men forget one another in the arts of the Way."

Zigong said, "May I ask about the singular man?"

"The singular man is singular in comparison to other men, but a companion of Heaven. So it is said, the petty man of Heaven is a gentleman among men; the gentleman among men is the petty man of Heaven."

* * *

18. The word *fang*, which I have translated as "realm," may also mean "method" or "procedure," and Confucius's answer seems to stress this latter meaning.

Yan Hui said to Confucius, "When Mengsun Cai's mother died, he wailed without shedding any tears; he did not grieve in his heart; and he conducted the funeral without any look of sorrow. He fell down on these three counts, and yet he is known all over the state of Lu for the excellent way he managed the funeral. Is it really possible to gain such a reputation when there are no facts to support it? I find it very peculiar indeed!"

Confucius said, "Mengsun did all there was to do. He was advanced beyond ordinary understanding, and he would have simplified things even more, but that wasn't practical. However, there is still a lot that he simplified. Mengsun doesn't know why he lives and doesn't know why he dies. He doesn't know why he should go ahead; he doesn't know why he should fall behind. In the process of change, he has become a thing [among other things], and he is merely waiting for some other change that he doesn't yet know about. Moreover, when he is changing, how does he know that he really is changing? And when he is not changing, how does he know that he hasn't already changed? You and I, now—we are dreaming and haven't waked up yet. But in his case, though something may startle his body, it won't injure his mind; though something may alarm the house [his spirit lives in], his emotions will suffer no death. Mengsun alone has waked up. Men wail and so he wails, too—that's the reason he acts like this.

"What's more, we go around telling one another, I do this, I do that—but how do we know that this 'I' we talk about has any 'I' to it? You dream you're a bird and soar up into the sky; you dream you're a fish and dive down in the pool. But now when you tell me about it, I don't know whether you are awake or whether you are dreaming. Running around accusing others[19] is not as good as laughing, and enjoying a good laugh is not as good as going along with things. Be content to go along and forget about change, and then you can enter the mysterious oneness of Heaven."

* * *

19. Following Xi Tong, I read *ze* instead of *shí*, but the sentence is obscure and there are many interpretations.

Yi Erzi went to see Xu You.[20] Xu You said, "What kind of assistance has Yao been giving you?"

Yi Erzi said, "Yao told me, 'You must learn to practice benevolence and righteousness and to speak clearly about right and wrong!'"

"Then why come to see *me*?" said Xu You. "Yao has already tattooed you with benevolence and righteousness and cut off your nose with right and wrong.[21] Now how do you expect to go wandering in any faraway, carefree, and as-you-like-it paths?"

"That may be," said Yi Erzi. "But I would like, if I may, to wander in a little corner of them."

"Impossible!" said Xu You. "Eyes that are blind have no way to tell the loveliness of faces and features; eyes with no pupils have no way to tell the beauty of colored and embroidered silks."

Yi Erzi said, "Yes, but Wuzhuang forgot her beauty, Juliang forgot his strength, and the Yellow Emperor forgot his wisdom—all were content to be recast and remolded.[22] How do you know that the Creator will not wipe away my tattoo, stick my nose back on again, and let me ride on the process of completion and follow after you, Master?"

"Ah—we can never tell," said Xu You. "I will just speak to you about the general outline. This Teacher of mine, this Teacher of mine—he passes judgment on the ten thousand things, but he doesn't think himself righteous; his bounty extends to ten thousand generations, but he doesn't think himself benevolent. He is older than the highest antiquity, but he doesn't think himself long-lived; he covers heaven, bears up the earth, carves and fashions countless forms, but he doesn't think himself skilled. It is with him alone I wander."

Yan Hui said, "I'm improving!"

Confucius said, "What do you mean by that?"

"I've forgotten benevolence and righteousness!"

"That's good. But you still haven't got it."

20. A recluse of the time of Emperor Yao. He appeared on p. 3.

21. Tattooing and cutting off the nose were common punishments.

22. Judging from the context, Wuzhuang and Juliang must have been noted for their beauty and strength, respectively. Perhaps the former is the same as the beautiful Maoqiang mentioned on p. 15. All these persons forgot themselves in the Way and were remolded by the Creator.

Another day, the two met again, and Yan Hui said, "I'm improving!"

"What do you mean by that?"

"I've forgotten rites and music!"

"That's good. But you still haven't got it."

Another day, the two met again, and Yan Hui said, "I'm improving!"

"What do you mean by that?"

"I can sit down and forget everything!"

Confucius looked very startled and said, "What do you mean, sit down and forget everything?"

Yan Hui said, "I smash up my limbs and body, drive out perception and intellect, cast off form, do away with understanding, and make myself identical with the Great Thoroughfare. This is what I mean by sitting down and forgetting everything."

Confucius said, "If you're identical with it, you must have no more likes! If you've been transformed, you must have no more constancy! So you really are a worthy man after all![23] With your permission, I'd like to become your follower."

23. Zhuangzi probably intends a humorous reference to Confucius's words in *Analects* VI, 9: "The Master said, 'What a worthy man was Hui!'"

Master Yu and Master Sang were friends. Once, it rained incessantly for ten days. Master Yu said to himself, Master Sang is probably having a bad time, and he wrapped up some rice and took it for his friend to eat. When he got to Master Sang's gate, he heard something like singing or crying and someone striking a lute and saying:

Father?
Mother?
Heaven?
Man?

It was as though the voice would not hold out and the singer were rushing to get through the words.

Master Yu went inside and said, "What do you mean—singing a song like that!"

"I was pondering what it is that has brought me to this extremity, but I couldn't find the answer. My father and mother surely wouldn't wish this poverty on me. Heaven covers all without partiality; earth bears up all without partiality—heaven and earth surely wouldn't single me out to make me poor. I try to discover who is doing it, but I can't get the answer. Still, here I am—at the very extreme. It must be fate."

7

FIT FOR EMPERORS AND KINGS

Nie Que was questioning Wang Ni. Four times he asked a question, and four times Wang Ni said he didn't know. Nie Que proceeded to hop around in great glee and went and told Master Puyi. Master Puyi said, "Are you just now finding *that* out?[1] The clansman Youyu was no match for the clansman Tai.[2] The clansman Youyu still held on to benevolence and worked to win men over. He won men over all right, but he never got out into [the realm of] 'not-man.' The clansman Tai, now—he lay down peaceful and easy; he woke up wide-eyed and blank. Sometimes he thought he was a horse; sometimes he thought he was a cow. His understanding was truly trustworthy; his virtue was perfectly true. He never entered [the realm of] 'non-man.'"[3]

Jian Wu went to see the madman Jie Yu. Jie Yu said, "What was Zhong Shi telling you the other day?"[4]

Jian Wu said, "He told me that the ruler of men should devise his own principles, standards, ceremonies, and regulations, and then there will be no one who will fail to obey him and be transformed by them."

The madman Jie Yu said, "This is bogus virtue! To try to govern the world like this is like trying to walk the ocean, to drill through a river, or to make a mosquito shoulder a mountain! When the sage governs, does he govern what is on the *outside*? He makes sure of himself first, and then he acts. He makes absolutely certain that things can do what they are supposed to do, that is all. The bird flies high in the sky where it can escape the danger of stringed arrows. The field mouse burrows deep down under the

1. On Nie Que and Wang Ni, see pp. 14–15. Master Puyi is probably the same as Master Piyi, who appears elsewhere in the *Zhuangzi* as Wang Ni's teacher. According to commentators, Nie Que's delight came from the fact that he had finally realized that there are no answers to questions.

2. "The clansman Youyu" is the sage ruler Shun, the ideal of the Confucian philosophers. "The clansman Tai" is vaguely identified as a ruler of high antiquity.

3. The existence of a category "not-man" depends on the recognition of a category "man." Shun could get no further than the category "man"; hence he never reached the realm of "not-man." Tai, on the other hand, was able to transcend all such categories.

4. Jian Wu and Jie Yu appeared on p. 4. Nothing is known about Zhong Shi. I follow Yu Yue in taking *ri* to mean "the other day."

sacred hill where it won't have to worry about men digging and smoking it out. Have you got less sense than these two little creatures?"

Tian Gen was wandering on the sunny side of Yin Mountain. When he reached the banks of the Liao River, he happened to meet a Nameless Man. He questioned the man, saying, "Please may I ask how to rule the world?"

The Nameless Man said, "Get away from me, you peasant! What kind of a dreary question is that! I'm just about to set off with the Creator. And if I get bored with that, then I'll ride on the Light-and-Lissome Bird out beyond the six directions, wandering in the village of Not-Even-Anything and living in the Broad-and-Borderless field. What business[5] do you have coming with this talk of governing the world and disturbing my mind?"

But Tian Gen repeated his question. The Nameless Man said, "Let your mind wander in simplicity, blend your spirit with the vastness, follow along with things the way they are, and make no room for personal views—then the world will be governed."

5. I follow the traditional interpretation, though in fact no one has succeeded in determining the meaning of this character for certain. Other interpretations are "How do you have the leisure to come," etc., or "What is this dream talk that you come with about governing the world," etc.

Yangzi Ju[6] went to see Lao Dan and said, "Here is a man swift as an echo, strong as a beam, with a wonderfully clear understanding of the principles of things, studying the Way without ever letting up—a man like this could compare with an enlightened king, couldn't he?"

6. Perhaps meant to be identified with the hedonist philosopher Yang Zhu.

Lao Dan said, "In comparison with the sage, a man like this is a drudging slave, a craftsman bound to his calling, wearing out his body, grieving his mind. They say it is the beautiful markings of the tiger and the leopard that call out the hunters, the nimbleness of the monkey and the ability of the dog to catch rats[7] that make them end up chained. A man like this—how could he compare with an enlightened king?"

7. Reading *liu* in accordance with the parallel passage in sec. 12.

Yangzi Ju, much taken aback, said, "May I venture to ask about the government of the enlightened king?"

Lao Dan said, "The government of the enlightened king? His achievements blanket the world but appear not to be his own doing. His transforming influence touches the ten thousand things, but the people do not depend on him. With him there is no promotion or praise—he lets everything find its own enjoyment. He takes his stand on what cannot be fathomed and wanders where there is nothing at all."

In Zheng there was a shaman of the gods named Ji Xian. He could tell whether men would live or die, survive or perish, be fortunate or unfortunate, live a long time or die young, and he would predict the year, month, week,[8] and day as though he were a god himself. When the people of Zheng saw him, they dropped everything and ran out of his way. Liezi went to see him and was completely intoxicated. Returning, he said to Huzi,[9] "I used to think, Master, that your Way was perfect. But now I see there is something even higher!"

8. The ancient ten-day week.

9. The Daoist philosopher Liezi appeared on p. 3. Huzi is his teacher.

Huzi said, "I have already showed you all the outward forms, but I haven't yet showed you the substance—and do you really think you have mastered this Way of mine? There may be a flock of hens, but if there is no rooster, how can they lay fertile eggs? You take what you know of the Way and wave it in the face of the world, expecting to be believed! This is the reason men can see right through you. Try bringing your shaman along next time and letting him get a look at me."

The next day Liezi brought the shaman to see Huzi. When they had left the room, the shaman said, "I'm so sorry—your master is dying! There's no life left in him—he won't last the week. I saw something very strange—something like wet ashes!"

Liezi went back into the room, weeping and drenching the collar of his robe with tears, and reported this to Huzi.

Huzi said, "Just now I appeared to him with the Pattern of Earth—still and silent, nothing moving, nothing

standing up. He probably saw in me the Workings of Virtue Closed Off.[10] Try bringing him around again."

The next day the two came to see Huzi again, and when they had left the room, the shaman said to Liezi, "It certainly was lucky that your master met me! He's going to get better—he has all the signs of life! I could see the stirring of what had been closed off!"

Liezi went in and reported this to Huzi.

Huzi said, "Just now I appeared to him as Heaven and Earth—no name or substance to it, but still the workings, coming up from the heels. He probably saw in me the Workings of the Good One.[11] Try bringing him again."

The next day the two came to see Huzi again, and when they had left the room, the shaman said to Liezi, "Your master is never the *same*! I have no way to physiognomize him! If he will try to steady himself, then I will come and examine him again."

Liezi went in and reported this to Huzi.

Huzi said, "Just now I appeared to him as the Great Vastness Where Nothing Wins Out. He probably saw in me the Workings of the Balanced Breaths. Where the swirling waves[12] gather, there is an abyss; where the still waters gather, there is an abyss; where the running waters gather, there is an abyss. The abyss has nine names, and I have shown him three.[13] Try bringing him again."

The next day the two came to see Huzi again, but before the shaman had even come to a halt before Huzi, his wits left him and he fled.

"Run after him!" said Huzi, but though Liezi ran after him, he could not catch up. Returning, he reported to Huzi, "He's vanished! He's disappeared! I couldn't catch up with him."

Huzi said, "Just now I appeared to him as Not Yet Emerged from My Source. I came at him empty, wriggling and turning, not knowing anything about 'who' or 'what,' now dipping and bending, now flowing in waves—that's why he ran away."

10. Virtue here has the sense of vital force. Compare *Book of Changes*, *Xici* 2: "The Great Virtue of Heaven and Earth is called life."

11. The language of this whole passage is, needless to say, deliberately mysterious. The term "Good One" may have some relation to the passage in the *Changes*, *Xici* 1: "The succession of the yin and yang is called the Way. What carries it on is goodness."

12. Following Ma Xulun's emendation and interpretation.

13. According to commentators, the three forms of the abyss in the order given here correspond to the third, first, and second of Huzi's manifestations.

After this, Liezi concluded that he had never really begun to learn anything.[14] He went home and, for three years, did not go out. He replaced his wife at the stove, fed the pigs as though he were feeding people, and showed no preferences in the things he did. He got rid of the carving and polishing and returned to plainness, letting his body stand alone like a clod. In the midst of entanglement he remained sealed, and in this oneness he ended his life.

14. That is, he had reached the highest stage of understanding.

Do not be an embodier for fame; do not be a storehouse of schemes; do not be an undertaker of projects; do not be a proprietor of wisdom. Embody to the fullest what has no end and wander where there is no trail. Hold on to all that you have received from Heaven, but do not think you have gotten anything. Be empty, that is all. The Perfect Man uses his mind like a mirror—going after nothing, welcoming nothing, responding but not storing. Therefore he can win out over things and not hurt himself.

The emperor of the South Sea was called Shu [Brief]; the emperor of the North Sea was called Hu [Sudden]; and the emperor of the central region was called Hundun [Chaos]. From time to time, Shu and Hu came together for a meeting in the territory of Hundun, and Hundun treated them very generously. Shu and Hu discussed how they could repay his kindness. "All men," they said, "have seven openings so they can see, hear, eat, and breathe. But Hundun alone doesn't have any. Let's trying boring him some!"

Every day they bored another hole, and on the seventh day Hundun died.

8

WEBBED TOES

Two toes webbed together, a sixth finger forking off—these come from the inborn nature but are excretions as far as Virtue is concerned.[1] Swelling tumors and protruding wens—these come from the body but are excretions as far as the inborn nature is concerned. Men overnice in the ways of benevolence and righteousness try to put these into practice, even to line them up with the five vital organs![2] This is not the right approach to the Way and its Virtue. Therefore he who has two toes webbed together has grown a flap of useless flesh; he who has a sixth finger forking out of his hand has sprouted a useless digit; and he who imposes overnice ways, webs, and forked fingers on the original form of the five vital organs will become deluded and perverse in the practice of benevolence and righteousness, and overnice in the use of his hearing and sight. Thus he who is web toed in eyesight will be confused by the five colors, bewitched by patterns and designs, by the dazzling hues of blue and yellow, of embroidery and brocade—am I wrong? So we have Li Zhu.[3] He who is overnice in hearing will be confused by the five notes, bewitched by the six tones, by the sounds of metal and stone, strings and woodwinds, the *huangzhong* and *dalü* pitch pipes—am I wrong? So we have Music Master Kuang.[4] He who is fork fingered with benevolence will tear out the Virtue given him and stifle his inborn nature in order to seize fame and reputation, leading the world on with pipe and drum in the service of an unattainable ideal—am I wrong? So we have Zeng and Shih.[5] He who is web toed in argumenta-

1. Virtue (*de*) here seems to mean inner power or vital force; see p. 58, n. 10. This and the following three sections are much closer in thought to the *Daodejing* of Laozi than the preceding sections, and the use of the word *de* seems to accord with its use in the *Daodejing*. Also, here we encounter for the first time in Zhuangzi the term *xing* or "inborn nature," which is so important to Confucian thought.

2. The five vital organs—liver, lungs, heart, kidneys, and spleen—were related to the five elements and later to the five Confucian virtues—benevolence, propriety, good faith, righteousness, wisdom.

3. Also called Li Lou; noted for his exceptionally keen eyesight.

4. Famous musician mentioned on p. 12. With this passage, compare *Daodejing* XII: "The five colors confuse the eye, the five sounds dull the ear."

5. Zeng Shen, a disciple of Confucius, and Shih Yu, historiographer of the state of Wei, paragons of benevolence and righteousness, respectively.

tion will pile up bricks, knot the plumb line, apply the curve,[6] letting his mind wander in the realm of "hard" and "white," "likeness" and "difference," huffing and puffing away, lauding his useless words—am I wrong? So we have Yang and Mo.[7] All these men walk a way that is overnice, web toed, wide of the mark, fork fingered, not that which is the True Rightness of the world.

He who holds to True Rightness[8] does not lose the original form of his inborn nature. So for him, joined things are not webbed toes; things forking off are not superfluous fingers; the long is never too much; the short is never too little.[9] The duck's legs are short, but to stretch them out would worry him; the crane's legs are long, but to cut them down would make him sad. What is long by nature needs no cutting off; what is short by nature needs no stretching. That would be no way to get rid of worry. I wonder, then, whether benevolence and righteousness are part of man's true form? Those benevolent men—how much worrying they do!

The man with two toes webbed together would weep if he tried to tear them apart; the man with a sixth finger on his hand would howl if he tried to gnaw it off. Of these two, one has more than the usual number; the other has less; but in worrying about it, they are identical. Nowadays the benevolent men of the age lift up weary eyes,[10] worrying over the ills of the world, while the men of no benevolence tear apart the original form of their inborn nature in their greed for eminence and wealth. Therefore I wonder whether benevolence and righteousness are really part of man's true form? From the Three Dynasties on down,[11] what a lot of fuss and hubbub they have made in the world!

If we must use curve and plumb line, compass and square, to make something right, this means cutting away its inborn nature; if we must use cords and knots, glue and lacquer, to make something firm, this means violating its natural Virtue. So the crouchings and bendings of rights

6. All seem to be building metaphors, though the meaning of the last is doubtful. I read *gou* instead of *ju*.

7. The hedonist philosopher Yang Zhu and the advocate of universal love Mo Di. We would expect a reference to the logicians, however, since they were the ones who argued about "hard," "white," etc.; see p. 12, n. 9.

8. Reading *zhizheng* as in the preceding sentence.

9. At this point, the meaning of the symbolism seems to shift (with some violence to the logic of the argument). The webbed toes and extra fingers, which earlier represented the forced and unnatural morality of Confucianism, now become natural deformities such as we have seen in the earlier chapters, which it would be wrong to try to correct.

10. Following Ma Xulun's interpretation.

11. The Xia, Shang, and Zhou dynasties.

and music, the smiles and beaming looks of benevolence and righteousness, which are intended to comfort the hearts of the world, in fact destroy their constant naturalness.

For in the world, there can be constant naturalness. Where there is constant naturalness, things are arced not by the use of the curve, straightened not by the use of the plumb line, rounded not by the compasses, squared not by T squares, joined not by glue and lacquer, bound not by ropes and lines. Then all things in the world, simple and compliant, live and never know how they happen to live; all things, rude and unwitting,[12] get what they need and never know how they happen to get it. Past and present, it has been the same; nothing can do injury to this [principle]. Why, then, come with benevolence and righteousness, that tangle and train of glue and lacquer, ropes and lines, and try to wander in the realm of the Way and its Virtue? You will only confuse the world!

12. Following Fukunaga, I read *tong* with the man radical. A similar phrase, *tonghu*, appears in sec. 9, and *tongran* in sec. 23.

A little confusion can alter the sense of direction; a great confusion can alter the inborn nature. How do I know this is so? Ever since that man of the Yu clan[13] began preaching benevolence and righteousness and stirring up the world, all the men in the world have dashed headlong for benevolence and righteousness. This is because benevolence and righteousness have altered their inborn nature, is it not?

13. The sage ruler Shun, idol of the Confucian philosophers.

Let me try explaining what I mean. From the Three Dynasties on down, everyone in the world has altered his inborn nature because of some [external] thing. The petty man?—he will risk death for the sake of profit. The knight?—he will risk it for the sake of fame. The high official?—he will risk it for family; the sage?—he will risk it for the world. All these various men go about the business in a different way and are tagged differently when it comes to fame and reputation; but in blighting their inborn nature and risking their lives for something, they are the same.

The slave boy and the slave girl were out together herding their sheep, and both of them lost their flocks. Ask the slave boy how it happened: well, he had a bundle of writing slips and was reading a book.[14] Ask the slave girl how it happened: well, she was playing a game of toss-and-wait-your-turn. They went about the business in different ways, but in losing their sheep, they were equal. Bo Yi died for reputation at the foot of Shouyang Mountain; Robber Zhi died for gain on top of Eastern Mound.[15] The two of them died different deaths, but in destroying their lives and blighting their inborn nature, they were equal. Why, then, must we say that Bo Yi was right and Robber Zhi wrong?

Everyone in the world risks his life for something. If he risks it for benevolence and righteousness, then custom names him a gentleman; if he risks it for goods and wealth, then custom names him a petty man. The risking is the same, and yet we have a gentleman here, a petty man there. In destroying their lives and blighting their inborn nature, Robber Zhi and Bo Yi were two of a kind. How then can we pick out the gentleman from the petty man in such a case?

He who applies his nature to benevolence and righteousness may go as far with it as Zeng and Shi, but I would not call him an expert. He who applies his nature to the five flavors may go as far with it as Yu Er,[16] but I would not call him an expert. He who applies his nature to the five notes may go as far with it as Music Master Kuang, but I would not call this good hearing. He who applies his nature to the five colors may go as far with it as Li Zhu, but I would not call this good eyesight. My definition of expertness has nothing to do with benevolence and righteousness; it means being expert in regard to your Virtue, that is all. My definition of expertness has nothing to do with benevolence or righteousness;[17] it means following the true form of your inborn nature, that is all. When I speak of good hearing, I do not mean listening to others; I mean simply listening to yourself. When I speak

14. An unusual slave boy who, in true Confucian fashion, was attempting to improve his mind.

15. On Bo Yi, the model of righteousness; see p. 126, n. 3; Robber Zhi, who appears later as the subject of sec. 29, represents the ultimate in greed and violence.

16. Apparently a famous chef and connoisseur of flavor.

17. This clause is excessively wordy and merely repeats what was said earlier. I suspect that it is corrupt and that in its original form it contained some reference to the five flavors.

of good eyesight, I do not mean looking at others; I mean simply looking at yourself. He who does not look at himself but looks at others, who does not get hold of himself but gets hold of others, is getting what other men have got and failing to get what he himself has got. He finds joy in what brings joy to other men but finds no joy in what would bring joy to himself. And if he finds joy in what brings joy to other men but finds no joy in what brings joy to himself, then whether he is a Robber Zhi or a Bo Yi, he is equally deluded and perverse. I have a sense of shame before the Way and its Virtue, and for that reason I do not venture to raise myself up in deeds of benevolence and righteousness or to lower myself in deluded and perverse practices.

9

HORSES' HOOFS

Horses' hoofs are made for treading frost and snow, their coats for keeping out wind and cold. To munch grass, drink from the stream, lift up their feet and gallop—this is the true nature of horses. Though they might possess great terraces and fine halls, they would have no use for them.

Then along comes Bo Luo.[1] "I'm good at handling horses!" he announces and proceeds to singe them, shave them, pare them, brand them, bind them with martingale and crupper, tie them up in stable and stall. By this time, two or three out of ten horses have died. He goes on to starve them, make them go thirsty, race them, prance them, pull them into line, and force them to run side by side, in front of them the worry of bit and rein, behind them the terror of whip and crop. By this time, more than half the horses have died.

1. Frequently mentioned in early texts as an expert judge of horses.

The potter says, "I'm good at handling clay! To round it, I apply the compass; to square it, I apply the T square." The carpenter says, "I'm good at handling wood! To arc it, I apply the curve; to make it straight, I apply the plumb line." But as far as inborn nature is concerned, the clay and the wood surely have no wish to be subjected to compass and square, curve and plumb line. Yet generation after generation sings out in praise, saying, "Bo Luo is good at handling horses! The potter and the carpenter are good at handling clay and wood!" And the same fault is committed by the men who handle the affairs of the world!

In my opinion, someone who was really good at handling the affairs of the world would not go about it like this. The people have their constant inborn nature. To

weave for their clothing, to till for their food—this is the Virtue they share. They are one in it and not partisan, and it is called the Emancipation of Heaven. Therefore, in a time of Perfect Virtue, the gait of men is slow and ambling; their gaze is steady and mild. In such an age, mountains have no paths or trails, lakes no boats or bridges. The ten thousand things live species by species, one group settled close to another. Birds and beasts form their flocks and herds; grass and trees grow to fullest height. So it happens that you can tie a cord to the birds and beasts and lead them about or bend down the limb and peer into the nest of the crow and the magpie. In this age of Perfect Virtue, men live the same as birds and beasts, group themselves side by side with the ten thousand things. Who then knows anything about "gentleman" or "petty man"? Dull and unwitting,[2] men have no wisdom; thus their Virtue does not depart from them. Dull and unwitting, they have no desire; this is called uncarved simplicity. In uncarved simplicity, the people attain their true nature.[3]

2. Reading *tong* with the man radical; see p. 62, n. 12.

3. The terms *su* and *pu* (uncarved simplicity), appear frequently in the *Daodejing*, for example, ch. XIX. Waley translates them as "Simplicity" and "the Uncarved Block," respectively.

Then along comes the sage, huffing and puffing after benevolence, reaching on tiptoe for righteousness, and the world for the first time has doubts; mooning and mouthing over his music, snipping and stitching away at his rites, and the world for the first time is divided. Thus, if the plain unwrought substance had not been blighted, how would there be any sacrificial goblets? If the white jade had not been shattered, how would there be any scepters and batons? If the Way and its Virtue had not been cast aside, how would there be any call for benevolence and righteousness? If the true form of the inborn nature had not been abandoned, how would there be any use for rights and music? If the five colors had not confused men, who would fashion patterns and hues? If the five notes had not confused them, who would try to tune things by the six tones? That the unwrought substance was blighted in order to fashion implements—this was the crime of the artisan. That the Way and its

Virtue were destroyed in order to create benevolence and righteousness—this was the fault of the sage.

When horses live on the plain, they eat grass and drink from the streams. Pleased, they twine their necks together and rub; angry, they turn back to back and kick. This all horses know how to do. But if you pile poles and yokes on them and line them up in crossbars and shafts, then they will learn to snap the crossbars, break the yoke, rip the carriage top, champ the bit, and chew the reins.[4] Thus horses learn how to commit the worst kinds of mischief.[5] This is the crime of Bo Luo.

In the days of He Xu,[6] people stayed home but didn't know what they were doing, walked around but didn't know where they were going. Their mouths crammed with food, they were merry; drumming on their bellies, they passed the time. This was as much as they were able to do. Then the sage came along with the crouchings and bendings of rites and music, which were intended to reform the bodies of the world; with the reaching-for-a-dangled-prize of benevolence and righteousness, which was intended to comfort the hearts of the world. Then for the first time, people learned to stand on tiptoe and covet knowledge, to fight to the death over profit, and there was no stopping them. This, in the end, was the fault of the sage.

4. There are many different interpretations of the terms in this sentence. I follow Ma Xulun's emendations and interpretations.

5. Following texts that read *neng* rather than *tai.*

6. Legendary ruler of high antiquity.

10

RIFLING TRUNKS

If one is to guard and take precautions against thieves who rifle trunks, ransack bags, and break open boxes, then he must bind with cords and ropes and make fast with locks and hasps. This the ordinary world calls wisdom. But if a great thief comes along, he will shoulder the boxes, hoist up the trunks, sling the bags over his back, and dash off, only worrying that the cords and ropes, the locks and hasps, are not fastened tightly enough. In that case, the man who earlier was called wise was in fact only piling up goods for the benefit of a great thief.

Let me try explaining what I mean. What the ordinary world calls a wise man is in fact someone who piles things up for the benefit of a great thief, is he not? And what it calls a sage is in fact someone who stands guard for the benefit of a great thief, is he not? How do I know this is so? In times past there was the state of Qi, its neighboring towns within sight of one another, the cries of their dogs and chickens within hearing of one another. The area where its nets and seines were spread, where its plows and spades dug the earth, measured more than two thousand *li* square, filling all the space within its four borders.[1] And in the way its ancestral temples and its altars of the soil and grain were set up, its towns and villages and hamlets were governed, was there anything that did not accord with the laws of the sages? Yet one morning Viscount Tian Cheng murdered the ruler of Qi and stole his state. And was it only the state he stole? Along with it, he also stole the laws that the wisdom of the sages had devised. Thus, although Viscount Tian Cheng gained the name of thief and bandit, he was able to rest as peacefully as a

1. That is, it was rich and fertile and had no wastelands.

Yao or a Shun. The smaller states did not dare condemn him; the larger states did not dare attack; and for twelve generations, his family held possession of the state of Qi.[2] Is this not a case in which a man, stealing the state of Qi, along with it stole the laws of the sages' wisdom and used them to guard the person of a thief and a bandit?

Let me try explaining it. What that ordinary world calls a man of perfect wisdom is in fact someone who piles things up for the benefit of a great thief; what the ordinary world calls a perfect sage is in fact someone who stands guard for the benefit of a great thief. How do I know this is so? In times past, Guan Longfeng was cut down; Bi Gan was disemboweled; Chang Hong was torn apart; and Wu Zixu was left to rot. All four were worthy men, and yet they could not escape destruction.[3]

One of Robber Zhi's followers once asked Zhi, "Does the thief, too, have a Way?"

Zhi replied, "How could he get anywhere if he didn't have a Way? Making shrewd guesses as to how much booty is stashed away in the room is sageliness; being the first one in is bravery; being the last one out is righteousness; knowing whether or not the job can be pulled off is wisdom; dividing up the loot fairly is benevolence. No one in the world ever succeeded in becoming a great thief if he didn't have all five!"

From this, we can see that the good man must acquire the Way of the sage before he can distinguish himself, and Robber Zhi must acquire the Way of the sage before he can practice his profession. But good men in the world are few, and bad men many, so in fact the sage brings little benefit to the world but much harm. Thus it is said, "When the lips are gone, the teeth are cold; when the wine of Lu is thin, Handan is besieged."[4] And when the sage is born, the great thief appears.

Cudgel and cane the sages, and let the thieves and bandits go their way; then the world will at last be well ordered! If the stream dries up, the valley will be empty;

2. The assassination of the king of Qi took place in 481 BCE; the actual usurpation of the state by the Tian family, in 386 BCE. No one has satisfactorily explained the "twelve generations"; Yu Yue suggests that it is a copyist's error for *shishi* (generation after generation).

3. All four men attempted to give good advice to their erring sovereigns and ended by being put to death or forced to commit suicide. On Guan Longfeng and Bi Gan, see p. 23; on Chang Hong and Wu Zixu, see p. 227, n. 2. I suppose this is meant to illustrate how the rulers "stole" the wisdom of their counselors, though it is hardly apt, since all the rulers came to violent ends as a result of their wickedness.

4. At a gathering of the feudal lords at the court of Chu, the ruler of Lu presented a gift of thin wine, while the ruler of Zhao presented rich wine. But the wine steward of Chu, having failed to receive a bribe from the ruler of Zhao, switched the gifts, and the ruler of Chu, angered, attacked Zhao and laid siege to its capital, Handan. Another version of the story asserts that the ruler of Chu, angered at Lu's thin wine, attacked Lu; and a third state, which had

(*continued*)

if the hills wash away, the deep pools will be filled up. And if the sage is dead and gone, then no more great thieves will arise. The world will then be peaceful and free of fuss.

But until the sage is dead, great thieves will never cease to appear, and if you pile on more sages in hopes of bringing the world to order, you will only be piling up more profit for Robber Zhi. Fashion pecks and bushels for people to measure by, and they will steal by peck and bushel.[5] Fashion scales and balances for people to weigh by, and they will steal by scale and balance. Fashion tallies and seals to ensure trustworthiness, and people will steal with tallies and seals. Fashion benevolence and righteousness to reform people, and they will steal with benevolence and righteousness. How do I know this is so? He who steals a belt buckle pays with his life; he who steals a state gets to be a feudal lord—and we all know that benevolence and righteousness are to be found at the gates of the feudal lords. Is this not a case of stealing benevolence and righteousness and the wisdom of the sages? So men go racing in the footsteps of the great thieves, aiming for the rank of feudal lord, stealing benevolence and righteousness and taking for themselves all the profits of peck and bushel, scale and balance, tally and seal. Though you try to lure them aside with rewards of official carriages and caps of state, you cannot move them; though you threaten them with the executioner's ax, you cannot deter them. This piling up of profits for Robber Zhi to the point where nothing can deter him—this is all the fault of the sage!

The saying goes, "The fish should not be taken from the deep pool; the sharp weapons of the state should not be shown to men."[6] The sage is the sharp weapon of the world, and therefore he should not be where the world can see him.[7]

Cut off sageliness, cast away wisdom, and then the great thieves will cease. Break the jades, crush the pearls, and petty thieves will no longer rise up. Burn the tallies,

hitherto been intimidated by Chu's power, took advantage of the opportunity to attack Chu's ally, Zhao. In both versions, the saying is meant to illustrate the existence of a causal connection between apparently unrelated phenomena.

5. Tian Chang, Viscount Cheng of Qi, who appeared as the "stealer" of the state of Qi, was said to have won the support of the people of Qi by using a larger-than-standard measure in doling out grain to the people, but the standard measure when collecting taxes in grain. See *Zuozhuan,* Duke Zhao, third year. The writer probably has this fact in mind.

6. An old saying, also found in *Daodejing* XXXVI.

7. If he is not to be a danger to the world, he must, like the true Daoist sage, remain unknown and unrecognized.

shatter the seals, and the people will be simple and guileless. Hack up the bushels, snap the balances in two, and the people will no longer wrangle. Destroy and wipe out the laws that the sage has made for the world, and at last you will find that you can reason with the people.

Discard and confuse the six tones; smash and unstring the pipes and lutes; stop up the ears of the blind musician Kuang; and for the first time; the people of the world will be able to hold on to their hearing. Wipe out patterns and designs; scatter the five colors; glue up the eyes of Li Zhu; and for the first time, the people of the world will be able to hold on to their eyesight. Destroy and cut to pieces the curve and plumb line; throw away the compass and square; shackle the fingers of Artisan Chui;[8] and for the first time; the people of the world will possess real skill. Thus it is said, "Great skill is like clumsiness."[9] Put a stop to the ways of Zeng and Shi; gag the mouths of Yang and Mo; wipe out and reject benevolence and righteousness; and for the first time, the Virtue of the world will reach the state of Mysterious Leveling.[10]

When men hold on to their eyesight, the world will no longer be dazzled. When men hold on to their hearing, the world will no longer be wearied. When men hold on to their wisdom, the world will no longer be confused. When men hold on to their Virtue, the world will no longer go awry. Men like Zeng, Shi, Yang, Mo, Musician Kuang, Artisan Chui, or Li Zhu all displayed their Virtue on the outside and thereby blinded and misled the world. As methods go, this one is worthless!

Have you alone never heard of that age of Perfect Virtue? Long ago, in the time of Yong Cheng, Da Ting, Bo Huang, Zhong Yang, Li Lu, Li Xu, Xian Yuan, He Xu, Zun Lu, Zhu Rong, Fu Xi, and Shen Nong, the people knotted cords and used them.[11] They relished their food, admired their clothing, enjoyed their customs, and were content with their houses. Though neighboring states were within sight of one another and could hear the cries of one another's dogs and chickens, the people grew old

8. A skilled artisan of ancient times; see p. 153.

9. The same saying appears in *Daodejing* XLV. But here it does not seem to fit the context, and I suspect that as Wang Maohong suggested, it is an interpolation, probably by someone who wished to establish a connection between this passage and the *Daodejing*.

10. Xuantong, a term also found in *Daodejing* LVI. Waley explains it there as a state "in which there is a general perception not effected through particular senses."

11. As a means of reminding themselves of things; they had no use for writing. The men mentioned in this sentence appear to be mythical rulers of antiquity, some mentioned in other early texts, some appearing only here. The passage from this point on to the next to last sentence is all but identical with a passage in *Daodejing* LXXX.

and died without ever traveling beyond their own borders. At a time such as this, there was nothing but the most perfect order.

But now something has happened to make people crane their necks and stand on tiptoe. "There's a worthy man in such and such a place!" they cry, and bundling up their provisions, they dash off. At home, they abandon their parents; abroad, they shirk the service of their ruler. Their footprints form an unending trail to the borders of the other feudal lords; their carriage tracks weave back and forth a thousand *li* and more. This is the fault of men in high places who covet knowledge.[12]

12. In late Zhou times, the feudal lords competed to attract men of unusual intelligence and ability to their courts. The state of Qi, which, as we have seen, was ruled at the time by the Tian family, was particularly famous for the inducements that it offered to draw philosophers from all over China to its state-sponsored academy.

As long as men in high places covet knowledge and are without the Way, the world will be in great confusion. How do I know this is so? Knowledge enables men to fashion bows, crossbows, nets, stringed arrows, and like contraptions; but when this happens, the birds flee in confusion to the sky. Knowledge enables men to fashion fishhooks, lures, seines, dragnets, trawls, and weirs; but when this happens, the fish flee in confusion to the depths of the water. Knowledge enables men to fashion pitfalls, snares, cages, traps, and gins; but when this happens, the beasts flee in confusion to the swamps. And the flood of rhetoric that enables men to invent wily schemes and poisonous slanders, the glib gabble of "hard" and "white," the foul fustian of "same" and "different," bewilder the understanding of common men.[13] So the world is dulled and darkened by great confusion. The blame lies in this coveting of knowledge.

13. I follow Fukunaga in the interpretation of the terms in this sentence.

In the world, everyone knows enough to pursue what he does not know, but no one knows enough to pursue what he already knows. Everyone knows enough to condemn what he takes to be no good, but no one knows enough to condemn what he has already taken to be good.[14] This is how the great confusion comes about, searing the vigor of hills and streams below, overturning the round of the four seasons in between. There is no insect that creeps and crawls, no creature that flutters and flies, that has not lost

14. That is, to discard the concept of good; I read *yi* as identical with the *yi* in the earlier parallel sentence.

its inborn nature. So great is the confusion of the world that comes from coveting knowledge!

From the Three Dynasties on down, it has been this and nothing else—shoving aside the pure and artless people and delighting in busy, bustling flatterers; abandoning the limpidity and calm of inaction and delighting in jumbled and jangling ideas. And this jumble and jangle has for long confused the world.

11

LET IT BE, LEAVE IT ALONE

I have heard of letting the world be, of leaving it alone; I have never heard of governing the world. You let it be for fear of corrupting the inborn nature of the world; you leave it alone for fear of distracting the Virtue of the world. If the nature of the world is not corrupted, if the Virtue of the world is not distracted, why should there be any governing of the world?

Long ago, when the sage Yao governed the world, he made the world bright and gleeful; men delighted in their nature, and there was no calmness anywhere. When the tyrant Jie governed the world, he made the world weary and vexed; men found bitterness in their nature, and there was no contentment anywhere. To lack calmness, to lack contentment, is to go against Virtue, and there has never been anyone in the world who could go against Virtue and survive for long.

Are men exceedingly joyful?—they will do damage to the yang element. Are men exceedingly angry?—they will do damage to the yin. And when both yang and yin are damaged, the four seasons will not come as they should; heat and cold will fail to achieve their proper harmony; and this in turn will do harm to the bodies of men. It will make men lose a proper sense of joy and anger, to be constantly shifting from place to place, to think up schemes that gain nothing, to set out on roads that reach no glorious conclusion. Then for the first time, the world will grow restless and aspiring,[1] and soon afterward will appear the ways of Robber Zhi, Zeng, and Shi.

Then, although the whole world joins in rewarding good men, there will never be enough reward; though the

1. The words "restless and aspiring" represent four characters in the original whose meaning is very doubtful.

whole world joins in punishing evil men, there will never be enough punishment. Huge as the world is, it cannot supply sufficient reward or punishment. From the Three Dynasties on down, there has been nothing but bustle and fuss, all over this matter of rewards and punishments. How could people have any leisure to rest in the true form of their inborn nature and fate!

Do men delight in what they see?—they are corrupted by colors. Do they delight in what they hear?—they are corrupted by sounds. Do they delight in benevolence?—they bring confusion to Virtue. Do they delight in righteousness?—they turn their backs on reason. Do they delight in rites?—they are aiding artificiality. Do they delight in music?—they are aiding dissolution. Do they delight in sageness?—they are assisting artifice. Do they delight in knowledge?—they are assisting the fault finders. As long as the world rests in the true form of its inborn nature and fate, it makes no difference whether or not these eight delights exist. But if the world does not rest in the true form of its nature and fate, then these eight delights will begin to grow warped and crooked, jumbled and deranged, and will bring confusion to the world. And if on top of that, the world begins to honor them and cherish them, then the delusion of the world will be great indeed! You say these are only a fancy that will pass in time? Yet men prepare themselves with fasts and austerities when they come to describe them, kneel solemnly on their mats when they recommend them, beat drums and sing to set them forth in dance. What's to be done about it, I'm sure I don't know!

If the gentleman finds he has no other choice than to direct and look after the world, then the best course for him is inaction. As long as there is inaction, he may rest in the true form of his nature and fate. If he values his own body more than the management of the world, then he can be entrusted with the world. If he is more careful of his own body than of the management of the world, then the world can be handed over to him.[2] If the gentleman can in

2. A similar saying is found in *Daodejing* XIII, though the wording is somewhat different.

truth keep from rending apart his five vital organs, from tearing out his eyesight and hearing, then he will command corpse-like stillness and dragon vision, the silence of deep pools, and the voice of thunder. His spirit will move in the train of Heaven, gentle and easy in inaction, and the ten thousand things will be dust on the wind. "What leisure have I now for governing the world?" he will say.

Cui Zhu was questioning Lao Dan. "If you do not govern the world, then how can you improve men's minds?"

Lao Dan said, "Be careful—don't meddle with men's minds! Men's minds can be forced down or boosted up, but this downing and upping imprisons and brings death to the mind. Gentle and shy, the mind can bend the hard and strong; it can chisel and cut away, carve and polish. Its heat is that of burning fire, its coldness that of solid ice, its swiftness such that, in the time it takes to lift and lower the head, it has twice swept over the four seas and beyond. At rest, it is deep fathomed and still; in movement, it is far-flung as the heavens, racing and galloping out of reach of all bonds. This indeed is the mind of man!"

In ancient times the Yellow Emperor first used benevolence and righteousness to meddle with the minds of men.[3] Yao and Shun followed him and worked till there was no more down on their thighs, no more hair on their shins, trying to nourish the bodies of the men of the world. They grieved their five vital organs in the practice of benevolence and righteousness, taxed their blood and breath in the establishment of laws and standards. But still some men would not submit to their rule, and so they had to exile Huan Dou to Mount Chung, drive away the Sanmiao tribes to the region of Sanwei, and banish Gong to the Dark City.[4] This shows that they could not make the world submit.

By the time the kings of the Three Dynasties appeared, the world was in great consternation indeed. On the lowest

3. Daoist writers ordinarily have only praise for the Yellow Emperor, and in Han times Daoism was known as *Huanglao,* the teaching of the Yellow Emperor and Laozi. It is surprising, therefore, to find him cited here as the prime meddler, though this is typical of the shifting roles assigned to the figures who appear in the *Zhuangzi.* It is unclear whether the following section should be taken as a continuation of Laozi's speech or as the words of the writer; I have taken it as the latter.

4. These banishments of evil and insubordinate men are mentioned in the *Book of Documents*, "Canon of Shun," in which their presence has long raised the troubling question of why there should have been any unsubmissive men during the rule of a sage.

level, there were men like the tyrant Jie and Robber Zhi, on the highest, men like Zeng and Shi, and the Confucianists and Mohists rose up all around. Then joy and anger eyed each other with suspicion; stupidity and wisdom duped each other; good and bad called one another names; falsehood and truth slandered each other; and the world sank into a decline. There was no more unity to the Great Virtue, and the inborn nature and fate shattered and fell apart. The world coveted knowledge, and the hundred clans were thrown into turmoil.[5] Then there were axes and saws to shape things; ink and plumb lines to trim them; mallets and gouges to poke holes in them; and the world, muddled and deranged, was in great confusion. The crime lay in this meddling with men's minds. So it was that worthy men crouched in hiding below the great mountains and yawning cliffs, and the lords of ten thousand chariots fretted and trembled above in their ancestral halls.

5. Following Zhang Binglin's interpretation.

In the world today, the victims of the death penalty lie heaped together; the bearers of cangues tread on one another's heels; the sufferers of punishment are never out of one another's sight. And now come the Confucianists and Mohists, waving their arms, striding into the very midst of the fettered and manacled men. Ah, that they should go this far, that they should be so brazen, so lacking in any sense of shame! Who can convince me that sagely wisdom is not in fact the wedge that fastens the cangue, that benevolence and righteousness are not in fact the loop and lock of these fetters and manacles? How do I know that Zeng and Shi are not the whistling arrows that signal the approach of Jie and Zhi? Therefore I say, cut off sageness, cast away wisdom, and the world will be in perfect order.

The Yellow Emperor had ruled as Son of Heaven for nineteen years, and his commands were heeded throughout the world, when he heard that Master Guang Cheng was living on top of the Mountain of Emptiness and Identity. He therefore went to visit him. "I have heard that you, sir,

have mastered the Perfect Way. May I venture to ask about the essence of the Perfect Way?" he said. "I would like to get hold of the essence of Heaven and earth and use it to aid the five grains and to nourish the common people. I would also like to control the yin and yang in order to ensure the growth of all living things. How may this be done?"

Master Guang Cheng said, "What you say you want to learn about pertains to the true substance of things, but what you say you want to control pertains to things in their divided state.[6] Ever since you began to govern the world, rain falls before the cloud vapors have even gathered; the plants and trees shed their leaves before they have even turned yellow; and the light of the sun and moon grows more and more sickly. Shallow and vapid, with the mind of a prattling knave—what good would it do to tell *you* about the Perfect Way!"

6. That is, the yin and yang, being two, already represent a departure from the primal unity of the Way. What Master Guang Cheng is objecting to, of course, is the fact that the Yellow Emperor wishes to "control" them.

The Yellow Emperor withdrew, gave up his throne, built a solitary hut, spread a mat of white rushes, and lived for three months in retirement. Then he went once more to request an interview. Master Guang Cheng was lying with his face to the south.[7] The Yellow Emperor, approaching in a humble manner, crept forward on his knees, bowed his head twice, and said, "I have heard that you, sir, have mastered the Perfect Way. I venture to ask about the governing of the body. What should I do in order to live a long life?"

7. The Chinese ruler, when acting as sovereign, faces south. Master Guang Cheng, by assuming the same position, indicates his spiritual supremacy.

Master Guang Cheng sat up with a start. "Excellent, this question of yours! Come, I will tell you about the Perfect Way. The essence of the Perfect Way is deep and darkly shrouded; the extreme of the Perfect Way is mysterious and hushed in silence. Let there be no seeing, no hearing; enfold the spirit in quietude, and the body will right itself. Be still, be pure, do not labor your body, do not churn up your essence, and then you can live a long life. When the eye does not see, the ear does not hear, and the mind does not know, then your spirit will protect the body, and the body will enjoy long life. Be wary of what is

within you; block off what is outside you, for much knowledge will do you harm. Then I will lead you up above the Great Brilliance to the source of the Perfect Yang; I will guide you through the Dark and Mysterious Gate to the source of the Perfect Yin. Heaven and earth have their controllers, the yin and yang their storehouses. You have only to take care and guard your own body; these other things will of themselves grow sturdy. As for myself, I guard this unity, abide in this harmony, and therefore I have kept myself alive for twelve hundred years, and never has my body suffered any decay."

The Yellow Emperor bowed twice and said, "Master Guang Cheng, you have been as a Heaven to me!"

Master Guang Cheng said, "Come, I will explain to you. This Thing I have been talking about is inexhaustible, and yet men all suppose that it has an end. This Thing I have been talking about is unfathomable, and yet men all suppose that it has a limit. He who attains my Way will be a Bright One on high,[8] and a king in the world below. But he who fails to attain my Way, though he may see the light above him, will remain below as dust. All the hundred creatures that flourish are born out of dust and return to dust. So I will take leave of you, to enter the gate of the inexhaustible and wander in the limitless fields, to form a triad with the light of the sun and moon, to partake in the constancy of Heaven and earth. What stands before me I mingle with, what is far from me I leave in darkness.[9] All other men may die; I alone will survive!"

8. The term "Bright One" (*huang*) was originally an epithet for Heaven or a being commanding respect and awe, such as the sage rulers of antiquity.

9. The meaning is doubtful.

Cloud Chief was traveling east and had passed the branches of the Fuyao when he suddenly came upon Big Concealment.[10] Big Concealment at the moment was amusing himself by slapping his thighs and hopping around like a sparrow. When Cloud Chief saw this, he stopped in bewilderment, stood dead still in his tracks, and said, "Old gentleman, who are you? What is this you're doing?"

10. Cloud Chief and Big Concealment are inventions of the writer, the latter apparently representing the Daoist sage. Fuyao appeared in sec. 1 as a name for the whirlwind; here perhaps it is an error for Fusang, a huge mythical tree in the eastern sea from whose branches the sun rises.

Big Concealment, without interrupting his thigh slapping and sparrow hopping, replied to Cloud Chief, "Amusing myself."

"I would like to ask a question," said Cloud Chief.

"Oh dear!" said Big Concealment, for the first time raising his head and looking at Cloud Chief.

"The breath of heaven is out of harmony; the breath of earth tangles and snarls," said Cloud Chief. "The six breaths do not blend properly;[11] the four seasons do not stay in order. Now I would like to harmonize the essences of the six breaths in order to bring nourishment to all living creatures. How should I go about it?"

11. Traditionally defined as the breaths of the yin, yang, wind, rain, darkness, and light.

Big Concealment, still thigh slapping and sparrow hopping, shook his head. "I have no idea! I have no idea!"

So Cloud Chief got no answer. Three years later he was again traveling east and, as he passed the fields of Song, happened on Big Concealment once more. Cloud Chief, overjoyed, dashed forward and presented himself, saying, "Heavenly Master, have you forgotten me? Have you forgotten me?" Then he bowed his head twice and begged for some instruction from Big Concealment.

Big Concealment said, "Aimless wandering does not know what it seeks; demented drifting does not know where it goes. A wanderer, idle, unbound, I view the sights of Undeception. What more do I know?"

Cloud Chief said, "I, too, consider myself a demented drifter, but the people follow me wherever I go, and I have no choice but to think of them. It is for their sake now that I beg one word of instruction!"

Big Concealment said, "If you confuse the constant strands of Heaven and violate the true form of things, then Dark Heaven will reach no fulfillment. Instead, the beasts will scatter from their herds; the birds will cry all night; disaster will come to the grass and trees; misfortune will reach even to the insects. Ah, this is the fault of men who 'govern'!"

"Then what should I do?" said Cloud Chief.

"Ah," said Big Concealment, "you are too far gone! Up, up, stir yourself and be off!"

Cloud Chief said, "Heavenly Master, it has been hard indeed for me to meet with you—I beg one word of instruction!"

"Well, then—mind-nourishment!" said Big Concealment.[12] "You have only to rest in inaction, and things will transform themselves. Smash your form and body, spit out hearing and eyesight, forget you are a thing among other things, and you may join in great unity with the deep and boundless. Undo the mind, slough off spirit, be blank and soulless, and the ten thousand things one by one will return to the root—return to the root and not know why. Dark and undifferentiated chaos—to the end of life, none will depart from it. But if you try to know it, you have already departed from it. Do not ask what its name is; do not try to observe its form. Things will live naturally and of themselves."

Cloud Chief said, "The Heavenly Master has favored me with this Virtue, instructed me in this Silence. All my life I have been looking for it, and now at last I have it!" He bowed his head twice, stood up, took his leave, and went away.

12. "Mind-nourishment" may seem an odd thing to recommend, particularly as the whole anecdote is directed against purposeful "governing" or "nourishing." But this is typical of Daoist paradox. As we soon see, it does not in fact mean what it seems to mean.

The common run of men all welcome those who are like themselves and scorn those who differ from themselves. The reason they favor those who are like themselves and do not favor those who are different is that their minds are set on distinguishing themselves from the crowd. But if their minds are set on distinguishing themselves from the crowd, how is this ever going to distinguish them from the crowd? It is better to follow the crowd and be content, for no matter how much you may know, it can never match the many talents of the crowd combined.

Here is a man who wants to take over the management of another man's state.[13] He thinks thereby to seize all the profits enjoyed by the kings of the Three Dynasties but fails to take note of their worries. This is to gamble with another man's state, and how long can you expect to gamble with his state and not lose it? Fewer than one man in ten thousand will succeed in holding on to the state; the

13. Probably a reference to the itinerant statesmen-advisers of late Zhou times who wandered about offering their services to the various feudal lords.

odds in favor of losing it are more than ten thousand to one. It is sad indeed that the possessors of states do not realize this!

Now the possessor of a state possesses a great thing. Because he possesses a great thing, he cannot be regarded as a mere thing himself.[14] He is a thing, and yet he is not a mere thing; therefore he can treat other things as mere things. He who clearly understands that in treating other things as mere things, he himself is no longer a mere thing—how could he be content only to govern the hundred clans of the world and do nothing more? He will move in and out of the Six Realms, wander over the Nine Continents, going alone, coming alone. He may be called a Sole Possessor, and a man who is a Sole Possessor may be said to have reached the peak of eminence.

14. I follow Fukunaga in punctuating after the first *wu*.

The Great Man in his teaching is like the shadow that follows a form, the echo that follows a sound. Only when questioned does he answer, and then he pours out all his thoughts, making himself the companion of the world. He dwells in the echoless, moves in the directionless, takes by the hand you who are rushing and bustling back and forth[15] and proceeds to wander in the beginningless. He passes in and out of the boundless and is ageless as the sun. His face and form[16] blend with the Great Unity, the Great Unity that is selfless. Being selfless, how then can he look on possession as possession? He who fixed his eyes on possession—he was the "gentleman" of ancient times. He who fixes his eyes on nothingness—he is the true friend of Heaven and earth.

15. Following Yu Yue's interpretation.

16. Following Zhang Binglin's interpretation.

What is lowly and yet must be used—things.[17] What is humble and yet must be relied on—the people. What is irksome[18] and yet must be attended to—affairs. What is sketchy and yet must be proclaimed—laws. What seems to apply only to distant relationships and yet must be observed—righteousness. What seems to apply only to intimate relationships and yet must be broadened—benevolence.

17. The remainder of the chapter, with its recognition of the necessity for benevolence, righteousness, law, ritual, etc., seems to clash violently with what has gone before. Some commentators interpret it as a description of the kind of compromise that even the perfect Daoist ruler must make if he is to rule effectively. Others regard it as an interpolation or a passage misplaced from some other section. See the similar passage on p. 79.

18. Following Ma Xulun's interpretation.

What is confining and yet must be repeatedly practiced—ritual. What is already apt and yet must be heightened—Virtue. What is One and yet must be adapted—the Way. What is spiritual and yet must be put into action—Heaven.

Therefore the sage contemplates Heaven but does not assist it. He finds completion in Virtue but piles on nothing more. He goes forth in the Way but does not scheme. He accords with benevolence but does not set great store by it. He draws close to righteousness but does not labor over it. He responds to the demands of ritual and does not shun them. He disposes of affairs and makes no excuses. He brings all to order with laws and allows no confusion. He depends on the people and does not make light of them. He relies on things and does not throw them aside. Among things, there are none that are worth using, and yet they must be used.

He who does not clearly understand Heaven will not be pure in Virtue. He who has not mastered the Way will find himself without any acceptable path of approach. He who does not clearly understand the Way is pitiable indeed!

What is this thing called the Way? There is the Way of Heaven and the way of man. To rest in inaction, and command respect—this is the Way of Heaven. To engage in action and become entangled in it—this is the way of man. The ruler is the Way of Heaven; his subjects are the way of man. The Way of Heaven and the way of man are far apart. This is something to consider carefully!

12

HEAVEN AND EARTH

Heaven and earth are huge, but they are alike in their transformations. The ten thousand things are numerous, but they are one in their good order. Human beings are many, but they all are subjects of the sovereign. The sovereign finds his source in Virtue, his completion in Heaven. Therefore it is said that the sovereign of dark antiquity ruled the world through inaction, through Heavenly Virtue and nothing more.

Look at words in the light of the Way—then the sovereign of the world will be upright.[1] Look at distinctions in the light of the Way—then the duty[2] of sovereign and subject will be clear. Look at abilities in the light of the Way—then the officials of the world will be well ordered. Look everywhere in the light of the Way—then the response of the ten thousand things will be complete.

Pervading Heaven and earth: that is the Way.[3] Moving among the ten thousand things: that is Virtue. Superiors governing the men below them: that is called administration. Ability finding trained expression: that is called skill. Skill is subsumed in administration, administration in duty, duty in Virtue, Virtue in the Way, and the Way in Heaven. Therefore it is said, those who shepherded the world in ancient times were without desire, and the world was satisfied, without action, and the ten thousand things were transformed. They were deep and silent, and the hundred clans were at rest. The Record says: "Stick to the One, and the ten thousand tasks will be accomplished; achieve mindlessness, and the gods and spirits will bow down."[4]

The Master said:[5] The Way covers and bears up the ten thousand things—vast, vast is its greatness! The gentle-

1. Perhaps a reference to the Confucian doctrine of the rectification of names, that is, the necessity to make certain that the one who is called "ruler" is in fact a true ruler, etc. The writer of this chapter seems to be attempting to effect a compromise between Daoist and Confucian ideals of government.

2. *Yi*, elsewhere translated as "righteousness."

3. As pointed out by commentators, the position of the *de* and that of the *dao* in the next sentence should be reversed to match the order of the sorites that follows. But the text is probably faulty.

4. It is not known what "Record" the writer is quoting.

5. The Master has been variously identified as Laozi, Zhuangzi, or Confucius.

man must pluck out his mind! To act through inaction is called Heaven. To speak through inaction is called Virtue. To love men and bring profit to things is called benevolence. To make the unlike alike is called magnitude. To move beyond barrier and distinction is called liberality. To possess the ten thousand unlikes is called wealth. To hold fast to Virtue is called enrootment. To mature in Virtue is called establishment. To follow the Way is called completion. To see that external things do not blunt the will is called perfection. When the gentleman clearly comprehends these ten things, then how huge will be the greatness of his mind setting forth, how endless his ramblings with the ten thousand things!

Such a man will leave the gold hidden in the mountains, the pearls hidden in the depths. He will see no profit in money and goods, no enticement in eminence and wealth, no joy in long life, no grief in early death, no honor in affluence, no shame in poverty. He will not snatch the profits of a whole generation and make them his private hoard; he will not lord it over the world and think that he dwells in glory. His glory is enlightenment, [for he knows that] the ten thousand things belong to one storehouse, that life and death share the same body.

The Master said: The Way—how deep its dwelling, how pure its clearness! Without it, the bells and chiming stones will not sound. The bells and stones have voices, but unless they are struck, they will not sound. The ten thousand things—who can make them be still?

The man of kingly Virtue moves in simplicity and is ashamed to be a master of facts. He takes his stand in the original source, and his understanding extends to the spirits. Therefore his Virtue is far-reaching. His mind moves forth only when some external thing has roused it. Without the Way, the body can have no life, and without Virtue, life can have no clarity. To preserve the body and live out life, to establish Virtue and make clear the Way—is this not kingly Virtue? Broad and boundless, suddenly he emerges, abruptly he moves, and the ten thousand things

follow him—this is what is called the man of kingly Virtue!

He sees in the darkest dark, hears where there is no sound. In the midst of darkness, he alone sees the dawn; in the midst of the soundless, he alone hears harmony. Therefore, in depth piled upon depth, he can spy out the thing; in spirituality piled upon spirituality, he can discover the essence.[6] So in his dealings with the ten thousand things, he supplies all their wants out of total nothingness. Racing with the hour, he seeks lodging for a night, in the great, the small, the long, the short, the near, the far.[7]

6. Compare *Daodejing* XXI: "shadowy and indistinct, within it is a thing; dim and dark, within it is an essence."

7. That is, he accommodates himself to external phenomena as a traveler accommodates himself to the conditions of the journey. In the main, I follow Fukunaga's interpretation, though the sentence is very obscure.

The Yellow Emperor went wandering north of the Red Water, ascended the slopes of Kunlun, and gazed south. When he got home, he discovered he had lost his Dark Pearl. He sent Knowledge to look for it, but Knowledge couldn't find it. He sent the keen-eyed Li Zhu to look for it, but Li Zhu couldn't find it. He sent Wrangling Debate to look for it, but Wrangling Debate couldn't find it. At last he tried employing Shapeless, and Shapeless found it.

The Yellow Emperor said, "How odd!—in the end it was Shapeless who was able to find it!"

Yao's teacher was Xu You; Xu You's teacher was Nie Que; Nie Que's teacher was Wang Ni; and Wang Ni's teacher was Piyi. Yao asked Xu You, "Would Nie Que do as the counterpart of Heaven? I could get Wang Ni to ask him to take over the throne from me."

Xu You said, "Watch out! You'll put the world in danger! Nie Que is a man of keen intelligence and superb understanding, nimble-witted and sharp. His inborn nature surpasses that of other men, and he knows how to exploit what Heaven has given him through human devices. He would do his best to prevent error, but he doesn't understand the source from which error arises. Make *him* the counterpart of Heaven? Watch—he will start leaning on men and forget about Heaven. He will put himself first

and relegate others to a class apart. He will worship knowledge and chase after it with the speed of fire. He will become the servant of causes, the victim of things, looking in all four directions to see how things are faring, trying to attend to all wants, changing along with things, and possessing no trace of any constancy of his own. How could he possibly do as counterpart of Heaven? However, there are clans, and there are clan heads. He might do as the father of one branch, though he would never do as the father of the father of the branch. His kind are the forerunners of disorder, a disaster to the ministers facing north, a peril to the sovereign facing south!"

Yao was seeing the sights at Hua when the border guard of Hua said, "Aha—a sage! I beg to offer up prayers for the sage. They will bring the sage long life!"

Yao said, "No, thanks."

"They will bring the sage riches!"

Yao said, "No, thanks."

"They will bring the sage many sons!"

Yao said, "No, thanks."

"Long life, riches, many sons—these are what all men desire!" said the border guard. "How is it that you alone do not desire them?"

Yao said, "Many sons mean many fears. Riches mean many troubles. Long life means many shames. These three are of no use in nourishing Virtue—therefore I decline them."

The border guard said, "At first I took you for a sage. Now I see you are a mere gentleman. When Heaven gives birth to the ten thousand people, it is certain to have jobs to assign to them. If you have many sons and their jobs are assigned to them, what is there to fear? If you share your riches with other men, what troubles will you have? The true sage is a quail at rest, a little fledgling at its meal, a bird in flight that leaves no trail behind. When the world has the Way, he joins in the chorus with all other things. When the world is without the Way, he nurses his

Virtue and retires in leisure. And after a thousand years, should he tire of the world, he will leave it and ascend to the immortals, riding on those white clouds all the way up to the village of God. The three worries you have cited never touch him; his body is forever free of peril. How can he suffer any shame?"

The border guard turned and left. Yao followed him, saying, "Please—I would like to ask you . . ."

"Go away!" said the border guard.

When Yao ruled the world, Bocheng Zigao was enfeoffed as one of his noblemen. But when Yao passed the throne to Shun, and Shun passed it to Yu, Bocheng Zigao relinquished his title and took up farming. Yu went to see him and found him working in the fields. Yu scurried forward in the humblest manner, came to a halt, and said, "In former times when Yao ruled the world, sir, you served as one of his noblemen. But when Yao passed the throne to Shun, and Shun passed it to me, you relinquished your title and took up farming. May I be so bold as to ask why?"

Zigao said, "In former times when Yao ruled the world, he handed out no rewards, and yet the people worked hard; he handed out no punishments, and yet the people were cautious. Now you reward and punish, and still the people fail to do good. From now on, Virtue will decay; from now on, penalties will prevail. The disorder of future ages will have its beginning here! You had better be on your way now—don't interrupt my work!" Busily, busily he proceeded with his farm work, never turning to look back.

In the Great Beginning, there was nonbeing; there was no being, no name. Out of it arose One; there was One, but it had no form. Things got hold of it and it came to life, and it was called Virtue. Before things had forms, they had their allotments; these were of many kinds but not cut off from one another, and they were called fates. Out of the flow and flux, things were born, and as they grew, they

developed distinctive shapes; these were called forms. The forms and bodies held within them spirits, each with its own characteristics and limitations, and this was called the inborn nature. If the nature is trained, you may return to Virtue, and Virtue at its highest peak is identical with the Beginning. Being identical, you will be empty; being empty, you will be great. You may join in the cheeping and chirping, and when you have joined in the cheeping and chirping, you may join with Heaven and earth. Your joining is wild and confused, as though you were stupid, as though you were demented. This is called Dark Virtue. Rude and unwitting, you take part in the Great Submission.

Confucius said to Lao Dan, "Here's a man who works to master the Way as though he were trying to talk down an opponent,[8] making the unacceptable acceptable, the not so, so. As the rhetoricians say, he can separate 'hard' from 'white' as clearly as though they were dangling from the eaves there. Can a man like this be called a sage?"

Lao Dan said, "A man like this is a drudging slave, a craftsman bound to his calling, wearing out his body, grieving his mind. Because the dog can catch rats, he ends up on a leash.[9] Because of his nimbleness, the monkey is dragged down from the mountain forest. Qiu,[10] I'm going to tell you something—something you could never hear for yourself and something you would never know how to speak of. People who have heads and feet but no minds and no ears—there are mobs of them. To think that beings with bodies can all go on existing along with that which is bodiless and formless—it can never happen! A man's stops and starts, his life and death, his rises and falls—none of these can he do anything about. Yet he thinks that the mastery of them lies with man! Forget things, forget Heaven, and be called a forgetter of self. The man who has forgotten self may be said to have entered Heaven."

* * *

8. Following Ma Xulun, I read *bang* (slander) in place of *fang*.

9. Following Sun Yirang, I read *lei* in place of *si*; compare the parallel passage on p. 56.

10. Confucius's familiar name. In using it to address Confucius face to face, Laozi is expressing great familiarity and/or contempt.

Jianglü Mian went to see Ji Che and said, "The ruler of Lu begged me to give him some instruction. I declined, but he wouldn't let me go, and so I had no choice but to tell him something. I don't know whether or not what I said was right, but I would like to try repeating it to you. I said to the ruler of Lu, 'You must be courteous and temperate! Pick out and promote those who are loyal and public-spirited, allow no flattery or favoritism, and then who of your people will venture to be unruly?'"

Ji Che heehawed with laughter. "As far as the Virtue of emperors and kings is concerned," he said, "your advice is like the praying mantis that waved its arms angrily in front of an approaching carriage—it just isn't up to the job. If the ruler of Lu went about it in that way, he would simply get himself all stirred up,[11] place himself on a tower or a terrace. Then things would flock around him, and the crowd would turn its steps in his direction!"

11. Following texts that read *ju* (agitated) in place of *chu*.

Jianglü Mian's eyes bugged out in amazement. "I am dumbfounded by your words," he said. "Nevertheless, I would like to hear how the Master would speak on this subject."

Ji Che said, "When a great sage rules the world, he makes the minds of his people free and far wandering. On this basis, he fashions teachings and simplifies customs, wiping out all treason from their minds and allowing each to pursue his own will. All is done in accordance with the inborn nature, and yet the people do not know why it is like this. Proceeding in this way, what need has he either to revere the way in which Yao and Shun taught their people or to look down on it in lofty contempt? His only desire is for unity with Virtue and the repose of the mind."

Zigong traveled south to Chu, and on his way back through Jin, as he passed along the south bank of the Han, he saw an old man preparing his fields for planting. He had hollowed out an opening by which he entered the well and from

which he emerged, lugging a pitcher, which he carried out to water the fields. Grunting and puffing, he used up a great deal of energy and produced very little result.

"There is a machine for this sort of thing," said Zigong. "In one day it can water a hundred fields, demanding very little effort and producing excellent results. Wouldn't you like one?"

The gardener raised his head and looked at Zigong. "How does it work?"

"It's a contraption made by shaping a piece of wood. The back end is heavy and the front end light and it raises the water as though it were pouring it out, so fast that it seems to boil right over! It's called a well sweep."

The gardener flushed with anger and then said with a laugh, "I've heard my teacher say, where there are machines, there are bound to be machine worries; where there are machine worries, there are bound to be machine hearts. With a machine heart in your breast, you've spoiled what was pure and simple, and without the pure and simple, the life of the spirit knows no rest. Where the life of the spirit knows no rest, the Way will cease to buoy you up. It's not that I don't know about your machine—I would be ashamed to use it!"

Zigong blushed with chagrin, looked down, and made no reply. After a while, the gardener said, "Who are you, anyway?"

"A disciple of Kong Qiu."[12]

12. Confucius.

"Oh—then you must be one of those who broaden their learning in order to ape the sages, heaping absurd nonsense on the crowd, plucking the strings and singing sad songs all by yourself in hopes of buying fame in the world! You would do best to forget your spirit and breath, break up your body and limbs—then you might be able to get somewhere. You don't even know how to look after your own body—how do you have any time to think about looking after the world! On your way now! Don't interfere with my work!"

Zigong frowned, and the color drained from his face. Dazed and rattled, he couldn't seem to pull himself together, and it was only after he had walked on for some thirty *li* that he began to recover.

One of his disciples said, "Who was that man just now? Why did you change your expression and lose your color like that, Master, so that it took you all day to get back to normal?"

"I used to think there was only one real man in the world," said Zigong. "I didn't know that there was this other one. I have heard Confucius say that in affairs you aim for what is right, and in undertakings you aim for success. To spend little effort and achieve big results—that is the Way of the sage. Now it seems that this isn't so. He who holds fast to the Way is complete in Virtue; being complete in Virtue, he is complete in body; being complete in body, he is complete in spirit; and to be complete in spirit is the Way of the sage. He is content to live among the people, to walk by their side, and never know where he is going. Witless, his purity is complete. Achievement, profit, machines, skill—they have no place in this man's mind! A man like this will not go where he has no will to go, will not do what he has no mind to do. Though the world might praise him and say he had really found something, he would look unconcerned and never turn his head; though the world might condemn him and say he had lost something, he would look serene and pay no heed. The praise and blame of the world are no loss or gain to him. He may be called a man of Complete Virtue. I—I am a man of the wind-blown waves."

When Zigong got back to Lu, he reported the incident to Confucius. Confucius said, "He is one of those bogus practitioners of the arts of Mr. Chaos.[13] He knows the first thing but doesn't understand the second. He looks after what is on the inside but doesn't look after what is on the outside. A man of true brightness and purity who can enter into simplicity, who can return to the primitive

13. On Mr. Chaos (Hundun), see p. 59.

through inaction, give body to his inborn nature, and embrace his spirit, and in this way wander through the everyday world—if you had met one like that, you would have had real cause for astonishment.[14] As for the arts of Mr. Chaos, you and I need not bother to find out about them."

14. That is, the true man of the Way does not retire from the world or reject society and its inventions.

Zhun Mang was on his way east to the Great Valley of the sea when he happened to meet Yuan Feng by the shore of the eastern ocean.[15] Yuan Feng said, "Where are you going?"

"I'm going to the Great Valley."

"What will you do there?"

"The Great Valley is the sort of thing you can pour into and it never gets full, dip from and it never runs dry. I'm going to wander there."

Yuan Feng said, "Don't you care about what happens to ordinary men? Please, won't you tell me about the government of the sage?"

"The government of the sage?" said Zhun Mang. "Assign offices so that no abilities are overlooked; promote men so that no talents are neglected. Always know the true facts, and let men do what they are best at. When actions and words proceed properly and the world is transformed, then at a wave of the hand or a tilt of the chin, all the people of the four directions will come flocking to you. This is called the government of the sage."

"May I ask about the man of Virtue?"

"The man of Virtue rests without thought, moves without plan. He has no use for right and wrong, beautiful and ugly. To share profit with all things within the four seas is his happiness, to look after their needs is his peace. Sad faced, he's like a little child who has lost his mother. Bewildered, he's like a traveler who has lost his way. He has more than enough wealth and goods, but he doesn't know where they come from. He gets all he needs to eat and drink, but he doesn't know how he gets it. This is called the manner of the man of Virtue."

15. The names of the persons in the anecdote are allegorical, Zhun Mang meaning something like "Artless and Forgetful" and Yuan Feng meaning "Little Wind."

"May I ask about the man of spirit?"

"He lets his spirit ascend and mount on the light; with his bodily form, he dissolves and is gone. This is called the Illumination of Vastness. He lives out his fate, follows to the end his true form, and rests in the joy of Heaven and earth while the ten thousand cares melt away. So all things return to their true form. This is called Muddled Darkness."

Men Wugui and Chizhang Manqui were watching the troops of King Wu.[16] Chizhang Manqui said, "He is no match for the man of the Yu clan. That's why he runs into all this trouble!"

Men Wugui said, "Was the world already in good order when the man of the Yu clan came along to order it? Or was it in disorder, and later he brought it in order?"

Chizhang Manqui said, "Everybody wants to see the world well ordered. If it had been so already, what point would there have been in calling on the man of the Yu clan? The man of the Yu clan was medicine to a sore. But to wait until you go bald and then buy a wig, to wait until you get sick and then call for a doctor, to prepare the medicine like a true filial son and present it to your loving father, wearing a grim and haggard look—this the true sage would be ashamed to do. In an age of Perfect Virtue, the worthy are not honored; the talented are not employed. Rulers are like the high branches of a tree; the people, like the deer of the fields. They do what is right, but they do not know that this is righteousness. They love one another, but they do not know that this is benevolence. They are truehearted but do not know that this is loyalty. They are trustworthy but do not know that this is good faith. They wriggle around like insects, performing services for one another, but do not know that they are being kind. Therefore they move without leaving any trail behind, act without leaving any memory of their deeds."

16. If they were viewing the actual troops, the episode must be set in the eleventh century BCE, when King Wu of the Zhou attacked and overthrew the last ruler of the Shang dynasty. But perhaps they were watching the court dances performed in later ages that reenacted the campaign. The "man of the Yu clan" in the following sentence is the sage ruler who did not have to launch any military expeditions.

When a filial son does not fawn on his parents, when a loyal minister does not flatter his lord, they are the finest

of sons and ministers. He who agrees with everything his parents say and approves of everything they do is regarded by popular opinion as an unworthy son; he who agrees with everything his lord says and approves of everything his lord does is regarded by popular opinion as an unworthy minister.[17] But in other cases, men do not realize that the same principle should apply. If a man agrees with everything that popular opinion says and regards as good everything that popular opinion regards as good, he is not, as you might expect, called a sycophant and a flatterer. Are we to assume, then, that popular opinion commands more authority than one's parents or is more to be honored than one's lord?

17. Because it is the duty of the son and minister to reprimand his parents and lord, respectively, when they are clearly in the wrong.

Call a man a sycophant, and he flushes with anger; call him a flatterer, and he turns crimson with rage. Yet all his life, he will continue to be a sycophant; all his life, he will continue to be a flatterer. See him set forth his analogies and polish his fine phrases to draw a crowd, until the beginning and end, the root and branches of his argument no longer match![18] See him spread out his robes, display his bright colors, put on a solemn face in hopes of currying favor with the age—and yet he does not recognize himself as a sycophant or a flatterer. See him with his followers laying down the law on right and wrong, and yet he does not recognize himself as one of the mob. This is the height of foolishness!

18. Following texts that omit the *zuí* and adopting Chu Boxiu's interpretation; the reference is apparently to the rhetoricians.

He who knows he is a fool is not the biggest fool; he who knows he is confused is not in the worst confusion. The man in the worst confusion will end his life without ever getting straightened out; the biggest fool will end his life without ever seeing the light. If three men are traveling along and one is confused, they will still get where they are going—because confusion is in the minority. But if two of them are confused, then they can walk until they are exhausted and never get anywhere—because confusion is in the majority. And with all the confusion in the world these days, no matter how often I point the way, it does no good. Sad, is it not?

Great music is lost on the ears of the villagers, but play them "The Breaking of the Willow" or "Bright Flowers," and they grin from ear to ear. In the same way, lofty words make no impression on the minds of the mob. Superior words gain no hearing because vulgar words are in the majority. It is like the case of the two travelers tramping along in confusion and never getting where they are going.[19] With all the confusion in the world these days, no matter how often I point the way, what good does it do? And if I know it does no good and still make myself do it, this too is a kind of confusion. So it is best to leave things alone and not force them. If I don't force things, at least I won't cause anyone any worry.

19. Following Lu Deming's emendations.

When the leper woman gives birth to a child in the dead of the night, she rushes to fetch a torch and examine it, trembling with terror lest it look like herself.[20]

20. Is this sentence intended to belong with what precedes it or with what follows it? I am unable to tell.

The hundred-year-old tree is hacked up to make bowls for the sacrificial wine, blue and yellow with patterns on them, and the chips are thrown into the ditch. Compare the sacrificial bowls with the chips in the ditch, and you will find them far apart in beauty and ugliness; yet they are alike in having lost their inborn nature. Robber Zhi, Zeng, and Shi are far apart in deeds and righteousness, and yet they are the same in having lost their inborn nature. There are five conditions under which the inborn nature is lost. One: when the five colors confuse the eye and cause the eyesight to be unclear. Two: when the five notes confuse the ear and cause the hearing to be unclear. Three: when the five odors stimulate the nose and produce weariness and congestion in the forehead. Four: when the five flavors dull the mouth, causing the sense of taste to be impaired and lifeless. Five: when likes and dislikes unsettle the mind and cause the inborn nature to become volatile and flighty. These five all are a danger to life. And yet the followers of Yangzi and Mozi go striding around, thinking they have really gotten hold of something.[21] This is not what I call getting hold of something.

21. On Yangzi and Mozi, see p. 61, n. 7. They preached acceptance and rejection, repectively, of sensual pleasure.

If what you have gotten has gotten you into trouble, then can you really be said to have gotten something? If so, then the pigeons and doves in their cage have also gotten hold of something. With likes and dislikes, sounds and colors, you cripple what is on the inside; with leather caps and snipe-feathered bonnets, batons stuck in belts and sashes trailing, you cramp what is on the outside. The inside hemmed in by pickets and pegs, the outside heaped with wraps and swathes, and still you stand in this tangle of wraps and swathes and declare that you have gotten hold of something? If so, then the condemned men with their chained wrists and manacled fingers, the tiger and the leopard in their pens and prisons, have also gotten hold of something![22]

22. These last two paragraphs, with their mention of Robber Zhi, Zeng, and Shi, and discussion of the five notes, flavors, etc., are close in thought and terminology to the preceding sections. Speculation is that they originally belonged to either sec. 9 or sec. 11.

13

THE WAY OF HEAVEN

It is the Way of heaven to keep moving and to allow no piling up—hence the ten thousand things come to completion. It is the Way of the emperor to keep moving and to allow no piling up—hence the whole world repairs to his court. It is the Way of the sage to keep moving and to allow no piling up—hence all within the seas bow to him. Comprehending Heaven, conversant with the sage, walker in the six avenues and four frontiers of the Virtue of emperors and kings—the actions of such a man come naturally; dreamily, he never lacks stillness.

The sage is still not because he takes stillness to be good and therefore is still. The ten thousand things are insufficient to distract his mind—that is the reason he is still. Water that is still gives back a clear image of beard and eyebrows; reposing in the water level, it offers a measure to the great carpenter. And if water in stillness possesses such clarity, how much more must pure spirit. The sage's mind in stillness is the mirror of Heaven and earth, the glass of the ten thousand things.

Emptiness, stillness, limpidity, silence, inaction—these are the level of Heaven and earth, the substance of the Way and its Virtue. Therefore the emperor, the king, the sage rest in them. Resting, they may be empty; empty, they may be full; and fullness is completion.[1] Empty, they may be still; still, they may move; moving, they may acquire. Still, they may rest in inaction; resting in inaction, they may demand success from those who are charged with activities. Resting in inaction, they may be merry; being merry, they may shun the place of care and anxiety, and the years of their life will be long.

1. Following texts that read *bei* in place of *lun.*

Emptiness, stillness, limpidity, silence, inaction are the root of the ten thousand things. To understand them and face south is to become a ruler such as Yao was; to understand them and face north is to become a minister such as Shun was.[2] To hold them in high station is the Virtue of emperors and kings, of the Son of Heaven; to hold them in lowly station is the way of the dark sage, the uncrowned king. Retire with them to a life of idle wandering, and you will command first place among the recluses of the rivers and seas, the hills and forests. Come forward with them to succor the age, and your success will be great, your name renowned, and the world will be united. In stillness you will be a sage, in action a king. Resting in inaction, you will be honored; of unwrought simplicity, your beauty will be such that no one in the world may vie with you.

2. Shun served as a minister under Yao before Yao ceded the throne to him; hence here he represents the ideal minister.

He who has a clear understanding of the Virtue of Heaven and earth may be called the Great Source, the Great Ancestor. He harmonizes with Heaven; and by doing so he brings equitable accord to the world and harmonizes with men as well. To harmonize with men is called human joy; to harmonize with Heaven is called Heavenly joy. Zhuangzi has said, "This Teacher of mine, this Teacher of mine—he passes judgment on the ten thousand things, but he doesn't think himself severe; his bounty extends to ten thousand generations, but he doesn't think himself benevolent. He is older than the highest antiquity, but he doesn't think himself long-lived; he covers heaven, bears up the earth, carves and fashions countless forms, but he doesn't think himself skilled."[3] This is what is called Heavenly joy.

3. See p. 52, where these words are attributed to Xu You.

So it is said, for him who understands Heavenly joy, life is the working of Heaven; death is the transformation of things. In stillness, he and the yin share a single Virtue; in motion, he and the yang share a single flow. Thus he who understands Heavenly joy incurs no wrath from Heaven, no opposition from man, no entanglement from things, no blame from the spirits. So it is said, his movement is

of Heaven, his stillness of earth. With his single mind in repose, he is king of the world; the spirits do not afflict him; his soul knows no weariness. His single mind reposed, the ten thousand things submit—which is to say that his emptiness and stillness reach throughout Heaven and earth and penetrate the ten thousand things. This is what is called Heavenly joy. Heavenly joy is the mind of the sage by which he shepherds the world.

The Virtue of emperors and kings takes Heaven and earth as its ancestor, the Way and its Virtue as its master, inaction as its constant rule. With inaction, you may make the world work for you and have leisure to spare; with action, you will find yourself working for the world and never will it be enough. Therefore the men of old prized inaction.

If superiors adopt inaction and inferiors adopt inaction as well, then inferior and superior will share the same virtue; and if inferior and superior share the same virtue, there will be none to act as minister. If inferiors adopt action and superiors adopt action as well, then superior and inferior will share the same way; and if superior and inferior share the same way, there will be none to act as lord. Superiors must adopt inaction and make the world work for them; inferiors must adopt action and work for the world. This is an unvarying truth.

Therefore the kings of the world in ancient times, though their knowledge encompassed all Heaven and earth, did not of themselves lay plans; though their power of discrimination embraced[4] the ten thousand things, they did not of themselves expound any theories; though their abilities outshone all within the four seas, they did not of themselves act. Heaven does not give birth, yet the ten thousand things are transformed; earth does not sustain, yet the ten thousand things are nourished. The emperor and the king do not act, yet the world is benefited. So it is said, nothing so spiritual as Heaven, nothing so rich as earth, nothing so great as the emperor and the king. So it is said, the Virtue of the emperor and the king

4. Reading *zhou* instead of *diao* in accordance with Zhang Binglin's interpretation.

is the counterpart of Heaven and earth. This is the way to mount Heaven and earth, to make the ten thousand things gallop, to employ the mass of men.

The source rests with the superior, the trivia with the inferior; the essential resides in the ruler, the details in his ministers. The blandishments of the three armies and the five weapons—these are the trivia of Virtue. The doling out of rewards and punishments, benefit and loss, the five penalties—these are the trivia of public instruction.[5] Rites and laws, weights, measures, the careful comparison of forms and names[6]—these are the trivia of good government. The tones of bell and drum, the posturings of feather and tassel—these are the trivia of music.[7] Lamentation and coarse garments, the mourning periods of varying lengths—these are the trivia of grief. These five trivia must wait for the movement of pure spirit, for the vitality of the mind's art before they can command respect. The study of such trivia was known to antiquity, but the men of old gave them no precedence.

The ruler precedes, the minister follows; the father precedes, the son follows; the older brother precedes, the younger brother follows; the senior precedes, the junior follows; the man precedes, the woman follows; the husband precedes, the wife follows. Honor and lowliness, precedence and following, are part of the workings of Heaven and earth, and from them the sage draws his model.

Heaven is honorable, earth lowly—such are their ranks in spiritual enlightenment. Spring and summer precede, autumn and winter follow—such is the sequence of the four seasons. The ten thousand things change and grow, their roots and buds, each with its distinctive form, flourishing and decaying by degree, a constant flow of change and transformation. If Heaven and earth, the loftiest in spirituality, have yet their sequence of honorable and lowly, of preceder and follower, how much more must the way of man! In the ancestral temple, honor is determined by degree of kinship; in the court, by degree of nobility; in the village, by degree of seniority; in the administration of

5. The "three armies" refers to the three-divisioned army of a feudal state. The five weapons are usually listed as spear, halberd, battle-ax, shield, and bow, though there are other lists. The five penalties are usually given as tattooing, cutting off the nose, cutting off the feet, castration, and death.

6. That is, the correspondence between an official's title and his actual performance in office, an important principle in Legalist doctrine.

7. Music here includes the dance, in which feathers and tassels made of yak tails were used.

affairs, by degree of worth. This is the sequence of the Great Way.

If you speak of the Way and not of its sequence, then it is not a way; and if you speak of a way that is not a way, then how can anyone make his way by it? Therefore the men of ancient times who clearly understood the Great Way first made clear Heaven and then went on to the Way and its Virtue. Having made clear the Way and its Virtue, they went on to benevolence and righteousness. Having made clear benevolence and righteousness, they went on to the observance of duties. Having made clear the observance of duties, they went on to forms and names. Having made clear forms and names, they went on to the assignment of suitable offices. Having made clear the assignment of suitable offices, they went on to the scrutiny of performance. Having made clear the scrutiny of performance, they went on to the judgment of right and wrong. Having made clear the judgment of right and wrong, they went on to rewards and punishments. Having made clear rewards and punishments, they could be certain that stupid and wise were in their proper place, that eminent and lowly were rightly ranked, that good and worthy men as well as unworthy ones showed their true form, that all had duties suited to their abilities, that all acted in accordance with their titles. It was in this way that superiors were served, inferiors were shepherded, external things were ordered, the inner man was trained. Knowledge and scheming were unused, yet all found rest in Heaven. This was called the Great Peace, the Highest Government. Hence the book says, "There are forms and there are names."[8] Forms and names were known to antiquity, but the men of old gave them no precedence.

Those who spoke of the Great Way in ancient times could count to five in the sequence [described earlier] and pick out "forms and names" or count to nine and discuss "rewards and punishments." But to jump right in and talk about "forms and names" is to lack an understanding of the source; to jump right in and talk about "rewards and punishments" is to lack an understanding of the begin-

8. It is not known what book the writer is quoting. The whole passage appears to be an attempt to combine Daoist, Confucian, and Legalist terminology and concepts of government into one comprehensive system, the sort of eclecticism often found in thinkers of the Qin and early Han.

ning. Those who stand the Way on its head before describing it, who turn it backward before expounding it, may be brought to order by others, but how could they be capable of bringing others to order? Those who jump right in and talk about "forms and names," "rewards and punishments," have an understanding of the tools for bringing order but no understanding of the way to bring order. They may work for the world, but they are not worthy to make the world work for them. They are rhetoricians, scholars cramped in one corner of learning. Rites and laws, weights and measures, the careful comparison of forms and names—the men of old had all these. They are the means by which those below serve those above, not the means by which those above shepherd those below.

Long ago Shun asked Yao, "As Heaven-appointed king, how do you use your mind?"

Yao replied, "I never abuse those who have nowhere to sue nor reject the poor people. Grieving for the dead, comforting the orphan, pitying the widow—I use my mind in these things alone."

Shun said, "Admirable as far as admirableness goes. But not yet great."

Yao said, "Then what should I do?"

Shun said, "Heaven raised on high, earth in peace,[9] sun and moon shining, the four seasons marching—if you could be like the constant succession of day and night, the clouds that move, the rains that fall!"

"And to think I have been going to all this bustle and bother!" said Yao. "You are one who joins with Heaven; I am one who joins with man."

Heaven and earth have been called great since ancient times, have been praised in chorus by the Yellow Emperor, Yao, and Shun. The kings of the world in ancient times—what need had they for action? Heaven and earth was enough for them.

Confucius went west to deposit his works with the royal house of Zhou. Zilu advised him, saying, "I have heard

9. Reading *deng* in place of *de*, and *tu* in place of *chu*, in accordance with the emendations by Zhang Binglin and Sun Yirang, respectively.

that the Keeper of the Royal Archives is one Lao Dan, now retired and living at home. If you wish to deposit your works, you might try going to see him about it."

"Excellent!" said Confucius and went to see Lao Dan, but Lao Dan would not give permission. Thereupon Confucius unwrapped his Twelve Classics and began expounding them.[10] Halfway through the exposition, Lao Dan said, "This will take forever! Just let me hear the gist of the thing!"

10. There are various explanations of the phrase "Twelve Classics," for example, the Six Confucian Classics with six commentaries, or the *Spring and Autumn Annals*, which covers the reigns of twelve dukes of Lu.

"The gist of it," said Confucius, "is benevolence and righteousness."

"May I ask if benevolence and righteousness belong to the inborn nature of man?" said Lao Dan.

"Of course," said Confucius. "If the gentleman lacks benevolence, he will get nowhere; if he lacks righteousness, he cannot even stay alive. Benevolence and righteousness are truly the inborn nature of man. What else could they be?"

Lao Dan said, "May I ask your definition of benevolence and righteousness?"

Confucius said, "To be glad and joyful[11] in mind, to embrace universal love and be without partisanship—this is the true form of benevolence and righteousness."

11. Reading *yi* (pleased) in place of *wu* in accordance with Zhang Binglin's emendation.

Lao Dan said, "Hmm—close—except for the last part. 'Universal love'—that's a rather nebulous ideal, isn't it? And to be without partisanship is already a kind of partisanship. Do you want to keep the world from losing its simplicity?[12] Heaven and earth hold fast to their constant ways, the sun and moon to their brightness, the stars and planets to their ranks, the birds and beasts to their flocks, the trees and shrubs to their stands. You have only to go along with Virtue in your actions, to follow the Way in your journey, and already you will be there. Why these flags of benevolence and righteousness so bravely upraised, as though you were beating a drum and searching for a lost child? Ah, you will bring confusion to the nature of man!"

12. Reading *pu* in place of *mu* to correspond to the parallel sentence in sec. 14, p. 115.

* * *

Shi Chengqi went to see Laozi. "I had heard that you were a sage," he said, "and so, without minding how long the road was, I came to beg an interview—a hundred nights along the way, feet covered with calluses, and yet I did not dare to stop and rest. Now that I see you, though, I find you are no sage at all. Rat holes heaped with leftover grain, and yet you turn your little sister out of the house, an unkind act indeed! More raw and cooked food in front of you than you can ever get through, and yet you go on endlessly hoarding goods!"[13] Laozi looked blank and made no reply.

The following day, Shi Chengqi came to see him again and said, "Yesterday I was very sharp with you, but now I have no heart for that sort of thing.[14] I wonder why that is?"

Laozi said, "Artful wisdom, the spirit-like sage—I hope I have shuffled off categories of that sort! If you'd called me an ox, I'd have said I was an ox; if you'd called me a horse, I'd have said I was a horse. If the reality is there and you refuse to accept the name that men give it, you'll only lay yourself open to double harassment. My submission is a constant submission; I do not submit because I think it's time to submit."

Shi Chengqi backed respectfully away so that he would not tread on Laozi's shadow and then advanced once more in a humble manner and asked how he should go about cultivating his person.

Laozi said, "Your face is grim, your eyes are fierce, your forehead is broad, your mouth is gaping, your manner is overbearing, like a horse held back by a tether, watching for a chance to bolt, bounding off as though shot from a crossbow. Scrutinizing ever so carefully, crafty in wisdom, parading your arrogance—all this invites mistrust. Up in the borderlands, a man like you would be taken for a thief!"

The Master said: The Way does not falter before the huge, is not forgetful of the tiny; therefore the ten thousand things are complete in it. Vast and ample, there is nothing

13. One can easily gather from the *Daodejing* that Laozi favored frugality, but nothing is known about these legends of his personal stinginess and lack of charity to his little sister.

14. Following Ma Xulun's emendation and interpretation.

it does not receive. Deep and profound, how can it be fathomed? Punishment and favor,[15] benevolence and righteousness—these are trivia to the spirit, and yet who but the Perfect Man can put them in their rightful place?

When the Perfect Man rules the world, he has hold of a huge thing, does he not?—yet it is not enough to snare him in entanglement. He works the handles that control the world but is not a party to the workings. He sees clearly into what has no falsehood and is unswayed by thoughts of gain. He ferrets out the truth of things and knows how to cling to the source. Therefore he can put Heaven and earth outside himself, forget the ten thousand things, and his spirit has no cause to be wearied. He dismisses benevolence and righteousness, rejects[16] rites and music, for the mind of the Perfect Man knows where to find repose.

15. A Legalist term; see *Han Feizi,* sec. 7, where punishment and favor are called "the two handles" of political power.

16. Reading *bin* with the hand radical.

Men of the world who value the Way all turn to books. But books are nothing more than words. Words have value; what is of value in words is meaning. Meaning has something it is pursuing, but the thing that it is pursuing cannot be put into words and handed down. The world values words and hands down books, but although the world values them, I do not think them worth valuing. What the world takes to be value is not real value.

What you can look at and see are forms and colors; what you can listen to and hear are names and sounds. What a pity!—that the men of the world should suppose that form and color, name and sound, are sufficient to convey the truth of a thing. It is because in the end, they are not sufficient to convey truth that "those who know do not speak, those who speak do not know."[17] But how can the world understand this!

17. The section in quotation marks is identical with the beginning of *Daodejing* LVI.

Duke Huan was in his hall reading a book. The wheelwright Pian, who was in the yard below chiseling a wheel, laid down his mallet and chisel, stepped up into the hall, and said to Duke Huan, "This book Your Grace is reading—may I venture to ask whose words are in it?"

"The words of the sages," said the duke.

"Are the sages still alive?"

"Dead long ago," said the duke.

"In that case, what you are reading there is nothing but the chaff and dregs of the men of old!"

"Since when does a wheelwright have permission to comment on the books I read?" said Duke Huan. "If you have some explanation, well and good. If not, it's your life!"

Wheelwright Pian said, "I look at it from the point of view of my own work. When I chisel a wheel, if the blows of the mallet are too gentle, the chisel will slide and won't take hold. But if they're too hard, it will bite and won't budge. Not too gentle, not too hard—you can get it in your hand and feel it in your mind. You can't put it into words, and yet there's a knack to it somehow. I can't teach it to my son, and he can't learn it from me. So I've gone along for seventy years, and at my age I'm still chiseling wheels. When the men of old died, they took with them the things that couldn't be handed down. So what you are reading there must be nothing but the chaff and dregs of the men of old."

14

THE TURNING OF HEAVEN

Does heaven turn? Does the earth sit still? Do sun and moon compete for a place to shine? Who masterminds all this? Who pulls the strings? Who, resting inactive himself, gives the push that makes it go this way? I wonder, is there some mechanism that works it and won't let it stop? I wonder if it just rolls and turns and can't bring itself to a halt? Do the clouds make the rain, or does the rain make the clouds? Who puffs them up, who showers them down like this? Who, resting inactive himself, stirs up all this lascivious joy?[1] The winds rise in the north, blowing now west, now east, whirling up to wander on high. Whose breaths and exhalations are they? Who, resting inactive himself, huffs and puffs them about like this?

The shaman Xian beckoned[2] and said, "Come—I will tell you. Heaven has the six directions and the five constants.[3] When emperors and kings go along with these, there is good order; when they move contrary to these, there is disaster. With the instructions of the Nine Luo,[4] order can be made to reign and virtue completed. The ruler will shine mirror-like over the earth below, and the world will bear him up. He may be called an August One on high."[5]

Tang, the prime minister of Shang,[6] asked Zhuangzi about benevolence.

Zhuangzi said, "Tigers and wolves—they're benevolent."

"How can you say that?"

Zhuangzi said, "Sire and cubs warm and affectionate with one another—why do you say they're not benevolent?"

1. The expression "clouds and rain" was used from early times to refer to sexual intercourse, and this may be why the writer employs the odd phrase "lascivious joy."

2. Reading *zhao* with the hand radical, as Ma Xulun suggested.

3. Usually taken to be the five elements of Chinese philosophy: wood, fire, earth, metal, and water.

4. Probably a reference to the "Great Plan" section of the *Book of Documents,* which is in nine divisions and was supposed to have been written on the back of a tortoise that emerged from the Luo River.

5. On the August Ones, see p. 113, n. 15.

6. Shang here presumably means the state of Song; see the introduction, p. viii.

"What I am asking to hear about is perfect benevolence."

"Perfect benevolence knows no affection," said Zhuangzi.

The prime minister said, "I have heard that where affection is lacking, there will be no love, and if there is no love, there will be no filial piety. Can you possibly say that perfect benevolence is unfilial?"

"No, no," said Zhuangzi. "Perfect benevolence is a lofty thing—words like filial piety would never do to describe it. And what you are talking about is not something that surpasses filial piety but something that doesn't even come up to it. If a traveler to the south turns to look north again when he reaches the city of Ying, he will no longer see the dark northern mountains. Why? Because they are too far away. Thus it is said, to be filial out of respect is easy; to be filial out of love is hard. To be filial out of love is easy; to forget parents is hard. To forget parents is easy; to make parents forget you is hard. To make parents forget you is easy; to forget the whole world is hard. To forget the whole world is easy; to make the whole world forget you is hard. Virtue discards Yao and Shun and rests in inaction. Its bounty enriches ten thousand ages, and yet no one in the world knows this. Why all these deep sighs, this talk of benevolence and filial piety? Filial piety, brotherliness, benevolence, righteousness, loyalty, trust, honor, integrity—for all of these, you must drive yourself and make a slave of Virtue. They are not worth prizing. So it is said, Highest eminence scorns the titles of the kingdom; greatest wealth rejects the riches of the kingdom; loftiest desire ignores fame and reputation. It is the Way alone that never varies."

Cheng of North Gate said to the Yellow Emperor, "When Your Majesty performed the Xianchi music in the wilds around Lake Dongting, I listened, and at first I was afraid. I listened some more and felt weary, and then I listened

to the end and felt confused. Overwhelmed, speechless, I couldn't get hold of myself."

"It's not surprising you felt that way," said the emperor. "I performed it through man, tuned it to Heaven, went forward with ritual principle, and established it in Great Purity. Perfect music must first respond to the needs of man, accord with the reason of Heaven, proceed by the Five Virtues, and blend with spontaneity; only then can it bring order to the four seasons and bestow a final harmony on the ten thousand things.[7] Then the four seasons will rise one after the other; the ten thousand things will take their turn at living. Now flourishing, now decaying, the civil and military strains will keep them in step; now with clear notes, now with dull ones, the yin and the yang will blend all in harmony, the sounds flowing forth like light, like hibernating insects that start to wriggle again, like the crash of thunder with which I awe the world. At the end, no tail; at the beginning, no head; now dead, now alive, now flat on the ground, now up on its feet, its constancy is unending, yet there is nothing that can be counted on. That's why you felt afraid.

7. The thirty-five characters that make up this sentence are omitted in some editions because there is strong suspicion that they are part of a commentary that was erroneously copied into the body of the text.

"Then I played it with the harmony of yin and yang, lit it with the shining of sun and moon; its notes I was able to make long or short, yielding or strong, modulating about a single unity but bowing before no rule or constancy. In the valley they filled the valley; in the void they filled the void; plugging up the crevices, holding back the spirit, accepting things on their own terms. Its notes were clear and radiant,[8] its fame high and bright. Therefore the ghosts and spirits kept to their darkness, and the sun, moon, stars, and constellations marched in their orbits. I made it stop where there is an end to things, made it flow where there is no stopping. You[9] try to fathom it but can't understand, try to gaze at it but can't see, try to overtake it but can't catch up. You stand dazed before the four-directioned emptiness of the Way or lean on your desk and moan. Your eyes fail before you can see; your

8. Following Ma Xulun's interpretation.

9. Following the texts that read *zi* instead of *yu*.

strength knuckles under before you can catch up.[10] It was nothing I could do anything about. Your body melted into the empty void, and this brought you to an idle freedom. It was this idle freedom that made you feel weary.

"Then I played it with unwearying notes and tuned it to the command of spontaneity. Therefore there seemed to be a chaos where things grow in thickets together, a maturity where nothing takes form, a universal plucking where nothing gets pulled, a clouded obscurity where there is no sound. It moved in no direction at all, rested in mysterious shadow. Some called it death, some called it life, some called it fruit, some called it flower. It flowed and scattered and bowed before no constant tone. The world, perplexed by it, went to the sage for instruction, for the sage is the comprehender of true form and the completer of fate. When the Heavenly mechanism is not put into action, and yet the five vital organs are all complete—this may be called the music of Heaven. Wordless, it delights the mind. Therefore the lord of Yan sang its praises thus: 'Listen—you do not hear its sound; look—you do not see its form. It fills all Heaven and earth, enwraps all the six directions.' You wanted to hear it but had no way to go about it. That was why you felt confused.[11]

"Music begins with fear, and because of this fear, there is dread, as of a curse. Then I add the weariness, and because of the weariness, there is compliance. I end it all with confusion, and because of the confusion, there is stupidity. And because of the stupidity, there is the Way, the Way that can be lifted up and carried around wherever you go."

When Confucius was away in the west visiting the state of Wei, Yan Yuan said to Music Master Jin, "What do you think of my master's trip?"[12]

Music Master Jin said, "A pity—your master will most likely end up in trouble."

"How so?" asked Yan Yuan.

10. Since in the preceding passage, the order of the verbs was "understand," "see," and "catch up," this sentence probably began originally with a clause describing Cheng's inability to understand, of which only the single character *zhí* now remains.

11. As the reader well may feel at this point. On the whole, I follow Fukunaga in the interpretation of this difficult and deliberately paradoxical passage, though I am not confident that I really understand what it is all about. It should be noted that because the words for "joy" and "music" are written with the same character, phrases translated here as "perfect music," "the music of Heaven," etc., can also be interpreted to refer to the states of emotion. The phrase "perfect music" in fact appears later as the title of sec. 18, where I have rendered it as "Supreme Happiness."

12. Yan Yuan, or Yan Hui, was Confucius's favorite disciple. Music Master Jin was presumably an official of Confucius's native state of Lu.

Music Master Jin said, "Before the straw dogs are presented at the sacrifice, they are stored in bamboo boxes and covered over with patterned embroidery, while the impersonator of the dead and the priest fast and practice austerities in preparation for fetching them. But after they have once been presented, then all that remains for them is to be trampled on, head and back, by passersby; to be swept up by the grass cutters and burned.[13] And if anyone should come along and put them back in their bamboo boxes, cover them over with patterned embroidery, and linger or lie down to sleep beneath them, he would dream no proper dreams; on the contrary, he would most certainly be visited again and again by nightmares.

13. The straw dogs, also mentioned in *Daodejing* V, apparently acted as scapegoats to draw off evil influences at the sacrifice; hence they were treated with reverence before the sacrifice but thrown away afterward, and to attempt to put them back in their original boxes would only invite bad luck.

"Now your master has picked up some old straw dogs that had been presented by the former kings and has called together his disciples to linger and lie down in sleep beneath them. Therefore the people chopped down the tree on him in Song, wiped away his footprints in Wei, and made trouble for him in Shang and Zhou—such were the dreams he had. They besieged him between Chen and Cai, and for seven days he ate no cooked food, till he hovered on the border between life and death—such were the nightmares he had.[14]

14. These various difficulties and persecutions that Confucius and his disciples encountered in their wanderings from state to state are mentioned in the *Analects* or other early texts; here, as earlier, the name Shang seems to stand for Song.

"Nothing is as good as a boat for crossing water, nothing as good as a cart for crossing land. But although a boat will get you over water, if you try to push it across land, you may push till your dying day and hardly move it any distance at all. And are the past and present not like the water and the land, and the states of Zhou and Lu not like a boat and a cart? To hope to practice the ways of Zhou in the state of Lu is like trying to push a boat over land—a great deal of work, no success, and certain danger to the person who tries it. The man who tries to do so has failed to understand the turning that has no direction, that responds to things and is never at a loss.

"Have you never seen a well sweep? Pull it, and down it goes; let go, and up it swings. It allows itself to be pulled

around by men; it doesn't try to pull them. So it can go up and down and never be blamed by anybody.

"Thus it is that the rituals and regulations of the Three August Ones and the Five Emperors are prized not because they were uniform but because they were capable of bringing about order.[15] The rituals and regulations of the Three August Ones and the Five Emperors may be compared to the haw, the pear, the orange, and the citron. Their flavors are quite different, yet all are pleasing to the mouth. Rituals and regulations are something that change in response to the times. If you take a monkey and dress him in the robes of the Duke of Zhou, he will bite and tear at them, not satisfied until he has divested himself of every stitch. And a glance will show that past and present are no more alike than are a monkey and the Duke of Zhou!

"The beautiful Xishi, troubled with heartburn, frowned at her neighbors. An ugly woman of the neighborhood, seeing that Xishi was beautiful, went home and likewise pounded her breast and frowned at her neighbors. But at the sight of her, the rich men of the neighborhood shut tight their gates and would not venture out, while the poor men grabbed their wives and children by the hand and scampered off. The woman understood that someone frowning could be beautiful, but she did not understand where the beauty of the frown came from. A pity, indeed! Your master is going to end up in trouble!"

15. The Three August Ones (*huang*) and Five Emperors (*di*) are legendary sage rulers of high antiquity, though it is not certain just which of the numerous legendary rulers the writer would have included in his list of three and five. Later on in the chapter, the phrase seems to mean sage rulers in general.

Confucius had gone along until he was fifty-one and had still not heard the Way. Finally he went south to Pei and called on Lao Dan. "Ah, you have come," said Lao Dan. "I've heard that you are a worthy man of the northern region. Have you found the Way?"

"Not yet," said Confucius.

"Where did you look for it?" asked Lao Dan.

"I looked for it in rules and regulations, but five years went by and I still hadn't found it."

"Where else did you look for it?" asked Lao Dan.

"I looked for it in the yin and yang, but twelve years went by and I still hadn't found it."

"It stands to reason!" said Lao Dan. "If the Way could be presented, there is no man who would not present it to his ruler. If the Way could be offered, there is no man who would not offer it to his parents. If the Way could be reported, there is no man who would not report it to his brothers. If the Way could be bequeathed, there is no man who would not bequeath it to his heirs. But it cannot—and for none other than the following reason: If there is no host on the inside to receive it, it will not stay; if there is no mark on the outside to guide it, it will not go. If what is brought forth from the inside is not received on the outside, then the sage will not bring it forth. If what is taken in from the outside is not received by a host on the inside, the sage will not entrust it.[16]

"Fame is a public weapon—don't reach for it too often. Benevolence and righteousness are the grass huts of the former kings; you may stop in them for one night, but you mustn't tarry there for long. A lengthy stay would invite many reproaches. The Perfect Man of ancient times used benevolence as a path to be borrowed, righteousness as a lodge to take shelter in. He wandered in the free and easy wastes, ate in the plain and simple fields, and strolled in the garden of no bestowal. Free and easy, he rested in inaction; plain and simple, it was not hard for him to live; bestowing nothing, he did not have to hand things out. The men of old called this the wandering of the Truth-Picker.

"He who considers wealth a good thing can never bear to give up his income; he who considers eminence a good thing can never bear to give up his fame. He who has a taste for power can never bear to hand over authority to others. Holding tight to these things, such men shiver with fear; should they let them go, they would pine in sorrow. They never stop for a moment of reflection, never cease to gaze with greedy eyes—they are men punished by Heaven. Re-

16. There are other ways to interpret this perplexing passage. The point is that the Way can be transmitted only telepathically, and therefore the sage must make certain that the mind of the other party is capable of receiving it before he extracts it from his own mind and hands it over.

sentment and kindness, taking away and giving, reproof and instruction, life and death—these eight things are the weapons of the corrector.[17] Only he who complies with the Great Change and allows no blockage will be able to use them. Therefore it is said, The corrector must be correct. If the mind cannot accept this fact, then the doors of Heaven will never open!"

17. On one level, this refers to the ruler, who rules by means of punishments, rewards, etc.; *zheng* (to correct) is etymologically the same as *zheng* (to govern). On another level, the passage is talking about the enlightened man who has a "correct" understanding of the Way.

Confucius called on Lao Dan and spoke to him about benevolence and righteousness. Lao Dan said, "Chaff from the winnowing fan can so blind the eye that heaven, earth, and the four directions all seem to shift place. A mosquito or a horsefly stinging your skin can keep you awake a whole night. And when benevolence and righteousness in all their fearfulness come to muddle the mind,[18] the confusion is unimaginable. If you want to keep the world from losing its simplicity, you must move with the freedom of the wind, stand in the perfection of Virtue. Why all this huffing and puffing, as though you were carrying a big drum and searching for a lost child! The snow goose needs no daily bath to stay white; the crow needs no daily inking to stay black. Black and white in their simplicity offer no ground for argument; fame and reputation in their clamorousness[19] offer no ground for envy. When the springs dry up and the fish are left stranded on the ground, they spew one another with moisture and wet one another down with spit—but it would be much better if they could forget one another in the rivers and lakes!"

18. Following texts that read *kui* in place of *fen.*

19. Following texts that read *huan* in place of *guan.*

When Confucius returned from his visit with Lao Dan, he did not speak for three days. His disciples said, "Master, you've seen Lao Dan —what estimation would you make of him?"

Confucius said, "At last I may say that I have seen a dragon—a dragon that coils to show his body at its best, that sprawls out to display his patterns at their best, riding on the breath of the clouds, feeding on the yin and yang. My mouth fell open and I couldn't close it; my tongue

flew up and I couldn't even stammer. How could I possibly make any estimation of Lao Dan!"

Zigong said, "Then is it true that the Perfect Man can command corpse-like stillness and dragon vision, the voice of thunder and the silence of deep pools; that he breaks forth into movement like Heaven and earth? If only I, too, could get to see him!"

In the end, he went with an introduction from Confucius and called on Lao Dan. Lao Dan was about to sit down in the hall and stretch out his legs. In a small voice he said, "I've lived to see a great many years come and go. What advice is it you have for me?"

Zigong said, "The Three August Ones and the Five Emperors ruled the world in ways that were not the same, though they were alike in the praise and acclaim they won. I am told, sir, that you alone do not regard them as sages. May I ask why?"

Lao Dan said, "Young man, come a little closer! Why do you say that they ruled in ways that were not the same?"

"Yao ceded the throne to Shun, and Shun ceded it to Yu. Yu wore himself out over it, and Tang even resorted to war. King Wen obeyed Zhou and did not dare to rebel; but his son King Wu turned against Zhou and refused to remain loyal. Therefore I say that they were not the same."

Lao Dan said, "Young man, come a little closer, and I will tell you how the Three August Ones and the Five Emperors ruled the world. In ancient times the Yellow Emperor ruled the world by making the hearts of the people one. Therefore, if there were those among the people who did not wail at the death of their parents, the people saw nothing wrong in this. Yao ruled the world by making the hearts of the people affectionate. Therefore, if there were those among the people who decided to mourn for longer or shorter periods according to the degree of kinship of the deceased, the people saw nothing wrong in this. Shun ruled the world by making the hearts

of the people rivalrous. Therefore the wives of the people became pregnant and gave birth in the tenth month as in the past, but their children were not five months old before they were able to talk, and their baby laughter had hardly rung out before they had begun to distinguish one person from another. It was then that premature death first appeared. Yu ruled the world by causing the hearts of the people to change. It was assumed that each man had a heart of his own, that recourse to arms was quite all right. Killing a thief is not a case of murder, they said; every man in the world should look out for his own kind. As a result, there was great consternation in the world, and the Confucians and Mohists all came forward, creating for the first time the rules of ethical behavior. But what would they say about those men who nowadays make wives of their daughters?[20]

"I will tell you how the Three August Ones and the Five Emperors ruled the world! They called it 'ruling,' but in fact they were plunging it into the worst confusion. The 'wisdom' of the Three August Ones was such as blotted out the brightness of sun and moon above, sapped the vigor of hills and streams below, and overturned the round of the four seasons in between. Their wisdom was more fearsome than the tail of the scorpion; down to the smallest beast, not a living thing was allowed to rest in the true form of its nature and fate. And yet they considered themselves sages! Was it not shameful—their lack of shame!"

Zigong, stunned and speechless, stood wondering which way to turn.

20. The sentence is obscure. It is apparent from Guo Xiang's note that he took it as a reference to incest, although later commentators, repelled or unconvinced by his interpretation, have suggested various other interpretations or emendations.

Confucius said to Lao Dan, "I have been studying the Six Classics—the *Odes*, the *Documents*, the *Ritual*, the *Music*, the *Changes*, and the *Spring and Autumn*, for what I would call a long time, and I know their contents through and through. But I have been around to seventy-two different rulers with them, expounding the ways of the former kings and making clear the path trod by the dukes of Zhou and

Shao, and yet not a single ruler has found anything to excite his interest. How difficult it is to persuade others, how difficult to make clear the Way!"

Laozi said, "It's lucky you didn't meet with a ruler who would try to govern the world as you say. The Six Classics are the old worn-out paths of the former kings—they are not the thing that walked the path. What you are expounding are simply these paths. Paths are made by shoes that walk them; they are by no means the shoes themselves!

"The white fish hawk has only to stare unblinking at its mate for fertilization to occur. With insects, the male cries on the wind above, the female cries on the wind below, and there is fertilization. The creature called the *lei* is both male and female, and so it can fertilize itself. Inborn nature cannot be changed, fate cannot be altered, time cannot be stopped, the Way cannot be obstructed. Get hold of the Way and there's nothing that can't be done; lose it and there's nothing that can be done."

Confucius stayed home for three months and then went to see Lao Dan once again. "I've got it," he said. "The magpie hatches its young; the fish spit out their milt; the slim-waisted wasp has its stages of transformation; and when baby brother is born, big brother howls.[21] For a long time now, I have not been taking my place as a man along with the process of change. And if I do not take my own place as a man along with the process of change, how can I hope to change other men?"

Laozi said, "Good, Qiu—now you've got it!"

21. That is, the older child is weaned when the younger is born; the phrase signifies mammalian birth, as opposed to the other three types of reproduction mentioned earlier.

15

CONSTRAINED IN WILL

To be constrained in will, lofty in action, aloof from the world, apart from its customs, elevated in discourse, sullen and critical, indignation his whole concern—such is the life favored by the scholar in his mountain valley, the man who condemns the world, the worn and haggard one who means to end it all with a plunge into the deep. To discourse on benevolence, righteousness, loyalty, and good faith, to be courteous, temperate, modest, and deferential, moral training his whole concern—such is the life favored by the scholar who seeks to bring the world to order, the man who teaches and instructs, who at home and abroad lives for learning. To talk of great accomplishments, win a great name, define the etiquette of ruler and subject, regulate the position of superior and inferior, the ordering of the state his only concern—such is the life favored by the scholar of court and council, the man who would honor his sovereign and strengthen his country, the bringer of accomplishment, the annexer of territory. To repair to the thickets and ponds, living idly in the wilderness, angling for fish in solitary places, inaction his only concern—such is the life favored by the scholar of the rivers and seas, the man who withdraws from the world, the unhurried idler. To pant, to puff, to hail, to sip, to spit out the old breath and draw in the new, practicing bear-hangings and bird-stretchings, longevity his only concern—such is the life favored by the scholar who practices Induction, the man who nourishes his body, who hopes to live to be as old as Pengcu.[1]

But to attain loftiness without constraining the will; to achieve moral training without benevolence and righ-

1. In this last sentence, which describes the practitioner of Induction (*daoyin*), a kind of yoga technique involving exercises and breath control. I follow Waley's translations of technical terms such as "bear-hangings" and "bird-stretchings," whose meaning can only be guessed. See Waley's *Three Ways of Thought in Ancient China,* p. 44.

teousness, good order without accomplishments and fame, leisure without rivers and seas, long life without Induction; to lose everything and yet possess everything, at ease in the illimitable, where all good things come to attend—this is the Way of Heaven and earth, the Virtue of the sage. So it is said, Limpidity, silence, emptiness, inaction—these are the level of Heaven and earth, the substance of the Way and its Virtue. So it is said, The sage rests; with rest comes peaceful ease, with peaceful ease comes limpidity, and where there is ease and limpidity, care and worry cannot get at him, noxious airs cannot assault him. Therefore his Virtue is complete and his spirit unimpaired.

So it is said, With the sage, his life is the working of Heaven, his death the transformation of things. In stillness, he and the yin share a single Virtue; in motion, he and the yang share a single flow. He is not the bearer of good fortune or the initiator of bad fortune. Roused by something outside himself, only then does he respond; pressed, only then does he move; finding he has no choice, only then does he rise up. He discards knowledge and purpose and follows along with the reasonableness of Heaven. Therefore he incurs no disaster from Heaven, no entanglement from things, no opposition from man, no blame from the spirits. His life is a floating, his death a rest. He does not ponder or scheme, does not plot for the future. A man of light, he does not shine; of good faith, he keeps no promises. He sleeps without dreaming, wakes without worry. His spirit is pure and clean, his soul never wearied. In emptiness, nonbeing, and limpidity, he joins with the Virtue of Heaven.

So it is said, Grief and happiness are perversions of Virtue; joy and anger are transgressions of the Way; love and hate are offenses against Virtue. When the mind is without care or joy, this is the height of Virtue. When it is unified and unchanging, this is the height of stillness. When it grates against nothing, this is the height of emptiness. When it has no commerce with things, this is the

height of limpidity. When it rebels against nothing, this is the height of purity.

So it is said, If the body is made to labor and take no rest, it will wear out; if the spiritual essence is taxed without cessation, it will grow weary, and weariness will bring exhaustion. It is the nature of water that if it is not mixed with other things, it will be clear, and if nothing stirs it, it will be level. But if it is dammed and hemmed in and not allowed to flow, then it, too, will cease to be clear. As such, it is a symbol of Heavenly Virtue. So it is said, To be pure, clean, and mixed with nothing; still, unified, and unchanging; limpid and inactive; moving with the workings of Heaven—this is the way to care for the spirit.

The man who owns a sword from Gan or Yue lays it in a box and stores it away, not daring to use it, for to him it is the greatest of treasures. Pure spirit reaches in the four directions, flows now this way, now that—there is no place it does not extend to. Above, it brushes Heaven; below, it coils on the earth. It transforms and nurses the ten thousand things, but no one can make out its form. Its name is called One-with-Heaven. The way to purity and whiteness is to guard the spirit, this alone; guard it and never lose it, and you will become one with spirit, one with its pure essence, which communicates and mingles with the Heavenly Order.[2] The common saying has it, "The ordinary man prizes gain, the man of integrity prizes name, the worthy man honors ambition, the sage values spiritual essence." Whiteness means there is nothing mixed in; purity means the spirit is never impaired. He who can embody purity and whiteness may be called the True Man.

2. The word *jíng* is being used in this passage in a number of different ways, a fact that is very difficult to bring out in translation. At the beginning of the paragraph, *jíng,* translated as "spiritual essence," means the vital energy of the body; later the word appears as an adjective in the compound "pure spirit" (*jíngshen*), that is, vital or essential spirit. Finally, it appears as a noun, "essence," or "purity." Because it may also mean "semen," the passage can be interpreted as dealing with the sexual regimen.

16

MENDING THE INBORN NATURE

Those who set about mending the inborn nature through vulgar learning, hoping thereby to return once more to the Beginning; those who set about muddling their desires through vulgar ways of thought, hoping thereby to attain clarity—they may be called the blind and benighted people.[1]

The men of ancient times who practiced the Way employed tranquillity to cultivate knowledge. Knowledge lived in them, yet they did nothing for its sake. So they may be said to have employed knowledge to cultivate tranquillity. Knowledge and tranquillity took turns cultivating each other, and harmony and order emerged from the inborn nature.

Virtue is harmony, the Way is order. When Virtue embraces all things, we have benevolence. When the Way is in all respects well ordered, we have righteousness. When righteousness is clearly understood and all things cling to it, we have loyalty. When within there is purity, fullness, and a return to true form, we have music. When good faith is expressed in face and body and there is a compliance with elegance, we have rites. But if all emphasis is placed on the conduct of rites and music, then the world will fall into disorder. The ruler, in his efforts to rectify, will draw a cloud over his own virtue, and his virtue will no longer extend to all things. And should he try to force it to extend, then things would invariably lose their inborn nature.[2]

The men of old dwelled in the midst of crudity and chaos; side by side with the rest of the world, they at-

1. I punctuate after *xue* and *sí*. The writer is attacking both the Confucian and Mohist ideals of moral training and those schools of thought that advocated the lessening or elimination of desire.

2. This passage, which attempts to derive the Confucian virtues and concerns from the Way, presents many difficulties in interpretation. Probably the text is faulty—judging from the parallelism; for example, "good faith" ought to have a definition of its own instead of being part of the definition of "rites." I follow Fukunaga's interpretation.

tained simplicity and silence there. At that time the yin and yang were harmonious and still; ghosts and spirits worked no mischief; the four seasons kept to their proper order; the ten thousand things knew no injury; and living creatures were free from premature death. Although men had knowledge, they did not use it. This was called the Perfect Unity. At this time, no one made a move to do anything, and there was unvarying spontaneity.

The time came, however, when Virtue began to dwindle and decline, and then Suiren and Fu Xi stepped forward to take charge of the world. As a result there was compliance, but no longer any unity. Virtue continued to dwindle and decline, and then Shennong and the Yellow Emperor stepped forward to take charge of the world. As a result, there was security but no longer any compliance. Virtue continued to dwindle and decline, and then Yao and Shun stepped forward to take charge of the world.[3] They set about in various fashions to order and transform the world and, in doing so, defiled purity and shattered simplicity. The Way was pulled apart for the sake of goodness; Virtue was imperiled for the sake of conduct. After this, inborn nature was abandoned, and minds were set free to roam, mind joining with mind in understanding; there was knowledge, but it could not bring stability to the world. After this, "culture" was added, and "breadth" was piled on top. "Culture" destroyed the substantial; "breadth" drowned the mind; and after this, the people began to be confused and disordered. They had no way to revert to the true form of their inborn nature or to return once more to the Beginning.

3. All these figures are mythical rulers or cultural heroes; Suiren and Shennong are the discoverers of fire and agriculture, respectively.

From this we may see that the world has lost the Way and the Way has lost the world; the world and the Way have lost each other. What means does a man of the Way have to go forward in the world? What means does the world have to go forward in the Way? The Way cannot go forward in the world, and the world cannot go forward in the Way. So although the sage does not retire to dwell in

the midst of the mountain forest, his Virtue is already hidden. It is already hidden, and therefore he does not need to hide it himself.

The so-called scholars in hiding of ancient times did not conceal their bodies and refuse to let them be seen; they did not shut in their words and refuse to let them out; they did not stow away their knowledge and refuse to share it. But the fate of the times was too much awry. If the fate of the times had been with them and they could have done great deeds in the world, then they would have returned to Unity and left no trace behind. But the fate of the times was against them and brought them only great hardship in the world, and therefore they deepened their roots, rested in perfection, and waited. This was the way they kept themselves alive.[4]

4. As Fukunaga pointed out, this concept of good and bad times that are fated is quite contrary to the philosophy expressed in the inner chapters, according to which any time is as good as any other. The thinking here is, in fact, much closer to the ideas of timeliness and fate expressed in the Confucian *Analects* or the *Book of Changes.*

Those in ancient times who wished to keep themselves alive did not use eloquence to ornament their knowledge. They did not use their knowledge to make trouble for the world; they did not use their knowledge to make trouble for Virtue. Loftily they kept to their places and returned to their inborn nature. Having done that, what more was there for them to do? The Way has no use for petty conduct; Virtue has no use for petty understanding. Petty understanding injures Virtue; petty conduct injures the Way. Therefore it is said, Rectify yourself, that is all.[5] When joy is complete, this is called the fulfillment of ambition.

5. Why the writer quotes such an un-Daoist injunction as "Rectify yourself," or what he means by it, I do not know.

When the men of ancient times spoke of the fulfillment of ambition, they did not mean fine carriages and caps. They meant simply that joy was so complete that it could not be made greater. Nowadays, however, when men speak of the fulfillment of ambition, they mean fine carriages and caps. But carriages and caps affect the body alone, not the inborn nature and fate. Such things from time to time may happen to come your way. When they come, you cannot keep them from arriving, but when they depart, you cannot stop them from going. Therefore carriages and caps are no excuse for becoming puffed up with

pride, and hardship and poverty are no excuse for fawning on the vulgar. You should find the same joy in one condition as in the other and thereby be free of care, that is all. But now, when the things that happened take their leave, you cease to be joyful. From this point of view, though you have joy, it will always be fated for destruction. Therefore it is said, Those who destroy themselves in things and lose their inborn nature in the vulgar may be called the upside-down people.

17

AUTUMN FLOODS

The time of the autumn floods came, and the hundred streams poured into the Yellow River. Its racing current swelled to such proportions that, looking from bank to bank or island to island, it was impossible to distinguish a horse from a cow. Then the Lord of the River[1] was beside himself with joy, believing that all the beauty in the world belonged to him alone. Following the current, he journeyed east until at last he reached the North Sea. Looking east, he could see no end to the water.

The Lord of the River began to wag his head and roll his eyes. Peering far off in the direction of Ruo,[2] he sighed and said, "The common saying has it, 'He has heard the Way a mere hundred times, but he thinks he's better than anyone else.' It applies to me. In the past, I heard men belittling the learning of Confucius and making light of the righteousness of Bo Yi,[3] though I never believed them. Now, however, I have seen your unfathomable vastness. If I hadn't come to your gate,[4] I should have been in danger. I should forever have been laughed at by the masters of the Great Method!"

Ruo of the North Sea said, "You can't discuss the ocean with a well frog—he's limited by the space he lives in. You can't discuss ice with a summer insect—he's bound to a single season. You can't discuss the Way with a cramped scholar—he's shackled by his doctrines. Now you have come out beyond your banks and borders and have seen the great sea—so you realize your own pettiness. From now on, it will be possible to talk to you about the Great Principle.

1. The Lord of the River, the god of the Yellow River, appeared on p. 45, under the name Pingyi.

2. The god of the sea.

3. Bo Yi, who relinquished his kingdom to his brother and later chose to die of starvation rather than serve a ruler he considered unjust, was regarded as a model of righteousness.

4. The Lord of the River has literally come to the gate of the sea. But a second meaning is implied, that is, "If I hadn't become your disciple."

"Of all the waters of the world, none is as great as the sea. Ten thousand streams flow into it—I have never heard of a time when they stopped—and yet it is never full. The water leaks away at Weilü[5]—I have never heard of a time when it didn't—and yet the sea is never empty. Spring or autumn, it never changes. Flood or drought, it takes no notice. It is so much greater than the streams of the Yangzi or the Yellow River that it is impossible to measure the difference. But I have never, for this reason, prided myself on it. I take my place with heaven and earth and receive breath from the yin and yang. I sit here between heaven and earth as a little stone or a little tree sits on a huge mountain. Since I can see my own smallness, what reason would I have to pride myself?

"Compare the area within the four seas with all that is between heaven and earth—is it not like one little anthill in a vast marsh? Compare the Middle Kingdom with the area within the four seas—is it not like one tiny grain in a great storehouse? When we refer to the things of creation, we speak of them as numbering ten thousand—and man is only one of them. We talk of the Nine Provinces where men are most numerous, and yet of the whole area where grain and foods are grown and where boats and carts pass back and forth, man occupies only one fraction.[6] Compared to the ten thousand things, is he not like one little hair on the body of a horse? What the Five Emperors passed along, what the Three Kings fought over, what the benevolent man grieves about, what the responsible man labors over—all is no more than this![7] Bo Yi gained a reputation by giving it up; Confucius passed himself off as learned because he talked about it. But in priding themselves in this way, were they not like you a moment ago priding yourself on your floodwaters?"

"Well then," said the Lord of the River, "if I recognize the hugeness of heaven and earth and the smallness of the tip of a hair, will that do?"

5. Said by some commentators to be a huge fiery stone against which seawater turns to steam.

6. As it stands in the original, this sentence makes little sense to me, and the translation represents no more than a tentative attempt to extract some meaning.

7. The Five Emperors were five legendary rulers of high antiquity, of whom the Yellow Emperor, Yao, and Shun are the most famous. The Three Kings were the founders of the Three Dynasties, the Xia, the Shang, and the Zhou.

"No indeed!" said Ruo of the North Sea. "There is no end to the weighing of things, no stop to time, no constancy to the division of lots, no fixed rule to beginning and end. Therefore great wisdom observes both far and near, and for that reason, it recognizes small without considering it paltry, recognizes large without considering it unwieldy, for it knows that there is no end to the weighing of things. It has a clear understanding of past and present, and for that reason, it spends a long time without finding it tedious, a short time without fretting at its shortness, for it knows that time has no end. It perceives the nature of fullness and emptiness, and for that reason, it does not delight if it acquires something or worry if it loses it, for it knows that there is no constancy to the division of lots. It comprehends the Level Road, and for that reason, it does not rejoice in life or look on death as a calamity, for it knows that no fixed rule can be assigned to beginning and end.

"Calculate what man knows, and it cannot compare with what he does not know. Calculate the time he is alive, and it cannot compare with the time before he was born. Yet man takes something so small and tries to exhaust the dimensions of something so large! Hence he is muddled and confused and can never get anywhere. Looking at it this way, how do we know that the tip of a hair can be singled out as the measure of the smallest thing possible? Or how do we know that heaven and earth can fully encompass the dimensions of the largest thing possible?"

The Lord of the River said, "Men who debate such matters these days all claim that the minutest thing has no form and the largest thing cannot be encompassed. Is this a true statement?"

Ruo of the North Sea said, "If from the standpoint of the minute, we look at what is large, we cannot see to the end. If from the standpoint of what is large, we look at what is minute, we cannot distinguish it clearly. The minute is the smallest of the small, the gigantic is the largest of the large, and it is therefore convenient to distinguish

between them. But this is merely a matter of circumstance. Before we can speak of coarse or fine, however, there must be some form. If a thing has no form, then numbers cannot express its dimensions, and if it cannot be encompassed, then numbers cannot express its size. We can use words to talk about the coarseness of things, and we can use our minds to visualize the fineness of things. But what words cannot describe and the mind cannot succeed in visualizing—this has nothing to do with coarseness or fineness.

"Therefore the Great Man in his actions will not harm others, but he makes no show of benevolence or charity. He will not move for the sake of profit, but he does not despise the porter at the gate. He will not wrangle for goods or wealth, but he makes no show of refusing or relinquishing them. He will not enlist the help of others in his work, but he makes no show of being self-supporting, and he does not despise the greedy and base. His actions differ from those of the mob, but he makes no show of uniqueness or eccentricity. He is content to stay behind with the crowd, but he does not despise those who run forward to flatter and fawn. All the titles and stipends of the age are not enough to stir him to exertion; all its penalties and censures are not enough to make him feel shame. He knows that no line can be drawn between right and wrong, no border can be fixed between great and small. I have heard it said, 'The Man of the Way wins no fame, the highest virtue[8] wins no gain, the Great Man has no self.' To the most perfect degree, he goes along with what has been allotted to him."

8. A play on the homophones *de* (virtue) and *de* (gain, or acquisition).

The Lord of the River said, "Whether they are external or internal to things, I do not understand how we come to have these distinctions of noble and mean or of great and small."

Ruo of the North Sea said, "From the point of view of the Way, things have no nobility or meanness. From the point of view of things themselves, each regards itself as noble and other things as mean. From the point of view of

common opinion, nobility and meanness are not determined by the individual himself.

"From the point of view of differences, if we regard a thing as big because there is a certain bigness to it, then among all the ten thousand things there are none that are not big. If we regard a thing as small because there is a certain smallness to it, then among the ten thousand things there are none that are not small. If we know that heaven and earth are tiny grains and the tip of a hair is a range of mountains, then we have perceived the law of difference.

"From the point of view of function, if we regard a thing as useful because there is a certain usefulness to it, then among all the ten thousand things there are none that are not useful. If we regard a thing as useless because there is a certain uselessness to it, then among the ten thousand things there are none that are not useless. If we know that east and west are mutually opposed but that one cannot do without the other, then we can estimate the degree of function.

"From the point of view of preference, if we regard a thing as right because there is a certain right to it, then among the ten thousand things there are none that are not right. If we regard a thing as wrong because there is a certain wrong to it, then among the ten thousand things there are none that are not wrong. If we know that Yao and Jie each thought himself right and condemned the other as wrong, then we may understand how there are preferences in behavior.

"In ancient times Yao abdicated in favor of Shun, and Shun ruled as emperor; Kuai abdicated in favor of Zhi, and Zhi was destroyed.[9] Tang and Wu fought and became kings; Duke Bo fought and was wiped out.[10] Looking at it this way, we see that struggling or giving way, behaving like a Yao or like a Jie, may at one time be noble and at another time be mean. It is impossible to establish any constant rule.

9. In 316 BCE, King Kuai of Yan was persuaded to imitate the example of Yao by ceding his throne to his minister Zi Zhi. In no time the state was torn by internal strife, and three years later it was invaded and annexed by the state of Qi.

10. Tang and Wu were the founders of the Shang and Zhou dynasties, respectively. Duke Bo was a scion of the royal family of Chu who led an unsuccessful revolt against its ruler and was defeated and forced to commit suicide in 479 BCE.

"A beam or pillar can be used to batter down a city wall, but it is no good for stopping up a little hole—this refers to a difference in function. Thoroughbreds like Qiji and Hualiu could gallop a thousand *li* in one day, but when it came to catching rats, they were no match for the wildcat or the weasel—this refers to a difference in skill. The horned owl catches fleas at night and can spot the tip of a hair, but when daylight comes, no matter how wide it opens its eyes, it cannot see a mound or a hill—this refers to a difference in nature. Now do you say that you are going to make Right your master and do away with Wrong, or make Order your master and do away with Disorder? If you do, then you have not understood the principle of heaven and earth or the nature of the ten thousand things. This is like saying that you are going to make Heaven your master and do away with Earth, or make Yin your master and do away with Yang. Obviously it is impossible. If men persist in talking this way without stop, they must be either fools or deceivers!

"Emperors and kings have different ways of ceding their thrones; the Three Dynasties had different rules of succession. Those who went against the times and flouted custom were called usurpers; those who went with the times and followed custom were called companions of righteousness. Be quiet, be quiet, O Lord of the River! How could you understand anything about the gateway of nobility and meanness or the house of great and small?"

"Well then," said the Lord of the River, "what should I do and what should I not do? How am I to know in the end what to accept and what to reject, what to abide by and what to discard?"

Ruo of the North Sea said, "From the point of view of the Way, what is noble or what is mean? These are merely what are called endless changes. Do not hobble your will, or you will be departing far from the Way! What is few, or what is many? These are merely what are called boundless turnings.[11] Do not strive to unify your actions, or you will

11. I follow Fukunaga's interpretation of these terms.

be at sixes and sevens with the Way! Be stern like the ruler of a state—he grants no private favor. Be benign and impartial like the god of the soil at the sacrifice—he grants no private blessing. Be broad and expansive like the endlessness of the four directions—they have nothing that bounds or hedges them. Embrace the ten thousand things universally—how could there be one you should give special support to? This is called being without bent. When the ten thousand things are unified and equal, then which is short and which is long?

"The Way is without beginning or end, but things have their life and death—you cannot rely on their fulfillment. One moment empty, the next moment full—you cannot depend on their form. The years cannot be held off; time cannot be stopped. Decay, growth, fullness, and emptiness end and then begin again. It is thus that we must describe the plan of the Great Meaning and discuss the principles of the ten thousand things. The life of things is a gallop, a headlong dash—with every movement they alter, with every moment they shift. What should you do and what should you not do? Everything will change of itself, that is certain!"

"If that is so," said the Lord of the River, "then what is there valuable about the Way?"

Ruo of the North Sea said, "He who understands the Way is certain to have command of basic principles. He who has command of basic principles is certain to know how to deal with circumstances. And he who knows how to deal with circumstances will not allow things to do him harm. When a man has perfect virtue, fire cannot burn him, water cannot drown him, cold and heat cannot afflict him, birds and beasts cannot injure him. I do not say that he makes light of these things. I mean that he distinguishes between safety and danger, contents himself with fortune or misfortune, and is cautious in his comings and goings. Therefore nothing can harm him.

"Hence it is said: the Heavenly is on the inside, the human is on the outside. Virtue resides in the Heavenly.

Understand the actions of Heaven and man, base yourself on Heaven, take your stand in virtue,[12] and then, although you hasten or hold back, bend or stretch, you may return to the essential and speak of the ultimate."

"What do you mean by the Heavenly and the human?"

Ruo of the North Sea said, "Horses and oxen have four feet—this is what I mean by the Heavenly. Putting a halter on the horse's head, piercing the ox's nose—this is what I mean by the human. So I say: do not let what is human wipe out what is Heavenly; do not let what is purposeful wipe out what is fated; do not let [the desire for] gain lead you after fame. Be cautious, guard it, and do not lose it—this is what I mean by returning to the True."

12. Actually, the text reads "gain" (*de*); perhaps this is merely a mistake for the *de* meaning "virtue," or perhaps a play on the two words is intended. See p. 129, n. 8.

The Kui[13] envies the millipede, the millipede envies the snake, the snake envies the wind, the wind envies the eye, and the eye envies the mind.

The Kui said to the millipede, "I have this one leg that I hop along on, though I make little progress. Now how in the world do you manage to work all those ten thousand legs of yours?"

The millipede said, "You don't understand. Haven't you ever watched a man spit? He just gives a hawk and out it comes, some drops as big as pearls, some as fine as mist, raining down in a jumble of countless particles. Now all I do is put in motion the heavenly mechanism in me—I'm not aware of how the thing works."

The millipede said to the snake, "I have all these legs that I move along on, but I can't seem to keep up with you who have no legs. How is that?"

The snake said, "It's just the heavenly mechanism moving me along—how can I change the way I am? What would I do with legs if I had them?"

The snake said to the wind, "I move my backbone and ribs and manage to get along, though I still have some kind of body. But now you come whirling up from the North Sea and go whirling off to the South Sea, and you don't seem to have any body. How is that?"

13. A being with only one leg. Sometimes it is described as a spirit or a strange beast, sometimes as a historical personage—the Music Master Kui.

The wind said, "It's true that I whirl up from the North Sea and whirl off to the South Sea. But if you hold up a finger against me you've defeated me, and if you trample on me you've likewise defeated me. On the other hand, I can break down big trees and blow over great houses—this is a talent that I alone have. So I take all the mass of little defeats and make them into a Great Victory. To make a Great Victory—only the sage is capable of that!"

When Confucius was passing through Kuang, the men of Song surrounded him with several encirclements of troops, but he went right on playing his lute and singing without a stop.[14] Zi Lu went in to see him and said, "Master, how can you be so carefree?"

14. The *Analects* twice states (IX, 5; XI, 22): "The Master was put in fear in Kuang." It is said that the people of the state in which Kuang was situated, here identified as Song, mistook Confucius for an enemy of theirs named Yang Huo.

Confucius said, "Come, I will explain to you. For a long time I have tried to stay out of the way of hardship. That I have not managed to escape it is due to fate. For a long time I have tried to achieve success. That I have not been able to do so is due to the times. If it happens to be the age of a Yao or a Shun, then there are no men in the world who face hardship—but this is not because their wisdom saves them. If it happens to be the age of a Jie or a Zhou, then there are no men in the world who achieve success—but this is not because their wisdom fails them. It is time and circumstance that make it so.

"To travel across the water without shrinking from the sea serpent or the dragon—this is the courage of the fisherman. To travel over land without shrinking from the rhinoceros or the tiger—this is the courage of the hunter. To see the bare blades clashing before him and to look on death as though it were life—this is the courage of the man of ardor.[15] To understand that hardship is a matter of fate, that success is a matter of the times, and to face great difficulty without fear—this is the courage of the sage. Be content with it, Zi Lu. My fate has been decided for me."

15. A man who is willing to sacrifice his life to save others or to preserve his honor.

Shortly afterward the leader of the armed men came forward and apologized. "We thought you were Yang Huo,

and that was why we surrounded you. Now that we see you aren't, we beg to take leave and withdraw."

Gongsun Long said to Prince Mou of Wei,[16] "When I was young, I studied the Way of the former kings, and when I grew older, I came to understand the conduct of benevolence and righteousness. I reconciled difference and sameness, distinguished hardness and whiteness, and proved that not so was so, that the unacceptable was acceptable. I confounded the wisdom of the hundred schools and demolished the arguments of a host of speakers. I believed that I had attained the highest degree of accomplishment. But now I have heard the words of Zhuangzi, and I am bewildered by their strangeness. I don't know whether my arguments are not as good as his, or whether I am no match for him in understanding. I find now that I can't even open my beak. May I ask what you advise?"

Prince Mou leaned on his armrest and gave a great sigh, and then he looked up at the sky and laughed, saying, "Haven't you ever heard about the frog in the caved-in well? He said to the great turtle of the Eastern Sea, 'What fun I have! I come out and hop around the railing of the well, or I go back in and take a rest in the wall where a tile has fallen out. When I dive into the water, I let it hold me up under the armpits and support my chin, and when I slip about in the mud, I bury my feet in it and let it come up over my ankles. I look around at the mosquito larvae and the crabs and tadpoles, and I see that none of them can match me. To have complete command of the water of one whole valley and to monopolize all the joys of a caved-in well—this is the best there is! Why don't you come some time and see for yourself?'

"But before the great turtle of the Eastern Sea had even gotten his left foot in the well, his right knee was already wedged fast. He backed out and withdrew a little, and then began to describe the sea. 'A distance of a thousand *li* cannot indicate its greatness; a depth of a thousand

16. The logician Gongsun Long, who spent much time discussing the concepts of sameness and difference or the relationship of attributes such as hardness and whiteness to the thing they qualify, was mentioned on p. 10, n. 7, and p. 12, n. 9. Prince Mou of Wei was the reputed author of a Daoist work in four sections that is no longer extant.

fathoms cannot express how deep it is. In the time of Yu, there were floods for nine years out of ten, and yet its waters never rose. In the time of Tang, there were droughts for seven years out of eight, and yet its shores never receded. Never to alter or shift, whether for an instant or an eternity; never to advance or recede, whether the quantity of water flowing in is great or small—this is the great delight of the Eastern Sea!'

"When the frog in the caved-in well heard this, he was dumbfounded with surprise, crestfallen, and completely at a loss. Now your knowledge cannot even define the borders of right and wrong, and still you try to see through the words of Zhuangzi—this is like trying to make a mosquito carry a mountain on its back or a pill bug race across the Yellow River. You will never be up to the task!

"He whose understanding cannot grasp these minute and subtle words but is fit only to win some temporary gain—is he not like the frog in the caved-in well? Zhuangzi, now—at this very moment he is treading the Yellow Springs[17] or leaping up to the vast blue. To him there is no north or south—in utter freedom he dissolves himself in the four directions and drowns himself in the unfathomable. To him there is no east or west—he begins in the Dark Obscurity and returns to the Great Thoroughfare. Now you come niggling along and try to spy him out or fix some name to him, but this is like using a tube to scan the sky or an awl to measure the depth of the earth—the instrument is too small, is it not? You'd better be on your way! Or perhaps you've never heard about the young boy of Shouling who went to learn the Handan Walk. He hadn't mastered what the Handan people had to teach him when he forgot his old way of walking, so he had to crawl all the way back home. Now if you don't get on your way, you're likely to forget what you knew before and be out of a job!"

17. The underworld.

Gongsun Long's mouth fell open and wouldn't stay closed. His tongue stuck to the roof of his mouth and

wouldn't come down. In the end he broke into a run and fled.

Once, when Zhuangzi was fishing in the Pu River, the king of Chu sent two officials to go and announce to him: "I would like to trouble you with the administration of my realm."

Zhuangzi held on to the fishing pole and, without turning his head, said, "I have heard that there is a sacred tortoise in Chu that has been dead for three thousand years. The king keeps it wrapped in cloth and boxed, and stores it in the ancestral temple. Now would this tortoise rather be dead and have its bones left behind and honored? Or would it rather be alive and dragging its tail in the mud?"

"It would rather be alive and dragging its tail in the mud," said the two officials.

Zhuangzi said, "Go away! I'll drag my tail in the mud!"

When Huizi was prime minister of Liang, Zhuangzi set off to visit him. Someone said to Huizi, "Zhuangzi is coming because he wants to replace you as prime minister!" With this, Huizi was filled with alarm and searched all over the state for three days and three nights trying to find Zhuangzi. Zhuangzi then came to see him and said, "In the south there is a bird called the Yuanchu—I wonder if you've ever heard of it? The Yuanchu rises up from the South Sea and flies to the North Sea, and it will rest on nothing but the Wutong tree, eat nothing but the fruit of the Lian, and drink only from springs of sweet water. Once there was an owl who had gotten hold of a half-rotten old rat, and as the Yuanchu passed by, it raised its head, looked up at the Yuanchu, and said, 'Shoo!' Now that you have this Liang state of yours, are you trying to shoo me?"

Zhuangzi and Huizi were strolling along the dam of the Hao River when Zhuangzi said, "See how the minnows

come out and dart around where they please! That's what fish really enjoy!"

Huizi said, "You're not a fish—how do you know what fish enjoy?"

Zhuangzi said, "You're not I, so how do you know that I don't know what fish enjoy?"

Huizi said, "I'm not you, so I certainly don't know what you know. On the other hand, you're certainly not a fish—so that still proves that you don't know what fish enjoy!"

Zhuangzi said, "Let's go back to your original question, please. You asked me *how* I know what fish enjoy—so you already knew that I knew it when you asked the question. I know it by standing here beside the Hao."

18

SUPREME HAPPINESS

Is there such a thing as supreme happiness in the world, or isn't there? Is there some way to keep yourself alive, or isn't there? What to do, what to rely on, what to avoid, what to stick by, what to follow, what to leave alone, what to find happiness in, what to hate?

This is what the world honors: wealth, eminence, long life, a good name. This is what the world finds happiness in: a life of ease, rich food, fine clothes, beautiful sights, sweet sounds. This is what it looks down on: poverty, meanness, an early death, a bad name. This is what it finds bitter: a life that knows no rest, a mouth that gets no rich food, no fine clothes for the body, no beautiful sights for the eye, no sweet sounds for the ear.

People who can't get these things fret a great deal and are afraid—this is a stupid way to treat the body. People who are rich wear themselves out rushing around on business, piling up more wealth than they could ever use—this is a superficial way to treat the body. People who are eminent spend night and day scheming and wondering whether they are doing right—this is a shoddy way to treat the body. Man lives his life in company with worry, and if he lives a long while till he's dull and doddering, then he has spent that much time worrying instead of dying, a bitter lot indeed! This is a callous way to treat the body.

Men of ardor[1] are regarded by the world as good, but their goodness doesn't succeed in keeping them alive. So I don't know whether or not their goodness is really good. Perhaps I think it's good—but not good enough to save their lives. Perhaps I think it's no good—but still good

1. See p. 134 , n. 15.

enough to save the lives of others. So I say, if your loyal advice isn't heeded, give way and do not wrangle. Zixu wrangled and lost his body.[2] But if he hadn't wrangled, he wouldn't have made a name. Is there really such a thing as goodness, or isn't there?

2. Wu Zixu, minister to the king of Wu, repeatedly warned the king of the danger of attack from the state of Yue. He finally aroused the king's ire and suspicion and was forced to commit suicide in 484 BCE.

What ordinary people do and what they find happiness in—I don't know whether or not such happiness is, in the end, really happiness. I look at what ordinary people find happiness in, what they all make a mad dash for, racing around as though they couldn't stop—they all say they're happy with it. I'm not happy with it, and I'm not unhappy with it. In the end, is there really happiness, or isn't there?

I take inaction to be true happiness, but ordinary people think it is a bitter thing. I say: the highest happiness has no happiness, the highest praise has no praise. The world can't decide what is right and what is wrong. And yet inaction can decide this. The highest happiness, keeping alive—only inaction gets you close to this!

Let me try putting it this way. The inaction of Heaven is its purity, the inaction of earth is its peace. So the two inactions combine, and all things are transformed and brought to birth. Wonderfully, mysteriously, there is no place they come out of. Mysteriously, wonderfully, they have no sign. Each thing minds its business, and all grow up out of inaction. So I say, Heaven and earth do nothing, and there is nothing that is not done. Among men, who can get hold of this inaction?

Zhuangzi's wife died. When Huizi went to convey his condolences, he found Zhuangzi sitting with his legs sprawled out, pounding on a tub and singing. "You lived with her, she brought up your children and grew old," said Huizi. "It should be enough simply not to weep at her death. But pounding on a tub and singing—this is going too far, isn't it?"

Zhuangzi said, "You're wrong. When she first died, do you think I didn't grieve like anyone else? But I looked back to her beginning and the time before she was born.

Not only the time before she was born, but the time before she had a body. Not only the time before she had a body, but the time before she had a spirit. In the midst of the jumble of wonder and mystery, a change took place and she had a spirit. Another change and she had a body. Another change and she was born. Now there's been another change and she's dead. It's just like the progression of the four seasons: spring, summer, fall, winter.

"Now she's going to lie down peacefully in a vast room. If I were to follow after her bawling and sobbing, it would show that I don't understand anything about fate. So I stopped."

Uncle Lack-Limb and Uncle Lame-Gait were seeing the sights at Dark Lord Hill and the wastes of Kunlun, the place where the Yellow Emperor rested.[3] Suddenly a willow sprouted out of Uncle Lame-Gait's left elbow.[4] He looked very startled and seemed to be annoyed.

"Do you resent it?" said Uncle Lack-Limb.

"No—what is there to resent?" said Uncle Lame-Gait. "To live is to borrow. And if we borrow to live, then life must be a pile of trash. Life and death are day and night. You and I came to watch the process of change, and now change has caught up with me. Why would I have anything to resent?"

3. These all are places or persons associated in Chinese legend with immortality. The Yellow Emperor, as we have seen on pp. 45–46, did not die but ascended to Heaven.

4. According to the more prosaic interpretation of Li Ciming, the character for "willow" is a loan for the word "tumor."

When Zhuangzi went to Chu, he saw an old skull, all dry and parched. He poked it with his carriage whip and then asked, "Sir, were you greedy for life and forgetful of reason and so came to this? Was your state overthrown, and did you bow beneath the ax and so came to this? Did you do some evil deed, and were you ashamed to bring disgrace on your parents and family and so came to this? Was it through the pangs of cold and hunger that you came to this? Or did your springs and autumns pile up until they brought you to this?"

When he had finished speaking, he dragged the skull over and, using it for a pillow, lay down to sleep.

In the middle of the night, the skull came to him in a dream and said, "You chatter like a rhetorician, and all your words betray the entanglements of a living man. The dead know nothing of these! Would you like to hear a lecture on the dead?"

"Indeed," said Zhuangzi.

The skull said, "Among the dead, there are no rulers above, no subjects below, and no chores of the four seasons. With nothing to do, our springs and autumns are as endless as heaven and earth. A king facing south on his throne could have no more happiness than this!"

Zhuangzi couldn't believe this and said, "If I got the Arbiter of Fate to give you a body again, make you some bones and flesh, return you to your parents and family and your old home and friends, you would want that, wouldn't you?"

The skull frowned severely, wrinkling up its brow. "Why would I throw away more happiness than that of a king on a throne and take on the troubles of a human being again?" it said.

When Yan Yuan went east to Qi, Confucius had a very worried look on his face.[5] Zigong got off his mat and asked, "May I be so bold as to inquire why the Master has such a worried expression now that Hui has gone east to Qi?"

"Excellent—this question of yours," said Confucius. "Guanzi[6] had a saying that I much approve of: 'Small bags won't hold big things; short well ropes won't dip up deep water.' In the same way I believe that fate has certain forms, and the body, certain appropriate uses. You can't add to or take away from these. I'm afraid that when Hui gets to Qi, he will start telling the marquis of Qi about the ways of Yao, Shun, and the Yellow Emperor and then will go on to speak about Suiren and Shennong.[7] The marquis will then look for similar greatness within himself and fail to find it. Failing to find it, he will become distraught, and when a man becomes distraught, he kills.

5. Yan Yuan or Yan Hui, who appeared earlier, was Confucius's favorite disciple.

6. Guan Zhong, a seventh-century statesman of Qi whom Confucius, judging from the *Analects*, admired.

7. Suiren and Shennong are mythical culture heroes, the discoverers of fire and agriculture, respectively.

"Haven't you heard this story? Once a sea bird alighted in the suburbs of the Lu capital. The marquis of Lu escorted it to the ancestral temple, where he entertained it, performing the Nine Shao music for it to listen to and presenting it with the meat of the Tailao sacrifice to feast on. But the bird only looked dazed and forlorn, refusing to eat a single slice of meat or drink a cup of wine, and in three days it was dead. This is to try to nourish a bird with what would nourish you instead of what would nourish a bird. If you want to nourish a bird with what nourishes a bird, then you should let it roost in the deep forest, play among the banks and islands, float on the rivers and lakes, eat mudfish and minnows, follow the rest of the flock in flight and rest, and live in any way it chooses. A bird hates to hear even the sound of human voices, much less all that hubbub and to-do. Try performing the Xianchi and Nine Shao music in the wilds around Lake Dongting—when the birds hear it, they will fly off; when the animals hear it, they will run away; when the fish hear it, they will dive to the bottom. Only the people who hear it will gather around to listen. Fish live in water and thrive, but if men tried to live in water, they would die. Creatures differ because they have different likes and dislikes. Therefore the former sages never required the same ability from all creatures or made them all do the same thing. Names should stop when they have expressed reality, concepts of right should be founded on what is suitable. This is what it means to have command of reason and good fortune to support you."

Liezi was on a trip and was eating by the roadside when he saw a hundred-year-old skull. Pulling away the weeds and pointing his finger, he said, "Only you and I know that you have never died and you have never lived. Are you really unhappy?[8] Am I really enjoying myself?"

8. Following Yu Yue's interpretation.

The seeds of things have mysterious workings. In the water, they become Break Vine; on the edges of the water,

they become Frog's Robe. If they sprout on the slopes, they become Hill Slippers. If Hill Slippers get rich soil, they turn into Crow's Feet. The roots of Crow's Feet turn into maggots, and their leaves turn into butterflies. Before long, the butterflies are transformed and turn into insects that live under the stove; they look like snakes, and their name is Qutuo. After a thousand days, the Qutuo insects become birds called Dried Leftover Bones. The saliva of the Dried Leftover Bones becomes Simi bugs, and the Simi bugs become Vinegar Eaters. Yiluo bugs are born from the Vinegar Eaters, and Huangshuang bugs, from Jiuyou bugs. Jiuyou bugs are born from Mourui bugs, and Mourui bugs are born from Rot Grubs, and Rot Grubs are born from Sheep's Groom. Sheep's Groom couples with bamboo that has not sprouted for a long while and produces Green Peace plants. Green Peace plants produce leopards, and leopards produce horses, and horses produce men. Men in time return again to the mysterious workings. So all creatures come out of the mysterious workings and go back into them again.[9]

9. The text of this paragraph, a romp through ancient Chinese nature lore, is doubtful at many points.

19

MASTERING LIFE

He who has mastered the true nature of life does not labor over what life cannot do. He who has mastered the true nature of fate does not labor over what knowledge cannot change. He who wants to nourish his body must, first of all, turn to things. And yet it is possible to have more than enough things and for the body still to go unnourished. He who has life must, first of all, see to it that it does not leave the body. And yet it is possible for life never to leave the body and still fail to be preserved. The coming of life cannot be fended off; its departure cannot be stopped. How pitiful the men of the world, who think that simply nourishing the body is enough to preserve life! Then why is what the world does worth doing? It may not be worth doing, and yet it cannot be left undone—this is unavoidable.

He who wants to avoid doing anything for his body had best abandon the world. By abandoning the world, he can be without entanglements. Being without entanglements, he can be upright and calm. Being upright and calm, he can be born again with others. Being born again, he can come close [to the Way].

But why is abandoning the affairs of the world worthwhile, and why is forgetting life worthwhile? If you abandon the affairs of the world, your body will be without toil. If you forget life, your vitality will be unimpaired. With your body complete and your vitality made whole again, you may become one with Heaven. Heaven and earth are the father and mother of the ten thousand things. They join to become a body; they part to become a beginning. When the body and vitality are without flaw, this is called

being able to shift. Vitality added to vitality, you return to become the Helper of Heaven.

Master Liezi said to the Barrier Keeper Yin, "The Perfect Man can walk under water without choking, can tread on fire without being burned, and can travel above the ten thousand things without being frightened. May I ask how he manages this?"

The Barrier Keeper Yin replied, "This is because he guards the pure breath—it has nothing to do with wisdom, skill, determination, or courage. Sit down and I will tell you about it. All that have faces, forms, voices, colors—these are all mere things. How could one thing and another thing be far removed from each other? And how could any of them be worth considering as a predecessor? They are forms, colors—nothing more. But things have their creation in what has no form, and their conclusion in what has no change. If a man can get hold of *this* and exhaust it fully, then how can things stand in his way? He may rest within the bounds that know no excess, hide within the borders that know no source, wander where the ten thousand things have their end and beginning, unify his nature, nourish his breath, unite his virtue, and thereby communicate with that which creates all things. A man like this guards what belongs to Heaven and keeps it whole. His spirit has no flaw, so how can things enter in and get at him?

"When a drunken man falls from a carriage, though the carriage may be going very fast, he won't be killed. He has bones and joints the same as other men, and yet he is not injured as they would be, because his spirit is whole. He didn't know he was riding, and he doesn't know he has fallen out. Life and death, alarm and terror, do not enter his breast, and so he can bang against things without fear of injury. If he can keep himself whole like this by means of wine, how much more can he keep himself whole by means of Heaven! The sage hides himself in Heaven—hence there is nothing that can do him harm.

"A man seeking revenge does not go so far as to smash the sword of his enemy; a man, no matter how hot tempered, does not rail at the tile that happens to fall on him. To know that all things in the world are equal and the same—this is the only way to eliminate the chaos of attack and battle and the harshness of punishment and execution!

"Do not try to develop what is natural to man; develop what is natural to Heaven. He who develops Heaven benefits life; he who develops man injures life. Do not reject what is of Heaven, do not neglect what is of man, and the people will be close to the attainment of Truth."[1]

1. I follow the text as it stands, though it would perhaps be preferable to adopt Ma Xulun's suggestion, dropping the *mín* and translating "and you will be close to the attainment of Truth."

When Confucius was on his way to Chu, he passed through a forest where he saw a hunchback catching cicadas with a sticky pole as easily as though he were grabbing them with his hand.

Confucius said, "What skill you have! Is there a special way to this?"

"I have a way," said the hunchback. "For the first five or six months, I practice balancing two balls on top of each other on the end of the pole, and if they don't fall off, I know I will lose very few cicadas. Then I balance three balls, and if they don't fall off, I know I'll lose only one cicada in ten. Then I balance five balls, and if they don't fall off, I know it will be as easy as grabbing them with my hand. I hold my body like a stiff tree trunk and use my arm like an old dry limb. No matter how huge heaven and earth or how numerous the ten thousand things, I'm aware of nothing but cicada wings. Not wavering, not tipping, not letting any of the other ten thousand things take the place of those cicada wings—how can I help but succeed?"

Confucius turned to his disciples and said, "He keeps his will undivided and concentrates his spirit—that would serve to describe our hunchback gentleman here, would it not?"

* * *

Yan Yuan said to Confucius, "I once crossed the gulf at Goblet Deeps, and the ferryman handled the boat with supernatural skill. I asked him, 'Can a person learn how to handle a boat?' and he replied, 'Certainly. A good swimmer will get the knack of it in no time. And if a man can swim under water, he may never have seen a boat before ,and still he'll know how to handle it!' I asked him what he meant by that, but he wouldn't tell me. May I venture to ask you what it means?"

Confucius said, "A good swimmer will get the knack of it in no time—that means he's forgotten the water. If a man can swim under water, he may never have seen a boat before, and still he'll know how to handle it—that's because he sees the water as so much dry land and regards the capsizing of a boat as he would the overturning of a cart. The ten thousand things[2] all may be capsizing and turning over at the same time right in front of him, and it can't get at him and affect what's inside—so where could he go and not be at ease?

2. Following the interpretation of Yu Yue, who supplies a *wu* after the *wan*.

"When you're betting for tiles in an archery contest, you shoot with skill. When you're betting for fancy belt buckles, you worry about your aim. And when you're betting for real gold, you're a nervous wreck. Your skill is the same in all three cases—but because one prize means more to you than another, you let outside considerations weigh on your mind. He who looks too hard at the outside gets clumsy on the inside."

Tian Kaizhi went to see Duke Wei of Zhou. Duke Wei said, "I hear that Zhu Xian is studying how to live. You are a friend of his—what have you heard from him on the subject?"

Tian Kaizhi said, "I merely wield a broom and tend his gate and garden—how should I have heard anything from the Master?"

Duke Wei said, "Don't be modest, Master Tian. I am anxious to hear about it."

Tian Kaizhi said, "I have heard the Master say, 'He who is good at nourishing life is like a herder of sheep—he watches for stragglers and whips them up.'"

"What does that mean?" asked Duke Wei.

Tian Kaizhi said, "In Lu there was Shan Bao—he lived among the cliffs, drank only water, and didn't go after gain like other people. He went along like that for seventy years and still had the complexion of a little child. Unfortunately, he met a hungry tiger who killed him and ate him up. Then there was Zhang Yi—there wasn't one of the great families and fancy mansions that he didn't rush off to visit. He went along like that for forty years, and then he developed an internal fever, fell ill, and died. Shan Bao looked after what was on the inside and the tiger ate up his outside. Zhang Yi looked after what was on the outside and the sickness attacked him from the inside. Both these men failed to give a lash to the stragglers.[3]

"Confucius has said, 'Don't go in and hide; don't come out and shine; stand stock-still in the middle.' He who can follow these three rules is sure to be called the finest. When people are worried about the safety of the roads, if they hear that one traveler in a party of ten has been murdered, then fathers and sons, elder and younger brothers, will warn one another to be careful and will not venture out until they have a large escort of armed men. That's wise of them, isn't it? But when it comes to what people really ought to be worried about—the time when they are lying in bed or sitting around eating and drinking—then they don't have sense enough to take warning. That's a mistake!"

3. That is, stick to a happy medium.

The Invocator of the Ancestors, dressed in his black, square-cut robes, peered into the pigpen and said, "Why should you object to dying? I'm going to fatten you for three months, practice austerities for ten days, fast for three days, spread the white rushes, and lay your shoulders and rump on the carved sacrificial stand—you'll go along with that, won't you? True, if I were planning things

from the point of view of a pig, I'd say it would be better to eat chaff and bran and stay right there in the pen. But if I were planning for myself, I'd say that if I could be honored as a high official while I lived and get to ride in a fine hearse and lie among the feathers and trappings when I died, I'd go along with that. Speaking for the pig, I'd give such a life a flat refusal, but speaking for myself, I'd certainly accept. I wonder why I look at things differently from a pig?"

Duke Huan was hunting in a marsh, with Guan Zhong as his carriage driver, when he saw a ghost. The duke grasped Guan Zhong's hand and said, "Father Zhong, what do you see?"[4]

"I don't see anything," replied Guan Zhong.

When the duke returned home, he fell into a stupor, grew ill, and for several days did not go out.

A gentleman of Qi named Huangzi Gaoao said, "Your Grace, you are doing this injury to yourself! How could a ghost have the power to injure you! If the vital breath that is stored up in a man becomes dispersed and does not return, then he suffers a deficiency. If it ascends and fails to descend again, it causes him to be chronically irritable. If it descends and does not ascend again, it causes him to be chronically forgetful. And if it neither ascends nor descends but gathers in the middle of the body in the region of the heart, then he becomes ill."

Duke Huan said, "But do ghosts really exist?"

"Indeed they do. There is the Li on the hearth[5] and the Ji in the stove. The heap of clutter and trash just inside the gate is where the Leiting lives. In the northeast corner the Beia and Guilong leap about, and the northwest corner is where the Yiyang lives. In the water is the Gangxiang; on the hills, the Xin; in the mountains, the Kui;[6] in the meadows, the Panghuang; and in the marshes, the Weituo."

The duke said, "May I ask what a Weituo looks like?"

4. Duke Huan of Qi (r. 685–643 BCE) later became the first of the *ba*—dictators or hegemons who imposed their will on the other feudal lords. Guan Zhong (d. 645 BCE) was his chief minister. As a special mark of esteem, the duke customarily addressed him as "Father Zhong."

5. Following Yu Yue's emendation and interpretation.

6. The one-legged creature who appeared on p. 133.

Huangzi said, "The Weituo is as big as a wheel hub, as tall as a carriage shaft, has a purple robe and a vermilion hat, and, as creatures go, is very ugly. When it hears the sound of thunder or a carriage, it grabs its head and stands up. Anyone who sees it will soon become a dictator."

Duke Huan's face lit up, and he said with a laugh, "*That* must have been what I saw!" Then he straightened his robe and hat and sat up on the mat with Huangzi, and before the day was over, though he didn't notice it, his illness went away.

Ji Xingzi was training gamecocks for the king. After ten days, the king asked if they were ready.

"Not yet. They're too haughty and rely on their nerve."

Another ten days and the king asked again.

"Not yet. They still respond to noises and movements."

Another ten days and the king asked again.

"Not yet. They still look around fiercely and are full of spirit."

Another ten days and the king asked again.

"They're close enough. Another cock can crow, and they show no sign of change. Look at them from a distance, and you'd think they were made of wood. Their virtue is complete. Other cocks won't dare face up to them but will turn and run."

Confucius was seeing the sights at Lüliang, where the water falls from a height of thirty fathoms and races and boils along for forty *li*, so swift that no fish or other water creature can swim in it. He saw a man dive into the water, and supposing that the man was in some kind of trouble and intended to end his life, he ordered his disciples to line up on the bank and pull the man out. But after the man had gone a couple of hundred paces, he came out of the water and began strolling along the base of the embankment, his hair streaming down, singing a song. Confucius ran after him and said, "At first I thought you were

a ghost, but now I see you're a man. May I ask if you have some special way of staying afloat in the water?"

"I have no way. I began with what I was used to, grew up with my nature, and let things come to completion with fate. I go under with the swirls and come out with the eddies, following along the way the water goes and never thinking about myself. That's how I can stay afloat."

Confucius said, "What do you mean by saying that you began with what you were used to, grew up with your nature, and let things come to completion with fate?"

"I was born on the dry land and felt safe on the dry land—that was what I was used to. I grew up with the water and felt safe in the water—that was my nature. I don't know why I do what I do—that's fate."

Woodworker Qing[7] carved a piece of wood and made a bell stand, and when it was finished, everyone who saw it marveled, for it seemed to be the work of gods or spirits. When the marquis of Lu saw it, he asked, "What art is it you have?"

7. A carpenter of Lu, mentioned in the *Zuozhuan* under Duke Xiang, fourth year (569 BCE).

Qing replied, "I am only a craftsman—how would I have any art? There is one thing, however. When I am going to make a bell stand, I never let it wear out my energy. I always fast in order to still my mind. When I have fasted for three days, I no longer have any thought of congratulations or rewards, of titles or stipends. When I have fasted for five days, I no longer have any thought of praise or blame, of skill or clumsiness. And when I have fasted for seven days, I am so still that I forget I have four limbs and a form and body. By that time, the ruler and his court no longer exist for me. My skill is concentrated, and all outside distractions fade away. After that, I go into the mountain forest and examine the Heavenly nature of the trees. If I find one of superlative form and I can see a bell stand there, I put my hand to the job of carving; if not, I let it go. This way I am simply matching up 'Heaven'

with 'Heaven.'[8] That's probably the reason that people wonder if the results were not made by spirits."

8. That is, matching his own innate nature with that of the tree.

Dongye Ji was displaying his carriage driving before Duke Zhuang. He drove back and forth as straight as a measuring line and wheeled to left and right as neat as a compass-drawn curve. Duke Zhuang concluded that even Zao Fu[9] could do no better and ordered him to make a hundred circuits and then return to the palace. Yan He happened along at the moment and went in to see the duke. "Dongye Ji's horses are going to break down," he said. The duke was silent and gave no answer. In a little while Dongye Ji returned, his horses having in fact broken down. The duke asked Yan He, "How did you know that was going to happen?" Yan He said, "The strength of the horses was all gone, and still he was asking them to go on—that's why I said they would break down."

9. Zao Fu was a famous master of the art of carriage driving. I emend *wen* to *fu*.

Artisan Chui could draw as true as a compass or a T square because his fingers changed along with things and he didn't let his mind get in the way. Therefore his Spirit Tower[10] remained unified and unobstructed.

10. A Daoist term for the mind.

You forget your feet when the shoes are comfortable. You forget your waist when the belt is comfortable. Understanding forgets right and wrong when the mind is comfortable. There is no change in what is inside, no following what is outside, when the adjustment to events is comfortable. You begin with what is comfortable and never experience what is uncomfortable when you know the comfort of forgetting what is comfortable.

A certain Sun Xiu appeared at the gate of Master Bian Qingzi to pay him a call. "When I was living in the village," he said, "no one ever said I lacked good conduct. When I faced difficulty, no one ever said I lacked courage. Yet when I worked the fields, it never seemed to be a good year for crops, and when I served the ruler, it never

seemed to be a good time for advancement. So I am an outcast from the villages, an exile from the towns. What crime have I committed against Heaven? Why should I meet this fate?"

Master Bian said, "Have you never heard how the Perfect Man conducts himself? He forgets his liver and gall and thinks no more about his eyes and ears. Vague and aimless, he wanders beyond the dirt and dust; free and easy, tending to nothing is his job. This is what is called 'doing but not looking for any thanks, bringing up but not bossing.'[11] Now you show off your wisdom in order to astound the ignorant, work at your good conduct in order to distinguish yourself from the disreputable, going around bright and shining as though you were carrying the sun and moon in your hand! You've managed to keep your body in one piece; you have all the ordinary nine openings; you haven't been struck down midway by blindness or deafness, lameness or deformity—compared with a lot of people, you're a lucky man. How do you have any time to go around complaining against Heaven? Be on your way!"

11. The same saying is found in the *Daodejing*, secs. X and LI.

After Master Sun had left, Master Bian went back into the house, sat down for a while, and then looked up to heaven and sighed. One of his disciples asked, "Why does my teacher sigh?"

Master Bian said, "Just now Sun Xiu came to see me, and I described to him the virtue of the Perfect Man. I'm afraid he was very startled and may end up in a complete muddle."

"Surely not," said the disciple. "Was what Master Sun said right and what my teacher said wrong? If so, then wrong can certainly never make a muddle out of right. Or was what Master Sun said wrong and what my teacher said right? If so, then he must already have been in a muddle when he came here, so what's the harm?"

"You don't understand," said Master Bian. "Once long ago a bird alighted in the suburbs of the Lu capital. The ruler of Lu was delighted with it, had a Tailao sacrifice prepared for it to feast on, and the Nine Shao music per-

formed for its enjoyment. But the bird immediately began to look unhappy and dazed and did not dare to eat or drink. This is what is called trying to nourish a bird with what would nourish you. If you want to nourish a bird with what will nourish a bird, you had best let it roost in the deep forest, float on the rivers and lakes, and live on snakes—then it can feel at ease.[12]

"Now Sun Xiu is a man of ignorance and little learning. For me to describe to him the virtue of the Perfect Man is like taking a mouse for a ride in a carriage or trying to delight a quail with the music of bells and drums. How could he help but be startled?"

12. The text of the last part of the sentence appears to be corrupt, and I make little sense of it. The same anecdote, in somewhat more detailed form, appeared on p. 143.

20

THE MOUNTAIN TREE

Zhuangzi was walking in the mountains when he saw a huge tree, its branches and leaves thick and lush. A woodcutter paused by its side but made no move to cut it down. When Zhuangzi asked the reason, he replied, "There's nothing it could be used for!" Zhuangzi said, "Because of its worthlessness, this tree is able to live out the years Heaven gave it."

Down from the mountain, the Master stopped for a night at the house of an old friend. The friend, delighted, ordered his son to kill a goose and prepare it. "One of the geese can cackle and the other can't," said the son. "May I ask, please, which I should kill?"

"Kill the one that can't cackle," said the host.

The next day Zhuangzi's disciples questioned him. "Yesterday there was a tree on the mountain that gets to live out the years Heaven gave it because of its worthlessness. Now there's our host's goose that gets killed because of its worthlessness. What position would you take in such a case, Master?"

Zhuangzi laughed and said, "I'd probably take a position halfway between worth and worthlessness. But halfway between worth and worthlessness, though it might seem to be a good place, really isn't—you'll never get away from trouble there. It would be very different, though, if you were to climb up on the Way and its Virtue and go drifting and wandering, neither praised nor damned, now a dragon, now a snake, shifting with the times, never willing to hold to one course only. Now up, now down, taking harmony for your measure, drifting and wandering with

the ancestor of the ten thousand things, treating things as things but not letting them treat you as a thing—then how could you get into any trouble? This is the rule, the method of Shennong and the Yellow Emperor.

"But now, what with the forms of the ten thousand things and the codes of ethics handed down from man to man, matters don't proceed in this fashion. Things join only to part, reach completion only to crumble. If sharp edged, they are blunted; if high stationed, they are overthrown;[1] if ambitious, they are foiled. Wise, they are schemed against; stupid, they are swindled. What is there, then, that can be counted on? Only one thing, alas!—remember this, my students—only the realm of the Way and its Virtue!"

1. Following the emendation suggested by Yu Yue. The word "things" in this passage includes mankind.

Yiliao from south of the Market called on the marquis of Lu.[2] The marquis had a very worried look on his face. "Why such a worried look?" asked the Master from south of the Market.

2. Xiong Yiliao, a man of Chu, is mentioned in *Zuozhuan,* Duke Ai, sixteenth year (479 BCE); the "marquis of Lu" is presumably the Duke Ai of Lu.

The marquis of Lu said, "I study the way of the former kings; I do my best to carry on the achievements of the former rulers; I respect the spirits, honor worthy men, draw close to them, follow their advice, and never for an instant leave their side. And yet I can't seem to avoid disaster. That's why I'm so worried."

The Master from south of the Market said, "Your technique for avoiding disaster is a very superficial one. The sleek-furred fox and the elegantly spotted leopard dwell in the mountain forest and crouch in the cliffside caves—such is their quietude. They go abroad by night but lurk at home by day—such is their caution. Though hunger, thirst, and hardship press them, they steal forth only one by one to seek food by the rivers and lakes—such is their forethought.[3] And yet they can't seem to escape the disaster of nets and traps. Where is the blame? Their fur is their undoing. And this state of Lu—is it not your coat of fur? So I would ask you to strip away your form, rid your-

3. That is, they never venture forth in groups. I follow texts that read *qie* in place of *dan* and adopt Ma Xulun's interpretation of *xusu.*

self of this fur, wash clean your mind, be done with desire, and wander in the peopleless fields.

"In Nanyue there is a city, and its name is The Land of Virtue Established. Its people are foolish and naive, few in thoughts of self, scant in desires. They know how to make but not how to lay away; they give but look for nothing in return. They do not know what accords with right; they do not know what conforms to ritual. Uncouth, uncaring, they move recklessly—and in this way they tread the path of the Great Method. Their birth brings rejoicing, their death a fine funeral. So I would ask you to discard your state, break away from its customs, and, with the Way as your helper, journey there."

The ruler of Lu said, "The road there is long and perilous. Moreover, there are rivers and mountains between, and I have no boat or carriage. What can I do?"

The Master from south of the Market said, "Be without imperiousness, be without conventionality—let this be your carriage."[4]

4. Meaning very doubtful; Ma Xulun opines that something has dropped out of the text.

But the ruler of Lu said, "The road is dark and long, and there are no people there. Who will be my companion on the way? When I have no rations, when I have nothing to eat, how will I be able to reach my destination?"

The Master from south of the Market said, "Make few your needs, lessen your desires, and then you may get along even without rations. You will ford the rivers and drift out on the sea. Gaze all you may—you cannot see its farther shore; journey on and on—you will never find where it ends. Those who came to see you off will all turn back from the shore and go home while you move ever farther into the distance.

"He who possesses men will know hardship; he who is possessed by men will know care. Therefore Yao neither possessed men nor allowed himself to be possessed by them. So I ask you to rid yourself of hardship, to cast off your cares, and to wander alone with the Way to the Land of Great Silence.

"If a man, having lashed two hulls together, is crossing a river, and an empty boat happens along and bumps into him, no matter how hot tempered the man may be, he will not get angry. But if there should be someone in the other boat, then he will shout out to haul this way or veer that. If his first shout is not heeded, he will shout again, and if that is not heard, he will shout a third time, this time with a torrent of curses following. In the first instance, he wasn't angry; now in the second, he is. Earlier he faced emptiness, now he faces occupancy. If a man could succeed in making himself empty and, in that way, wander through the world, then who could do him harm?"

Beigong She was collecting taxes for Duke Ling of Wei in order to make a set of bells. He built a platform outside the gate of the outer wall, and in the space of three months the bells were completed, both the upper and lower tiers.[5] Prince Qingji, observing this, asked, "What art is it you wield?"[6]

Beigong She replied, "In the midst of Unity, how should I venture to 'wield' anything? I have heard it said, When carving and polishing are done, then return to plainness. Dull, I am without understanding; placid, I dawdle and drift. Mysteriously, wonderfully, I bid farewell to what goes, I greet what comes; for what comes cannot be denied, and what goes cannot be detained. I follow the rude and violent, trail after the meek and bending, letting each come to its own end. So I can collect taxes from morning to night and meet not the slightest rebuff. How much more would this be true, then, of a man who had hold of the Great Road?"

5. There were sixteen bells in a set, arranged in two tiers. Most commentators take the "platform" to be an altar on which a sacrifice was made in preparation for the casting of the bells, though Ma Xulun believes it was connected with the actual casting process.

6. Prince Qingji, son of King Liao of Wu, had fled to the state of Wei to escape from his father's assassin and successor, King Helü, who took the throne of Wu in 514 BCE.

Confucius was besieged between Chen and Cai, and for seven days he ate no cooked food. Taigong Ren went to offer his sympathy. "It looks as if you're going to die," he said.

"It does indeed."

"Do you hate the thought of dying?"

"I certainly do!"

Ren said, "Then let me try telling you about a way to keep from dying. In the eastern sea, there is a bird and its name is Listless. It flutters and flounces but seems to be quite helpless. It must be boosted and pulled before it can get into the air, pushed and shoved before it can get back to its nest. It never dares to be the first to advance, never dares to be the last to retreat. At feeding time, it never ventures to take the first bite but picks only at the leftovers. So when it flies in file, it never gets pushed aside, nor do other creatures such as men ever do it any harm. In this way, it escapes disaster.

"The straight-trunked tree is the first to be felled; the well of sweet water is the first to run dry. And you, now—you show off your wisdom in order to astound the ignorant, work at your good conduct in order to distinguish yourself from the disreputable, going around bright and shining as though you were carrying the sun and moon in your hand! That's why you can't escape!

"I have heard the Man of Great Completion say: 'Boasts are a sign of no success; success once won faces overthrow; fame once won faces ruin.' Who can rid himself of success and fame, return and join the common run of men? His Way flows abroad, but he does not rest in brightness; his Virtue[7] moves, but he does not dwell in fame. Vacant, addled, he seems close to madness. Wiping out his footprints, sloughing off his power, he does not work for success or fame. So he has no cause to blame other men, nor other men to blame him. The Perfect Man wants no repute. Why then do you delight in it so?"

7. The text has the *de*, which means "gain," which may be either an error for the *de* meaning "virtue" or a deliberate play on the two words. See p. 129, n. 8.

"Excellent!" exclaimed Confucius. Then he said goodbye to his friends and associates, dismissed his disciples, and retired to the great swamp, wearing furs and coarse cloth and living on acorns and chestnuts. He could walk among the animals without alarming their herds, walk among the birds without alarming their flocks. If even the birds and beasts did not resent him, how much less would men!

* * *

Confucius said to Master Sanghu, "Twice I have been driven out of Lu. The people chopped down a tree on me in Song, wiped away my footprints in Wei, made trouble for me in Shang and Zhou, and besieged me between Chen and Cai—so many calamities have I encountered. My kinfolk and associates drift further and further away; my friends and followers one after the other take leave. Why is this?"

Master Sanghu said, "Have you never heard about Lin Hui, the man who fled from Jia? He threw away his jade disk worth a thousand measures of gold, strapped his little baby on his back, and hurried off. Someone said to him, 'Did you think of it in terms of money? Surely a little baby isn't worth much money! Or were you thinking of the bother? But a little baby is a great deal of bother! Why, then, throw away a jade disk worth a thousand measures of gold and hurry off with a little baby on your back?'

"Lin Hui replied, 'The jade disk and I were joined by profit, but the child and I were brought together by Heaven. When pressed by misfortune and danger, things joined by profit will cast one another aside; but when pressed by misfortune and danger, things brought together by Heaven will cling to one another. To cling to one another and to cast one another aside are far apart indeed!'

"The friendship of a gentleman, they say, is insipid as water; that of a petty man, sweet as rich wine. But the insipidity of the gentleman leads to affection, while the sweetness of the petty man leads to revulsion. Those with no particular reason for joining together will, for no particular reason, part."

Confucius said, "I will do my best to honor your instructions!" Then with leisurely steps and a free and easy manner, he returned home. He abandoned his studies, gave away his books, and his disciples no longer came to bow in obeisance before him, but their affection for him was greater than it had ever been before.

Another day Master Sanghu likewise said, "When Shun was about to die, he carefully[8] instructed Yu in these words: 'Mark what I say! In the case of the body, it is best to let it go along with things. In the case of the emotions, it is best to let them follow where they will. By going along with things, you avoid becoming separated from them. By letting the emotions follow as they will, you avoid fatigue. And when there is no separation or fatigue, then you need not seek any outward adornment or depend on the body. And when you no longer seek outward adornment or depend on the body, you have in fact ceased to depend on any material thing.'"

8. Reading *shen* (*zhen* with the heart radical).

Zhuangzi put on his robe of coarse cloth with the patches on it, tied his shoes with hemp to keep them from falling apart, and went to call on the king of Wei. "My goodness, sir, you certainly are in distress!" said the king of Wei.

Zhuangzi said, "I am poor, but I am not in distress! When a man possesses the Way and its Virtue but cannot put them into practice, then he is in distress. When his clothes are shabby and his shoes worn through, then he is poor, but he is not in distress. This is what they call being born at the wrong time. Has Your Majesty never observed the bounding monkeys? If they can reach the tall cedars, the catalpas, or the camphor trees, they will swing and sway from their limbs, frolic and lord it in their midst, and even the famous archers Yi or Peng Meng could not take accurate aim at them. But when they find themselves among prickly mulberries, brambles, hawthorns, or spiny citrons, they must move with caution, glancing from side to side, quivering and quaking with fear. It is not that their bones and sinews have suddenly become stiff and lost their suppleness. It is simply that the monkeys find themselves in a difficult and disadvantageous position in which they cannot exercise their abilities to the full. And now if I should live under a benighted ruler and among traitorous ministers and still hope to escape distress, what

hope would there be of doing so? Bi Gan had his heart cut out—there is the proof of the matter!"[9]

Confucius was in trouble between Chen and Cai, and for seven days he ate no cooked food. His left hand propped against a withered tree, his right beating time on a withered limb, he sang the air of the lord of Yan.[10] The rapping of the limb provided an accompaniment, but it was without any fixed rhythm; there was melody, but none that fitted the usual tonal categories of *gong* or *jue*. The drumming on the tree and the voice of the singer had a pathos to them that would strike a man's heart.

Yan Hui, standing with hands folded respectfully across his chest, turned his eyes and looked inquiringly at Confucius. Confucius, fearful that Yan Hui's respect for him was too great, that his love for him was too tender, said to him, "Hui! It is easy to be indifferent to the afflictions of Heaven but hard to be indifferent to the benefits of man. No beginning but has its end, and man and Heaven are one. Who is it, then, who sings this song now?"

Hui said, "May I venture to ask what you mean when you say it is easy to be indifferent to the afflictions of Heaven?"

Confucius said, "Hunger, thirst, cold, heat, barriers and blind alleys that will not let you pass—these are the workings of Heaven and earth, the shifts of ever turning things. This is what is called traveling side by side with the others. He who serves as a minister does not dare to abandon his lord. And if he is thus faithful to the way of a true minister, how much more would he be if he were to attend on Heaven!"

"And what do you mean when you say that it is hard to be indifferent to the benefits of man?"

Confucius replied, "A man sets out on a career, and soon he is advancing in all four directions at once. Titles and stipends come raining down on him without end, but these are merely material profits and have nothing to do

9. On Prince Bi Gan, who was put to death by the tyrant Zhou, see p. 23. Zhuangzi is presumably explaining why he does not take public office in the troubled times in which he lived.

10. The lord of Yan appeared in sec. 14, p. 111; he was presumably a sage ruler of antiquity, identified by some commentators with Shennong. Some texts give his name as "the lord of Piao."

with the man himself. As for me, my fate lies elsewhere. A gentleman will not pilfer, a worthy man will not steal. What business would I have, then, trying to acquire such things? So it is said, There is no bird wiser than the swallow. If its eyes do not light on a suitable spot, it will not give a second look. If it happens to drop the food it had in its beak, it will let it go and fly on its way. It is wary of men, and yet it lives among them, finding its protection along with men in the village altars of the soil and grain."

"And what do you mean by saying, 'No beginning but has its end'?"

Confucius said, "There is a being who transforms the ten thousand things, yet we do not know how he works these changes. How do we know what is an end? How do we know what is a beginning? The only thing for us to do is just to wait!"

"And what do you mean by saying, 'man and Heaven are one'?"

Confucius said, "Man exists because of Heaven, and Heaven, too, exists because of Heaven. But man cannot cause Heaven to exist; this is because of [the limitations of] his inborn nature. The sage, calm and placid, embodies change and so comes to his end."

Zhuang Zhou was wandering in the park at Diaoling when he saw a peculiar kind of magpie that came flying along from the south. It had a wingspread of seven feet, and its eyes were a good inch in diameter. It brushed against Zhuang Zhou's forehead and then settled down in a grove of chestnut trees. "What kind of bird is that!" exclaimed Zhuang Zhou. "Its wings are enormous, but they get it nowhere; its eyes are huge, but it can't even see where it's going!" Then he hitched up his robe, strode forward, cocked his crossbow, and prepared to take aim. As he did so, he spied a cicada that had found a lovely spot of shade and had forgotten all about [the possibility of danger to] its body. Behind it, a praying mantis, stretching

forth its claws, prepared to snatch the cicada, and it, too, had forgotten about its own form as it eyed its prize. The peculiar magpie was close behind, ready to make off with the praying mantis, forgetting its own true self as it fixed its eyes on the prospect of gain. Zhuang Zhou, shuddering at the sight, said, "Ah!—things do nothing but make trouble for one another—one creature calling down disaster on another!" He threw down his crossbow, turned about, and hurried from the park, but the park keeper [taking him for a poacher] raced after him with shouts of accusation.

Zhuang Zhou returned home and, for three months, looked unhappy.[11] Lin Ju in the course of tending to his master's needs, questioned him, saying, "Master, why is it that you are so unhappy these days?"

11. Following Wang Niansun's emendation.

Zhuang Zhou said, "In clinging to outward form, I have forgotten my own body. Staring at muddy water, I have been misled into taking it for a clear pool. Moreover, I have heard my Master say, 'When you go among the vulgar, follow their rules!' I went wandering at Diaoling and forgot my body. A peculiar magpie brushed against my forehead, wandered off to the chestnut grove, and there forgot its true self. And the keeper of the chestnut grove, to my great shame, took me for a trespasser! That is why I am unhappy."

Yangzi, on his way to Song, stopped for the night at an inn. The innkeeper had two concubines, one beautiful, the other ugly. But the ugly one was treated as a lady of rank, while the beautiful one was treated as a menial. When Yangzi asked the reason, a young boy of the inn replied, "The beautiful one is only too aware of her beauty, so we don't think of her as beautiful. The ugly one is only too aware of her ugliness, so we don't think of her as ugly."

Yangzi said, "Remember that, my students! If you act worthily but rid yourself of the awareness that you are acting worthily, then where can you go that you will not be loved?"

21

TIAN ZIFANG

Tian Zifang was sitting in attendance on Marquis Wen of Wei.[1] When he repeatedly praised one Qi Gong, Marquis Wen asked, "Is Qi Gong your teacher?"

"No," replied Zifang. "He comes from the same neighborhood as I do. Discussing the Way with him, I've found he often hits the mark—that's why I praise him."

"Have you no teacher then?" asked Marquis Wen.

"I have," said Zifang.

"Who is your teacher?"

"Master Shun from east of the Wall," said Zifang.

"Then why have you never praised *him*?" asked Marquis Wen.

Zifang said, "He's the kind of man who is True—the face of a human being, the emptiness of Heaven. He follows along and keeps tight hold of the True; pure, he can encompass all things. If men do not have the Way, he has only to put on a straight face, and they are enlightened; he causes men's intentions to melt away. But how could any of this be worth praising!"

Zifang retired from the room, and Marquis Wen, stupefied, sat for the rest of the day in silence. Then he called to the ministers who stood in attendance on him and said, "How far away he is—the gentleman of Complete Virtue! I used to think that the words of the wisdom of the sages and the practices of benevolence and righteousness were the highest ideal. But now that I have heard about Zifang's teacher, my body has fallen apart, and I feel no inclination to move; my mouth is manacled, and I feel no inclination to speak. These things that I have been study-

1. Marquis Wen (r. 424–387 BCE) guided the state of Wei during the crucial years when it first won recognition as an independent feudal domain; he is famous in history as a patron of learning. Tian Zifang appears to have been one of the philosophers attracted to his court.

ing are so many clay dolls[2]—nothing more! This state of Wei is in truth only a burden to me!"

2. That melt and turn to mud when the rains come.

Wenbo Xuezi, journeying to Qi, stopped along the way in the state of Lu.[3] A man of Lu requested an interview with him, but Wenbo Xuezi said, "No indeed! I have heard of the gentlemen of these middle states—enlightened on the subject of ritual principles but stupid in their understanding of men's hearts. I have no wish to see any such person."

3. Wenbo Xuezi is vaguely identified as a man of the state of Chu in the south; hence he refers to the states of Qi and Lu, the centers of Confucian learning, as "middle states."

He arrived at his destination in Qi and, on his way home, had stopped again in Lu when the man once more requested an interview. Wenbo Xuezi said, "In the past he made an attempt to see me, and now he's trying again. He undoubtedly has some means by which he hopes to 'save' me!"

He went out to receive the visitor and returned to his own rooms with a sigh. The following day, he received the visitor once more and once more returned with a sigh. His groom said, "Every time you receive this visitor, you come back sighing. Why is that?"

"I told you before, didn't I? These men of the middle states are enlightened in ritual principles but stupid in the understanding of men's hearts. Yesterday, when this man came to see me, his advancings and retirings were as precise as though marked by compass or T square. In looks and bearing, he was now a dragon, now a tiger. He remonstrated with me as though he were my son, offered me guidance as though he were my father! That is why I sighed."

Confucius also went for an interview with Wenbo Xuezi but returned without having spoken a word. Zilu said, "You have been wanting to see Wenbo Xuezi for a long time. Now you had the chance to see him; why didn't you say anything?"

Confucius said, "With that kind of man, one glance tells you that the Way is there before you. What room does that leave for any possibility of speech?"

* * *

Yan Yuan said to Confucius, "Master, when you walk, I walk; when you trot, I trot; when you gallop, I gallop. But when you break into the kind of dash that leaves even the dust behind, all I can do is stare after you in amazement!"

"Hui, what are you talking about?" asked the Master.

"When you walk, I walk—that is, I can speak just as you speak. When you trot, I trot—that is, I can make discriminations just as you do. When you gallop, I gallop—that is, I can expound the Way just as you do. But when you break into the kind of dash that leaves even the dust behind and all I can do is stare after you in amazement—by that I mean that you do not have to speak to be trusted, that you are catholic and not partisan,[4] that although you lack the regalia of high office, the people still congregate before you, and with all this, you do not know why it is so."

4. Compare *Analects* II, 14: "The gentleman is catholic and not partisan."

"Ah," said Confucius, "we had best look into this! There is no grief greater than the death of the mind—beside it, the death of the body is a minor matter. The sun rises out of the east, sets at the end of the west, and each one of the ten thousand things moves side by side with it. Creatures that have eyes and feet must wait for it before their success is complete. Its rising means they may go on living; its setting means they perish. For all the ten thousand things, it is thus. They must wait for something before they can die, wait for something before they can live. Having once received this fixed bodily form, I will hold on to it, unchanging, in this way waiting for the end. I move after the model of other things, day and night without break, but I do not know what the end will be. Mild, genial, my bodily form takes shape. I understand my fate, but I cannot fathom what has gone before it. This is the way I proceed, day after day.

"I have gone through life linked arm in arm with you, yet now you fail [to understand me]—is this not sad? You see in me, I suppose, the part that can be seen—but that part is already over and gone. For you to come looking for

it, thinking it still exists, is like looking for a horse after the horse fair is over.[5] I serve you best when I have utterly forgotten you, and you likewise serve me best when you have utterly forgotten me. But even so, why should you repine? Even if you forget the old me, I will still possess something that will not be forgotten!"[6]

5. Reading *kong* in place of *tang* in accordance with Ma Xulun's suggestion.

6. This beautiful passage, whose exact meaning I only dimly follow, presents numerous difficulties of interpretation. The verb *fu*, which I have translated as "serve," may be taken in many different ways.

Confucius went to call on Lao Dan. Lao Dan had just finished washing his hair and had spread it over his shoulders to dry. Utterly motionless, he did not even seem to be human. Confucius, hidden from sight,[7] stood waiting and then, after some time, presented himself and exclaimed, "Did my eyes play tricks on me, or was that really true? A moment ago, sir, your form and body seemed stiff as an old dead tree, as though you had forgotten things, taken leave of men, and were standing in solitude itself!"

7. Following Zhang Binglin's interpretation.

Lao Dan said, "I was letting my mind wander in the Beginning of things."

"What does that mean?" asked Confucius.

"The mind may wear itself out but can never understand it; the mouth may gape but can never describe it. Nevertheless, I will try explaining it to you in rough outline.

"Perfect Yin is stern and frigid; Perfect Yang is bright and glittering. The sternness and frigidity come forth from heaven; the brightness and glitter emerge from the earth;[8] the two mingle, penetrate, come together, harmonize, and all things are born therefrom. Perhaps someone manipulates the cords that draw it all together, but no one has ever seen his form. Decay, growth, fullness, emptiness, now murky, now bright, the sun shifting, the moon changing phase—day after day these things proceed, yet no one has seen him bringing them about. Life has its sproutings, death its destination, end and beginning tail one another in unbroken round, and no one has ever heard of their coming to a stop. If it is not as I have described it, then who else could the Ancestor of all this be?"

8. Ordinarily, the yang principle represents heaven, and the yin principle, earth. Whether the reversal of their roles here is deliberate or the result of textual error, I do not know. Waley (*Three Ways of Thought,* p. 16) emends the text to put them in their usual order.

Confucius said, "May I ask what it means to wander in such a place?"

Lao Dan said, "It means to attain Perfect Beauty and Perfect Happiness. He who attains Perfect Beauty and wanders in Perfect Happiness may be called the Perfect Man."

Confucius said, "I would like to hear by what means this may be accomplished."

"Beasts that feed on grass do not fret over a change of pasture; creatures that live in water do not fret over a change of stream. They accept the minor shift as long as the all-important constant is not lost. [Be like them,] and joy, anger, grief, and happiness can never enter your breast. In this world, the ten thousand things come together in One; and if you can find that One and become identical with it, then your four limbs and hundred joints will become dust and sweepings; life and death, beginning and end, will be mere day and night, and nothing whatever can confound you—certainly not the trifles of gain or loss, good or bad fortune!

"A man will discard the servants who wait on him as though they were so much earth or mud, for he knows that his own person is of more worth than the servants who tend it. Worth lies within yourself, and no external shift will cause it to be lost. And since the ten thousand transformations continue without even the beginning of an end, how could they be enough to bring anxiety to your mind? He who practices the Way understands all this."[9]

Confucius said, "Your virtue, sir, is the very counterpart of Heaven and earth, and yet even you must employ these perfect teachings in order to cultivate your mind. Who, then, even among the fine gentlemen of the past, could have avoided such labors?"

"Not so!" said Lao Dan. "The murmuring of the water is its natural talent, not something that it does deliberately. The Perfect Man stands in the same relationship to virtue. Without cultivating it, he possesses it to such an extent that things cannot draw away from him. It is as natural as the height of heaven, the depth of the earth, the brightness of sun and moon. What is there to be cultivated?"

9. One may also, like Guo Xiang, take the word *jie* (understand) to mean "free"; that is, "He who practices the Way is freed from all this." Compare sec. 6, p. 48: "the freeing of the bound."

When Confucius emerged from the interview, he reported what had passed to Yan Hui, saying, "As far as the Way is concerned, I was a mere gnat in the vinegar jar! If the Master hadn't taken off the lid for me, I would never have understood the Great Integrity of Heaven and earth!"

Zhuangzi went to see Duke Ai of Lu. Duke Ai said, "We have a great many Confucians here in the state of Lu, but there seem to be very few men who study your methods, sir!"

"There are few Confucians in the state of Lu!" said Zhuangzi.

"But the whole state of Lu is dressed in Confucian garb!" said Duke Ai. "How can you say they are few?"

"I have heard," said Zhuangzi, "that the Confucians wear round caps on their heads to show that they understand the cycles of heaven, that they walk about in square shoes to show that they understand the shape of the earth, and that they tie ornaments in the shape of a broken disk at their girdles in order to show that when the time comes for decisive action, they must 'make the break.' But a gentleman may embrace a doctrine without necessarily wearing the garb that goes with it, and he may wear the garb without necessarily comprehending the doctrine. If Your Grace does not believe this is so, then why not try issuing an order to the state proclaiming: 'All those who wear the garb without practicing the doctrine that goes with it will be sentenced to death!'"

Duke Ai did in fact issue such an order, and within five days there was no one in the state of Lu who dared wear Confucian garb. Only one old man came in Confucian dress and stood in front of the duke's gate. The duke at once summoned him and questioned him on affairs of state, and though the discussion took a thousand turnings and ten thousand shifts, the old man was never at a loss for words. Zhuangzi said, "In the whole state of Lu, then, there is only one man who is a real Confucian. How can you say there are a great many of them?"

* * *

Boli Xi did not let title and stipend get inside his mind. He fed the cattle and the cattle grew fat, and this fact made Duke Mu of Qin forget Boli Xi's lowly position and turn over the government to him.[10] Shun, the man of the Yu clan, did not let life and death get inside his mind. So he was able to influence others.[11]

Lord Yuan of Song wanted to have some pictures painted. The crowd of court clerks all gathered in his presence, received their drawing panels,[12] and took their places in line, licking their brushes, mixing their inks; so many of them that there were more outside the room than inside it. There was one clerk who arrived late, sauntering in without the slightest haste. When he received his drawing panel, he did not look for a place in line but went straight to his own quarters. The ruler sent someone to see what he was doing, and it was found that he had taken off his robes, stretched out his legs, and was sitting there naked. "Very good," said the ruler. "This is a true artist!"

King Wen was seeing the sights at Zang when he spied an old man fishing.[13] Yet his fishing wasn't really fishing. He didn't fish as though he were fishing for anything but as though it were his constant occupation to fish. King Wen wanted to summon him and hand over the government to him, but he was afraid that the high officials and his uncles and brothers would be uneasy. He thought perhaps he had better forget the matter and let it rest, and yet he couldn't bear to deprive the hundred clans of such a Heaven-sent opportunity. At dawn the next day he therefore reported to his ministers, saying, "Last night I dreamed I saw a fine man, dark complexioned and bearded, mounted on a dappled horse that had red hoofs on one side. He commanded me, saying, 'Hand over your rule to the old man of Zang—then perhaps the ills of the people may be cured!'

The ministers, awestruck, said, "It was the king, your late father!"

10. Boli Xi, a statesman of the seventh century BCE, was taken captive when his state was overthrown and, for a time, led the life of a lowly cattle tender. His worth was eventually recognized by Duke Mu of Qin, who made him his high minister.

11. Shun's parents and younger brother made several attempts to kill him, but he did not allow this to alter his filial behavior.

12. Following Ma Xulun's emendation. It is not clear just what kind of paintings the ruler of Song is commissioning, and some commentators take them to be mere maps. But the description of the "true artist" that follows suggests a more creative type of activity.

13. King Wen, honored as the founder of the Zhou dynasty, was one of the ancient sages most often and extravagantly praised by Confucius and his followers.

"Then perhaps we should divine to see what ought to be done," said King Wen.

"It is the command of your late father!" said the ministers. "Your Majesty must have no second thoughts. What need is there for divination?"

In the end, therefore, the king had the old man of Zang escorted to the capital and handed over the government to him, but the regular precedents and laws remained unchanged, and not a single new order was issued.

At the end of three years, King Wen made an inspection tour of the state. He found that the local officials had smashed their gate bars and disbanded their cliques, that the heads of government bureaus achieved no special distinction, and that persons entering the four borders from other states no longer ventured to bring their own measuring cups and bushels with them. The local officials had smashed their gate bars and disbanded their cliques because they had learned to identify with their superiors.[14] The heads of government bureaus achieved no special distinction because they looked on all tasks as being of equal distinction. Persons entering the four borders from other states no longer ventured to bring their own measuring cups and bushels with them because the feudal lords had ceased to distrust the local measures.

King Wen thereupon concluded that he had found a Great Teacher, and facing north as a sign of respect, he asked, "Could these methods of government be extended to the whole world?"

But the old man of Zang looked blank and gave no answer, evasively mumbling some excuse; and when orders went out the next morning to make the attempt, the old man ran away the very same night and was never heard of again.

Yan Yuan questioned Confucius about this story, saying, "King Wen didn't amount to very much after all, did he! And why did he have to resort to that business about the dream?"

14. The term "identifying with one's superior" is taken from the teachings of Mozi. According to this doctrine, each class of society is to follow the orders and ethical teaching of the class above, the whole hierarchy being headed by the Son of Heaven, in this case, King Wen.

"Quiet!" said Confucius. "No more talk from you! King Wen was perfection itself—how can there be any room for carping and criticism! The dream—that was just a way of getting out of a moment's difficulty."

Lie Yukou was demonstrating his archery to Bohun Wuren.[15] He drew the bow as far as it would go, placed a cup of water on his elbow, and let fly. One arrow had no sooner left his thumb ring than a second was resting in readiness beside his arm guard, and all the while he stood like a statue.[16] Bohun Wuren said, "This is the archery of an archer, not the archery of a nonarcher! Try climbing up a high mountain with me, scrambling over the steep rocks to the very brink of an eight-hundred-foot chasm—then we'll see what kind of shooting you can do!"

Accordingly, they proceeded to climb a high mountain, scrambling over the steep rocks to the brink of an eight-hundred-foot chasm. There Bohun Wuren, turning his back to the chasm, walked backward until his feet projected halfway off the edge of the cliff, bowed to Lie Yukou, and invited him to come forward and join him. But Lie Yukou cowered on the ground, sweat pouring down all the way to his heels. Bohun Wuren said, "The Perfect Man may stare at the blue heavens above, dive into the Yellow Springs below, ramble to the end of the eight directions, yet his spirit and bearing undergo no change. And here you are in this cringing, eye-batting state of mind—if you tried to take aim now, you would be in certain peril!"

15. Lie Yukou appeared in sec. 1, p. 3; Bohun Wuren, in sec. 5, p. 35.

16. In the interpretation of these archery terms, I follow Ma Xulun's emendations.

Jian Wu said to Sunshu Ao, "Three times you have become premier, yet you didn't seem to glory in it.[17] Three times you were dismissed from the post, but you never looked glum over it. At first I doubted that this was really true, but now I stand before your very nose and see how calm and unconcerned you are. Do you have some unique way of using your mind?"

17. Jian Wu appeared in sec. 1, p. 4, and sec. 7, p. 55. Sunshu Ao was a sixth-century statesman of Chu.

Sunshu Ao replied, "How am I any better than other men? I considered that the coming of such an honor could not be fended off and that its departure could not be prevented. As far as I was concerned, the question of profit or loss did not rest with me, and so I had no reason to put on a glum expression, that was all. How am I any better than other men? Moreover, I'm not really certain whether the glory resides in the premiership or in me. If it resides in the premiership, then it means nothing to me. And if it resides in me, then it means nothing to the premiership. Now I'm about to go for an idle stroll, to go gawking in the four directions. What leisure do I have to worry about who holds an eminent position and who a humble one?"

Confucius, hearing of the incident, said, "He was a True Man of old, the kind that the wise cannot argue with, the beautiful cannot seduce, the violent cannot intimidate; even Fu Xi or the Yellow Emperor could not have befriended him. Life and death are great affairs, and yet they are no change to him—how much less to him are things like titles and stipends! With such a man, his spirit may soar over Mount Tai without hindrance, may plunge into the deepest springs without getting wet, may occupy the meanest, most humble position without distress. He fills all Heaven and earth, and the more he gives to others, the more he has for himself."

The king of Chu was sitting with the lord of Fan.[18] After a little while, three of the king of Chu's attendants reported that the state of Fan had been destroyed. The lord of Fan said, "The destruction of Fan is not enough to make me lose what I am intent on preserving.[19] And if the destruction of Fan is not enough to make me lose what I preserve, then the preservation of Chu is not enough to make it preserve what it ought to preserve. Looking at it this way, then, Fan has not yet begun to be destroyed, and Chu has not yet begun to be preserved!"

18. Fan was a small state subservient to the much larger and more powerful state of Chu, which eventually overthrew it.

19. That is, the Way. The whole passage is a play on the two levels of meaning, political and philosophical, of the words "destruction" (*wang*) and "preservation" (*cun*).

22

KNOWLEDGE WANDERED NORTH

Knowledge wandered north to the banks of the Black Waters, climbed the Knoll of Hidden Heights, and there by chance came upon Do-Nothing-Say-Nothing. Knowledge said to Do-Nothing-Say-Nothing, "There are some things I'd like to ask you. What sort of pondering, what sort of cogitation does it take to know the Way? What sort of surroundings, what sort of practices does it take to find rest in the Way? What sort of path, what sort of procedure will get me to the Way?"

Three questions he asked, but Do-Nothing-Say-Nothing didn't answer. It wasn't that he just didn't answer—he didn't know how to answer!

Knowledge, failing to get any answer, returned to the White Waters of the south, climbed the summit of Dubiety Dismissed, and there caught sight of Wild-and-Witless. Knowledge put the same questions to Wild-and-Witless. "Ah—I know!" said Wild-and-Witless. "And I'm going to tell you." But just as he was about to say something, he forgot what it was he was about to say.

Knowledge, failing to get any answer, returned to the imperial palace, where he was received in audience by the Yellow Emperor, and posed his questions. The Yellow Emperor said, "Only when there is no pondering and no cogitation will you get to know the Way. Only when you have no surroundings and follow no practices will you find rest in the Way. Only when there is no path and no procedure can you get to the Way."

Knowledge said to the Yellow Emperor, "You and I know, but those other two that I asked didn't know. Which of us is right, I wonder?"

The Yellow Emperor said, "Do-Nothing-Say-Nothing—he's the one who is truly right. Wild-and-Witless appears to be so. But you and I in the end are nowhere near it. Those who know do not speak; those who speak do not know. Therefore the sage practices the teaching that has no words.[1] The Way cannot be brought to light; its virtue cannot be forced to come. But benevolence—you can put that into practice; you can discourse[2] on righteousness, you can dupe one another with rites. So it is said, When the Way was lost, then there was virtue; when virtue was lost, then there was benevolence; when benevolence was lost, then there was righteousness; when righteousness was lost, then there were rites. Rites are the frills of the Way and the forerunners of disorder.[3] So it is said, He who practices the Way does less every day, does less and goes on doing less until he reaches the point where he does nothing; does nothing and yet there is nothing that is not done.[4] Now that we've already become 'things,' if we want to return again to the Root, I'm afraid we'll have a hard time of it! The Great Man—he's the only one who might find it easy.

"Life is the companion of death; death is the beginning of life. Who understands their workings? Man's life is a coming-together of breath. If it comes together, there is life; if it scatters, there is death. And if life and death are companions to each other, then what is there for us to be anxious about?

"The ten thousand things are really one. We look on some as beautiful because they are rare or unearthly; we look on others as ugly because they are foul and rotten. But the foul and rotten may turn into the rare and unearthly, and the rare and unearthly may turn into the foul and rotten. So it is said, You have only to comprehend the one breath that is the world. The sage never ceases to value oneness."

Knowledge said to the Yellow Emperor, "I asked Do-Nothing-Say-Nothing, and he didn't reply to me. It wasn't that he merely didn't reply to me—he didn't know

1. This and the sentence that precedes it appear in *Daodejing* II and LVI, respectively.

2. Following the interpretation of Ma Xulun.

3. The sentence is nearly identical with parts of *Daodejing* XXXVIII.

4. Identical with parts of *Daodejing* XLVIII.

how to reply to me. I asked Wild-and-Witless, and he was about to explain to me, though he didn't explain anything. It wasn't that he wouldn't explain to me—but when he was about to explain, he forgot what it was. Now I have asked you, and you know the answer. Why, then, do you say that you are nowhere near being right?"

The Yellow Emperor said, "Do-Nothing-Say-Nothing is the one who is truly right—because he doesn't know. Wild-and-Witless appears to be so—because he forgets. But you and I in the end are nowhere near it—because we know."

Wild-and-Witless heard of the incident and concluded that the Yellow Emperor knew what he was talking about.

Heaven and earth have their great beauties but do not speak of them; the four seasons have their clear-marked regularity but do not discuss it; the ten thousand things have their principles of growth but do not expound them. The sage seeks out the beauties of Heaven and earth and masters the principles of the ten thousand things. Thus it is that the Perfect Man does not act, the Great Sage does not move—they have perceived [the Way of] Heaven and earth, we may say. This Way, whose spiritual brightness is of the greatest purity, joins with others in a hundred transformations. Already things are living or dead, round or square; no one can comprehend their source, yet here are the ten thousand things in all their stir and bustle, just as they have been since ancient times. Things as vast as the Six Realms have never passed beyond the border [of the Way]; things as tiny as an autumn hair must wait for it to achieve bodily form. There is nothing in the world that does not bob and sink to the end of its days, lacking fixity. The yin and yang, the four seasons follow one another in succession, each keeping to its proper place. Dark and hidden, [the Way] seems not to exist, and yet it is there; lush and unbounded, it possesses no form but only spirit; the ten thousand things are shepherded

by it, though they do not understand it—this is what is called the Source, the Root. This is what may be perceived in Heaven.

Nie Que asked Piyi about the Way. Piyi said, "Straighten up your body, unify your vision, and the harmony of Heaven will come to you. Call in your knowledge, unify your bearing, and the spirits will come to dwell with you. Virtue will be your beauty, the Way will be your home, and stupid as a newborn calf, you will not try to find out the reason why."

Before he had finished speaking, however, Nie Que fell sound asleep. Piyi, immensely pleased, left and walked away, singing this song:

Body like a withered corpse,
mind like dead ashes,
true in the realness of knowledge,
not one to go searching for reasons,
dim dim, dark dark,
mindless, you cannot consult with him,
what kind of man is this?

Shun asked Cheng, "Is it possible to gain possession of the Way?"

"You don't even have possession of your own body—how could you possibly gain possession of the Way!"

"If I don't have possession of my own body, then who does?" said Shun.

"It is a form lent you by Heaven and earth. You do not have possession of life—it is a harmony lent by Heaven and earth. You do not have possession of your inborn nature and fate—they are contingencies lent by Heaven and earth. You do not have possession of your sons and grandsons—they are castoff skins lent by Heaven and earth. So it is best to walk without knowing where you are going, stay home without knowing what you are guarding, eat without knowing what you are tasting. All is the work of the

Powerful Yang[5] in the world. How, then, could it be possible to gain possession of anything?"

5. See sec. 27, p. 237.

Confucius said to Lao Dan, "Today you seem to have a moment of leisure—may I venture to ask about the Perfect Way?"

Lao Dan said, "You must fast and practice austerities, cleanse and purge your mind, wash and purify your inner spirit, destroy and do away with your knowledge. The Way is abstruse and difficult to describe. But I will try to give you a rough outline of it.

"The bright and shining is born out of deep darkness; the ordered is born out of formlessness; pure spirit is born out of the Way. The body is born originally from this purity,[6] and the ten thousand things give bodily form to one another through the process of birth. Therefore those with nine openings in the body are born from the womb; those with eight openings are born from eggs. [In the case of the Way,] there is no trace of its coming, no limit to its going. Gateless, roomless, it is airy and open as the highways of the four directions. He who follows along with it will be strong in his four limbs, keen and penetrating in intellect, sharp eared, bright eyed, wielding his mind without wearying it, responding to things without prejudice. Heaven cannot help but be high; earth cannot help but be broad; the sun and moon cannot help but revolve; the ten thousand things cannot help but flourish. Is this not the Way?

6. Or seminal fluid; see p. 121, n. 2.

"Breadth of learning does not necessarily mean knowledge; eloquence does not necessarily mean wisdom—therefore the sage rids himself of these things. That which can be increased without showing any sign of increase; that which can be diminished without suffering any diminution—that is what the sage holds fast to. Deep, unfathomable, it is like the sea; tall and craggy,[7] it ends only to begin again, transporting and weighing the ten thousand things without ever failing them. The 'Way of the gentleman,' [which you preach,] is mere superficiality, is it not?

7. Probably the words "it is like the mountains," which would complete the parallelism, have dropped out at this point.

But what the ten thousand things all look to for sustenance, what never fails them—is this not the real Way?

"Here is a man of the Middle Kingdom, neither yin nor yang, living between heaven and earth. For a brief time only, he will be a man, and then he will return to the Ancestor. Look at him from the standpoint of the Source, and his life is a mere gathering together of breath. And whether he dies young or lives to a great old age, the two fates will scarcely differ—a matter of a few moments, you might say. How, then, is it worth deciding that Yao is good and Jie is bad?

"The fruits of trees and vines have their patterns and principles. Human relationships, too, difficult as they are, have their relative order and precedence. The sage, encountering them, does not go against them; passing beyond, he does not cling to them. To respond to them in a spirit of harmony—this is virtue; to respond to them in a spirit of fellowship—this is the Way. Thus it is that emperors have raised themselves up and kings have climbed to power.

"Man's life between heaven and earth is like the passing of a white colt glimpsed through a crack in the wall—whoosh!—and that's the end. Overflowing, starting forth, there is nothing that does not come out; gliding away, slipping into silence, there is nothing that does not go back in. Having been transformed, things find themselves alive; another transformation and they are dead. Living things grieve over it, mankind mourns. But it is like the untying of the Heaven-lent bow-bag, the unloading of the Heaven-lent satchel—a yielding, a mild mutation, and the soul and spirit are on their way, the body following after, on at last to the Great Return.

"The formless moves to the realm of form; the formed moves back to the realm of formlessness. This all men alike understand. But it is not something to be reached by striving. The common run of men all alike debate how to reach it. But those who have reached it do not debate, and those who debate have not reached it. Those who peer

with bright eyes will never catch sight of it. Eloquence is not as good as silence. The Way cannot be heard; to listen for it is not as good as plugging up your ears. This is called the Great Acquisition."

Master Dongguo[8] asked Zhuangzi, "This thing called the Way—where does it exist?"

Zhuangzi, said, "There's no place it doesn't exist."

"Come," said Master Dongguo, "you must be more specific!"

"It is in the ant."

"As low a thing as that?"

"It is in the panic grass."

"But that's lower still!"

"It is in the tiles and shards."

"How can it be so low?"

"It is in the piss and shit!"

Master Dongguo made no reply.

Zhuangzi said, "Sir, your questions simply don't get at the substance of the matter. When Inspector Huo asked the superintendent of the market how to test the fatness of a pig by pressing it with the foot, he was told that the lower down on the pig you press, the nearer you come to the truth. But you must not expect to find the Way in any particular place—there is no thing that escapes its presence! Such is the Perfect Way, and so too are the truly great words. 'Complete,' 'universal,' 'all-inclusive'—these three are different words with the same meaning. All point to a single reality.

"Why don't you try wandering with me to the Palace of Not-Even-Anything—identity and concord will be the basis of our discussions, and they will never come to an end, never reach exhaustion. Why not join with me in inaction, in tranquil quietude, in hushed purity, in harmony and leisure? Already my will is vacant and blank. I go nowhere and don't know how far I've gotten. I go and come and don't know where to stop. I've already been

8. Literally, "East Wall Master," perhaps intended to be the same as Master Shun from east of the Wall in sec. 21.

there and back, and I don't know when the journey is done. I ramble and relax in unbordered vastness; Great Knowledge enters in, and I don't know where it will ever end.

"That which treats things as things is not limited by things. Things have their limits—the so-called limits of things. The unlimited moves to the realm of limits; the limited moves to the unlimited realm. We speak of the filling and emptying, the withering and decay of things. [The Way] makes them full and empty without itself filling or emptying; it makes them wither and decay without itself withering or decaying. It establishes root and branch but knows no root and branch itself; it determines when to store up or scatter but knows no storing or scattering itself."

A Hegan and Shennong were studying together under Old Longji.[9] Shennong sat leaning on his armrest, the door shut, taking his daily nap, when at midday A Hegan threw open the door, entered, and announced, "Old Long is dead!"

9. On Shennong, see p. 142. Old Longji's name means Old Dragon Fortune.

Shennong, still leaning on the armrest, reached for his staff and jumped to his feet. Then he dropped the staff with a clatter and began to laugh, saying, " My Heaven-sent Master—he knew how cramped and mean, how arrogant and willful I am, and so he abandoned me and died. My Master went off and died without ever giving me any wild words to open up my mind!"

Yan Gangdiao, hearing of the incident, said, "He who embodies the Way has all the gentlemen of the world flocking to him. As far as the Way goes, Old Long hadn't gotten hold of a piece as big as the tip of an autumn hair, hadn't found his way into one ten-thousandth of it—but even he knew enough to keep his wild words stored away and to die with them unspoken. How much more so, then, in the case of a man who embodies the Way! Look for it, but it has no form; listen, but it has no voice. Those who

discourse on it with other men speak of it as dark and mysterious. The Way that is discoursed on is not the Way at all! "

At this point, Grand Purity asked No-End, "Do *you* understand the Way?"

"I don't understand it," said No-End.

Then he asked No-Action, and No-Action said, "I understand the Way."

"You say you understand the Way—is there some trick to it?

"There is."

"What's the trick?"

No-Action said, "I understand that the Way can exalt things and can humble them, that it can bind them together and can cause them to disperse.[10] This is the trick by which I understand the Way."

10. That is, cause them to be born and to die.

Grand Purity, having received these various answers, went and questioned No-Beginning, saying, "If this is how it is, then between No-End's declaration that he doesn't understand and No-Action's declaration that he does, which is right and which is wrong?"

No-Beginning said, "Not to understand is profound; to understand is shallow. Not to understand is to be on the inside; to understand is to be on the outside."

Thereupon Grand Purity gazed up[11] and sighed, saying, "Not to understand is to understand? To understand is not to understand? Who understands the understanding that does not understand?"

11. Following Xi Tong, I read *yang* in place of *zhong*.

No-Beginning said, "The Way cannot be heard; heard, it is not the Way. The Way cannot be seen; seen, it is not the Way. The Way cannot be described; described, it is not the Way. That which gives form to the formed is itself formless—can you understand that? There is no name that fits the Way."

No-Beginning continued, "He who, when asked about the Way, gives an answer does not understand the Way; and he who asked about the Way has not really heard the

Way explained. The Way is not to be asked about, and even if it is asked about, there can be no answer. To ask about what cannot be asked about is to ask for the sky. To answer what cannot be answered is to try to split hairs. If the hair splitter waits for the sky asker,[12] then neither will ever perceive the time and space that surround them on the outside or understand the Great Beginning that is within. Such men can never trek across the Kunlun, can never wander in the Great Void!"[13]

12. I follow Guo Xiang in the interpretation of the phrase "to ask for the sky," that is, to try to measure the immeasurable. *Neiwu,* that which is so minute there is nothing inside it—translated here as "to split hairs"—appears in sec. 33, p. 297.

13. The Kunlun, a fabulous range of mountains to the far west where the immortal spirits dwell, was mentioned on p. 141.

Bright Dazzlement asked Nonexistence, "Sir, do you exist, or do you not exist?" Unable to obtain any answer, Bright Dazzlement stared intently at the other's face and form—all was vacuity and blankness. He stared all day but could see nothing, listened but could hear no sound, stretched out his hand but grasped nothing. "Perfect!" exclaimed Bright Dazzlement. "Who can reach such perfection? I can conceive of the existence of nonexistence but not of the nonexistence of nonexistence. Yet this man has reached the stage of the nonexistence of nonexistence.[14] How could I ever reach such perfection!"

14. I read *wuwu*, following the parallel passage in *Huainanzi,* sec. 2.

The grand marshal's buckle maker was eighty years old, yet he had not lost the tiniest part of his old dexterity. The grand marshal said, "What skill you have! Is there a special way to this?"

"I have a way.[15] From the time I was twenty, I have loved to forge buckles. I never look at other things—if it's not a buckle, I don't bother to examine it."

15. Following Wang Niansun, I read *dao* in place of *shou*; compare the similar passage, p. 147.

Using this method of deliberately *not* using other things, he was able, over the years, to get some use out of it. And how much greater would a man be if, by the same method, he reached the point where there was nothing that he did not use! All things would come to depend on him.

Ran Qiu asked Confucius, "Is it possible to know anything about the time before Heaven and earth existed?"

Confucius said, "It is—the past is the present."

Ran Qiu, failing to receive any further answer, retired. The following day he went to see Confucius again and said, "Yesterday I asked if it were possible to know anything about the time before Heaven and earth existed, and you, Master, replied, 'It is—the past is the present.' Yesterday that seemed quite clear to me, but today it seems very obscure. May I venture to ask what this means?"

Confucius said, "Yesterday it was clear because your spirit took the lead in receiving my words. Today, if it seems obscure, it is because you are searching for it with something other than spirit, are you not? There is no past and no present, no beginning and no end. Sons and grandsons existed before sons and grandsons existed—may we make such a statement?"

Ran Qiu had not replied when Confucius said, "Stop!—don't answer! Do not use life to give life to death. Do not use death to bring death to life.[16] Do life and death depend on each other? Both have in them that which makes them a single body. There is that which was born before Heaven and earth, but is it a thing? That which treats things as things is not a thing. Things that come forth can never precede all other things, because there already were things existing then; and before that, too, there already were things existing—so on without end. The sage's love of mankind, which never comes to an end, is modeled on this principle."

16. Compare sec. 6, p. 46: "That which kills life does not die; that which gives life to life does not live."

Yan Yuan said to Confucius, "Master, I have heard you say that there should be no going after anything, no welcoming anything.[17] May I venture to ask how one may wander in such realms?"

Confucius said, "The men of old changed on the outside but not on the inside. The men of today change on the inside but not on the outside. He who changes along with things is identical with him who does not change. Where is there change? Where is there no change? Where is there any friction with others? Never will he treat others

17. Compare sec. 7, p. 59: "The Perfect Man uses his mind like a mirror—going after nothing, welcoming nothing, responding but not storing."

with arrogance. But Xiwei had his park, the Yellow Emperor his garden, Shun his palace, Tang and Wu their halls.[18] And among gentlemen, there were those like the Confucians and Mohists who became 'teachers.' As a result, people began using their 'rights' and 'wrongs' to push one another around. And how much worse are the men of today!

"The sage lives with things but does no harm to them, and he who does no harm to things cannot in turn be harmed by them. Only he who does no harm is qualified to join with other men in 'going after' or 'welcoming.'

"The mountains and forests, the hills and fields, fill us with overflowing delight, and we are joyful. Our joy has not ended when grief comes trailing it. We have no way to bar the arrival of grief and joy, no way to prevent them from departing. Alas, the men of this world are no more than travelers, stopping now at this inn, now at that, all of them run by 'things.' They know the things they happen to encounter but not those that they have never encountered. They know how to do the things they can do, but they can't do the things they don't know how to do. Not to know, not to be able to do—from these, mankind can never escape. And yet there are those who struggle to escape from the inescapable—can you help but pity them? Perfect speech is the abandonment of speech; perfect action is the abandonment of action. To be limited to understanding only what is understood—this is shallow indeed!"

18. The mythical figure Xiwei appeared on p. 45. The series "park," "garden," "palace," "hall" probably represents a devolution from naturalness to increasing artificiality and extravagance, though the older interpretation is that these were the "groves of Academe" of high antiquity.

23

GENGSANG CHU

Among the attendants of Lao Dan was one Gengsang Chu, who had mastered a portion of the Way of Lao Dan, and with it went north to live among the Mountains of Zigzag. His servants, with their bright and knowing looks, he discharged; his concubines, with their tender and solicitous ways, he put far away from him. Instead, he shared his house with drabs and dowdies and employed the idle and indolent to wait on him. He had been living there for three years when Zigzag began to enjoy bountiful harvests, and the people of Zigzag said to one another, "When Master Gengsang first came among us, we were highly suspicious of him. But now, if we figure by the day, there never seems to be enough, but if we figure by the year, there's always some left over! It might just be that he's a sage! Why don't we make him our impersonator of the dead and pray to him, turn over to him our altars of the soil and grain?"

When Master Gengsang heard this, he faced south with a look of displeasure.[1] His disciples thought this strange, but Master Gengsang said, "Why should you wonder that I am displeased? When the breath of spring comes forth, the hundred grasses begin to grow, and later, when autumn visits them, their ten thousand fruits swell and ripen. Yet how could spring and autumn do other than they do?—the Way of Heaven has already set them in motion. I have heard that the Perfect Man dwells corpse-like in his little four-walled room, leaving the hundred clans to their uncouth and uncaring ways, not knowing where they are going, where they are headed. But now these petty people of Zigzag, in their officious and busybody

1. That is, faced in Laozi's direction. He is displeased, of course, because his worth has been discovered, whereas the true sage remains hidden and unrecognized.

fashion, want to bring their sacrificial stands and platters and make me one of their 'worthies'! Am I to be held up as a model for men? That is why, remembering the words of Lao Dan, I am so displeased!"

"But there's no need for that!" said his disciples. "In a ditch eight or sixteen feet wide, the really big fish doesn't even have room to turn around, yet the minnows and loaches think it ample. On a knoll no more than five or ten paces in height, the really big animal doesn't even have room to hide, yet the wily foxes think it ideal. Moreover, to honor the worthy and assign office to the able, according them precedence and conferring benefits on them—this has been the custom from the ancient days of the sages Yao and Shun. How much more so, then, should it be the custom among the common people of Zigzag! Why not go ahead and heed their demands, Master?"

Master Gengsang said, "Come nearer, my little ones! A beast large enough to gulp down a carriage, if he sets off alone and leaves the mountains, cannot escape the perils of net and snare; a fish large enough to swallow a boat, if he is tossed up by the waves and left stranded, is bound to fall victim to ants and crickets.[2] Therefore birds and beasts don't mind how high they climb to escape danger; fish and turtles don't mind how deep they dive. So the man who would preserve his body and life must think only of how to hide himself away, not minding how remote or secluded the spot may be.

2. For the sake of the parallelism, I follow Ma Xulun's suggestion in adding the character *lou*.

"And as for those two you mentioned—Yao and Shun—how are they worthy to be singled out for praise? With their nice distinctions, they are like a man who goes around willfully poking holes in people's walls and fences and planting weeds and brambles in them, like a man who picks out which hairs of his head he intends to comb before combing it, who counts the grains of rice before he cooks them. Such bustle and officiousness—how can it be of any use in saving the age? Promote men of worth and the people begin trampling over one another; employ

men of knowledge and the people begin filching from one another. Such procedures will do nothing to make the people ingenuous. Instead, the people will only grow more diligent in their pursuit of gain till there are sons who kill their fathers, ministers who kill their lords, men who filch at high noon, who bore holes through walls in broad daylight. I tell you, the source of all great confusion will invariably be found to lie right there with Yao and Shun! And a thousand generations later, it will still be with us. A thousand generations later—mark my word—there will be men who will eat one another up!"

Nanrong Zhu straightened up on his mat with a perplexed look and said, "A man like myself who's already on in years—what sort of studies is he to undertake in order to attain this state you speak of?"

Master Gengsang said, "Keep the body whole, cling fast to life! Do not fall prey to the fidget and fuss of thoughts and scheming. If you do this for three years, then you can attain the state I have spoken of."

Nanrong Zhu said, "The eyes are part of the body—I have never thought them anything else—yet the blind man cannot see with his. The ears are part of the body—I have never thought them anything else—yet the deaf man cannot hear with his. The mind is part of the body—I have never thought it anything else—yet the madman cannot comprehend with his. The body, too, must be part of the body—surely they are intimately connected.[3] Yet—is it because something intervenes?—I try to seek my body, but I cannot find it. Now you tell me, 'Keep the body whole, cling fast to life! Do not fall prey to the fidget and fuss of thoughts and scheming.' As hard as I try to understand your explanation of the Way, I'm afraid your words penetrate no farther than my ears."[4]

"I've said all I can say," exclaimed Master Gengsang. "The saying goes, mud daubers have no power to transform caterpillars.[5] The little hens of Yue cannot hatch goose eggs, though the larger hens of Lu can do it well enough. It isn't that one kind of hen isn't just as henlike as

3. Following Ma Xulun's interpretation.

4. The whole passage, as Fukunaga points out, seems to be related to the remark in sec. 1, p. 4: "And blindness and deadness are not confined to the body alone—the understanding has them, too, as your words just now have shown."

5. According to Chinese nature lore, the mud dauber can transform mulberry caterpillars into its own young.

the other. One can and the other can't because their talents just naturally differ in size. Now I'm afraid my talents are not sufficient to bring about any transformation in you. Why don't you go south and visit Laozi?"

Nanrong Zhu packed up his provisions and journeyed for seven days and seven nights until he came to Laozi's place. Laozi said, "Did you come from Gengsang Chu's place?"

"Yes, sir," said Nanrong Zhu.

"Why did you come with all this crowd of people?" asked Laozi.

Nanrong Zhu, astonished, turned to look behind him.

"Don't you know what I mean?" asked Laozi.

Nanrong Zhu hung his head in shame and then, looking up with a sigh, said, "Now I've even forgotten the right answer to that, so naturally I can't ask any questions of my own."

"What does *that* mean?" asked Laozi.

"If I say I don't know, then people will call me an utter fool," said Nanrong Zhu. "But if I say I do know, then, on the contrary, I will bring worry on myself. If I am not benevolent, I will harm others; but if I am benevolent, then, on the contrary, I will make trouble for myself. If I am not righteous, I will do injury to others; but if I am righteous, then, on the contrary, I will distress myself. How can I possibly escape from this state of affairs? It is these three dilemmas that are harassing me, and so through Gengsang Chu's introduction, I have come to beg an explanation."

Laozi said, "A moment ago, when I looked at the space between your eyebrows and eyelashes, I could tell what kind of person you are. And now what you have said confirms it. You are confused and crestfallen as though you had lost your father and mother and were setting off with a pole to fish for them in the sea. You are a lost man—hesitant and unsure, you want to return to your true form and inborn nature, but you have no way to go about it—a pitiful sight indeed!"

Nanrong Zhu asked to be allowed to repair to his quarters. There he tried to cultivate his good qualities and rid himself of his bad ones; and after ten days of making himself miserable, he went to see Laozi again. Laozi said, "You have been very diligent in your washing and purifying—as I can see from your scrubbed and shining look. But there is still something smoldering away inside you—it would seem that there are bad things there yet. When outside things trip you up and you can't snare and seize them, then bar the inside gate. When inside things trip you up and you can't bind and seize them, then bar the outside gate. If both outside and inside things trip you up, then even the Way and its virtue themselves can't keep you going—much less one who is a mere follower of the Way in his actions."[6]

Nanrong Zhu said, "When a villager gets sick and his neighbors ask him how he feels, if he is able to describe his illness, it means he can still recognize his illness as an illness—and so he isn't all that ill. But now, if I were to ask about the Great Way, it would be like drinking medicine that made me sicker than before. What I would like to ask about is simply the basic rule of life preservation, that is all."

Laozi said, "Ah—the basic rule of life preservation. Can you embrace the One? Can you keep from losing it? Can you, without tortoise shell or divining stalks, foretell fortune and misfortune? Do you know where to stop; do you know where to leave off? Do you know how to disregard it in others and instead look for it in yourself? Can you be brisk and unflagging? Can you be rude and unwitting? Can you be a little baby? The baby howls all day, yet its throat never gets hoarse—harmony at its height![7] The baby makes fists all day, yet its fingers never get cramped—virtue is all it holds to. The baby stares all day without blinking its eyes—it has no preferences in the world of externals. To move without knowing where you are going, to sit at home without knowing what you are doing, traipsing and trailing about with other things, riding

6. Laozi is referring perhaps to himself or to Gengsang Chu. I follow Fukunaga in the interpretation of this paragraph.

7. Almost identical with a passage in *Daodejing* LV. Parts of this paragraph are in rhyme.

along with them on the same wave—this is the basic rule of life preservation, this and nothing more."

Nanrong Zhu said, "Then is this all there is to the virtue of the Perfect Man?"

"Oh, no! This is merely what is called the freeing of the ice bound, the thawing of the frozen. Can you do it?[8] The Perfect Man joins with others in seeking his food from the earth, his pleasures in Heaven. But he does not become embroiled with them in questions of people and things, profit and loss. He does not join them in their shady doings; he does not join them in their plots; he does not join them in their projects. Brisk and unflagging, he goes; rude and unwitting, he comes. This is what is called the basic rule of life preservation."

8. This sentence has dropped out of most versions of the text.

"Then is this the highest stage?"

"Not yet! Just a moment ago I said to you, 'Can you be a baby?' The baby acts without knowing what it is doing, moves without knowing where it is going. Its body is like the limb of a withered tree, its mind like dead ashes. Since it is so, no bad fortune will ever touch it, and no good fortune will come to it, either. And if it is free from good and bad fortune, then what human suffering can it undergo?"

He whose inner being rests in the Great Serenity will send forth a Heavenly light. But though he sends forth a Heavenly light, men will see him as a man, and things will see him as a thing. When a man has trained himself to this degree, then for the first time, he achieves constancy. Because he possesses constancy, men will come to lodge with him, and Heaven will be his helper. Those whom men come to lodge with may be called the people of Heaven; those whom Heaven aids may be called the sons of Heaven.

Learning means learning what cannot be learned; practicing means practicing what cannot be practiced; discriminating means discriminating what cannot be discriminated. Understanding that rests in what it cannot

understand is the finest.[9] If you do not attain this goal, then Heaven the Equalizer will destroy you.

Utilize the bounty of things and let them nourish your body; withdraw into thoughtlessness, and in this way give life to your mind; be reverent of what is within and extend this same reverence to others. If you do these things and yet are visited by ten thousand evils, then all are Heaven sent and not the work of man. They should not be enough to destroy your composure; they must not be allowed to enter the Spirit Tower.[10] The Spirit Tower has its guardian, but unless it understands who its guardian is, it cannot be guarded.

If you do not perceive the sincerity within yourself and yet try to move forth, each movement will miss the mark. If outside concerns enter and are not expelled, each movement will only add failure to failure. He who does what is not good in clear and open view will be seized and punished by men. He who does what is not good in the shadow of darkness will be seized and punished by ghosts. Only he who clearly understands both men and ghosts will be able to walk alone.[11]

He who concentrates on the internal does deeds that bring no fame. He who concentrates on the external sets his mind on the hoarding of goods.[12] He who does deeds that bring no fame is forever the possessor of light. He who sets his mind on the hoarding of goods is a mere merchant. To other men's eyes, he seems to be straining on tiptoe in his greed, yet he thinks himself a splendid fellow. If a man goes along with things to the end, then things will come to him. But if he sets up barriers against things, then he will not be able to find room enough even for himself, much less for others. He who can find no room for others lacks fellow feeling, and to him who lacks fellow feeling, all men are strangers. There is no weapon more deadly than the will—even Moye is inferior to it.[13] There are no enemies greater than the yin and yang—because nowhere between heaven and earth can you escape

9. Compare sec. 2, p. 14: "Therefore understanding that rests in what it does not understand is the finest. Who can understand discriminations that are not spoken, the Way that is not a way?"

10. "Spirit Tower," like "Spirit Storehouse," is a Daoist term for the mind; see the parallel passage in sec. 5, p. 39.

11. The thought and wording of this paragraph, particularly the key term "sincerity," are closely allied to the *Zhongyong* or "The Mean," a chapter of the *Book of Rites* that later became one of the most important texts in Confucian thought.

12. I follow Yu Yue in the interpretation of the word *chi.*

13. Moye, the famous sword of antiquity, was mentioned in sec. 6, p. 48.

from them. It is not that the yin and yang deliberately do you evil—it is your own mind that makes them act so.[14]

The Way permeates all things. Their dividedness is their completeness; their completeness is their impairment.[15] What is hateful about this state of dividedness is that men take their dividedness and seek to supplement it; and what is hateful about attempts to supplement it is that they are a mere supplementation of what men already have. So they go forth and forget to return—they act as though they had seen a ghost. They go forth and claim to have gotten something—what they have gotten is the thing called death. They are wiped out and choked off—already a kind of ghost themselves. Only when that which has form learns to imitate the formless will it find serenity.

It comes out from no source, it goes back in through no aperture. It has reality yet no place where it resides; it has duration yet no beginning or end. Something emerges, though through no aperture—this refers to the fact that it has reality. It has reality, yet there is no place where it resides—this refers to the dimension of space. It has duration but no beginning or end—this refers to the dimension of time. There is life, there is death, there is a coming out, there is a going back in—yet in the coming out and going back, its form is never seen.[16] This is called the Heavenly Gate. The Heavenly Gate is nonbeing. The ten thousand things come forth from nonbeing. Being cannot create being out of being; inevitably it must come forth from nonbeing. Nonbeing is absolute nonbeing, and it is here that the sage hides himself.

The understanding of the men of ancient times went a long way. How far did it go? To the point where some of them believed that things have never existed—so far, to the end, where nothing can be added. Those at the next stage thought that things exist.[17] They looked on life as a loss, on death as a return—thus they had already entered the state of dividedness. Those at the next stage said, "In

14. That is, the workings of the mind or will upset the balance of the yin and yang within the body and automatically bring on illness; see sec. 4, p. 26, n. 9.

15. Compare sec. 2, p. 11: "The Way makes them all into one. Their dividedness is their completeness; their completeness is their impairment." I follow Fukunaga in supplying the characters *chengye,* which are found in the Kōzanji text of the *Zhuangzi,* thus making the passage identical with that in sec. 2 just cited.

16. Compare sec. 2, p. 8: The "True Master . . . can act—that is certain. Yet I cannot see his form. He has identity but no form."

17. The paragraph up to this point is identical with the passage in sec. 2, pp. 11–12.

the beginning, there was nonbeing. Later there was life, and when there was life, suddenly there was death. We look on nonbeing as the head, on life as the body, on death as the rump. Who knows that being and nonbeing, life and death, are a single way?[18] I will be his friend!"

These three groups, while differing in their viewpoint, belong to the same royal clan; though, as in the case of the Zhao and Jing families, whose names indicate their line of succession, and that of the Qu family, whose name derives from its fief, they are not identical.[19]

Out of the murk, things come to life. With cunning, you declare, "We must analyze this!" You try putting your analysis in words, though it is not something to be put into words. You cannot, however, attain understanding. At the winter sacrifice, you can point to the tripe or the hoof of the sacrificial ox, which can be considered separate things and yet, in a sense, cannot be considered separate. A man who goes to look at a house walks all around the chambers and ancestral shrines, but he also goes to inspect the privies. And so for this reason, you launch into your analysis.[20]

Let me try describing this analysis of yours. It takes life as its basis and knowledge as its teacher and, from there, proceeds to assign "right" and "wrong." So in the end, we have "names" and "realities," and accordingly each man considers himself to be their arbiter. In his efforts to make other men appreciate his devotion to duty, for example, he will go so far as to accept death as his reward for devotion. To such men, he who is useful is considered wise; he who is of no use is considered stupid. He who is successful wins renown; he who runs into trouble is heaped with shame. Analyzers—that is what the men of today are![21] They are like the cicada and the little dove who agreed because they were two of a kind.[22]

If you step on a stranger's foot in the marketplace, you apologize at length for your carelessness. If you step on your older brother's foot, you give him an affectionate pat, and if you step on your parent's foot, you know you are

18. Following Wang Niansun, I read *dao* in place of *shou*; see sec. 22, p. 185, n. 15. The latter part of the passage is almost identical with sec. 6, p. 47.

19. I follow Zhang Binglin in the interpretation of *dai*, and Ma Xulun in emending the name Jia to Qu. The Zhao, Jing, and Qu families all were branches of the ruling family of the state of Chu. Zhao and Jing were the posthumous names of the rulers from whom the families descended: Qu was originally the name of the area where the Qu family was enfeoffed.

20. That is, because analysis is possible. This paragraph is a mass of textual problems and uncertainties, and only the most tentative translation can be offered. The point seems to be that although it is possible to analyze things such as an ox or a house into their component parts, nothing is gained by the process.

21. Following the texts that omit the *fei*.

22. On the cicada and the little dove, see sec. 1, p. 1–2.

already forgiven. So it is said, perfect ritual makes no distinction of persons; perfect righteousness takes no account of things; perfect knowledge does not scheme; perfect benevolence knows no affection; perfect trust dispenses with gold.[23]

23. With seals, tallies, and other pledges of good faith.

Wipe out the delusions of the will; undo the snares of the heart; rid yourself of the entanglements to virtue; open up the roadblocks in the Way. Eminence and wealth, recognition and authority, fame and profit—these six are the delusions of the will. Appearances and carriage, complexion and features, temperament and attitude—these six are the snares of the heart. Loathing and desire, joy and anger, grief and happiness—these six are the entanglements of virtue. Rejecting and accepting, taking and giving, knowledge and ability—these six are the roadblocks of the Way. When these four sixes no longer seethe within the breast, then you will achieve uprightness; being upright, you will be still; being still, you will be enlightened; being enlightened, you will be empty; and being empty, you will do nothing, and yet there will be nothing that is not done.

The Way is virtue's idol. Life is virtue's light. The inborn nature is the substance of life. The inborn nature in motion is called action. Action that has become artificial is called loss. Understanding reaches out, understanding plots. But the understanding of that which is not to be understood is a childlike stare. Action that is done because one cannot do otherwise is called virtue. Action in which there is nothing other than self is called good order. In definition, the two seem to be opposites, but in reality they agree.

Archer Yi was skilled at hitting the smallest target but clumsy in not preventing people from praising him for it. The sage is skilled in what pertains to Heaven but clumsy in what pertains to man. To be skilled in Heavenly affairs and good at human ones as well—only the Complete Man can encompass that. Only bugs can be bugs because only bugs can abide by Heaven. The Complete Man hates

Heaven and hates the Heavenly in man. How much more, then, does he hate the "I" who distinguishes between Heaven and man.[24]

If a single sparrow came within Archer Yi's range, he was sure to bring it down—impressive shooting. But he might have made the whole world into a cage, and then the sparrows would have had no place to flee to. That was the way it was when Tang caged Yi Yin by making him a cook and Duke Mu caged Boli Xi for the price of five ram skins.[25] But if you hope to get a man, you must cage him with what he likes, or you will never succeed.

The man who has had his feet cut off in punishment discards his fancy clothes—because praise and blame no longer touch him. The chained convict climbs the highest peak without fear—because he has abandoned all thought of life and death. These two are submissive[26] and unashamed because they have forgotten other men, and by forgetting other men, they have become men of Heaven. Therefore you may treat such men with respect, and they will not be pleased; you may treat them with contumely, and they will not be angry. Only because they are one with the Heavenly Harmony can they be like this.

If he who bursts out in anger is not really angry, then his anger is an outburst of nonanger. If he who launches into action is not really acting, then his action is a launching into inaction. He who wishes to be still must calm his energies; he who wishes to be spiritual must compose his mind; he who in his actions wishes to hit the mark must go along with what he cannot help doing. Those things that you cannot help doing—they represent the Way of the sage.

24. That is, though he "abides by Heaven"—that is, acts with complete naturalness and spontaneity—he deplores any conscious attempt to analyze or understand this naturalness, which is the Way.

25. Tang, founder of the Shang dynasty, recognized the worth of Yi Yin when the latter was serving as one of his cooks. Boli Xi, another worthy, was ransomed from captivity by Duke Mu of Qin for the price of five ram skins. On the latter, see sec. 21, p. 172, n. 10.

26. I follow Ma Xulun's emendation.

24

XU WUGUI

Through Nü Shang, the recluse Xu Wugui obtained an interview with Marquis Wu of Wei. Marquis Wu greeted him with words of comfort, saying, "Sir, you are not well. I suppose that the hardships of life in the mountain forests have become too much for you, and so at last you have consented to come and visit me."

"I am the one who should be comforting you!" said Xu Wugui. "What reason have you to comfort me? If you try to fulfill all your appetites and desires and indulge your likes and dislikes, then you will bring affliction to the true form of your inborn nature and fate. And if you try to deny your appetites and desires and forcibly change your likes and dislikes, then you will bring affliction to your ears and eyes. It is my place to comfort you—what reason have you to comfort me!"

Marquis Wu, looking very put out, made no reply.

After a little while, Xu Wugui said, "Let me try telling you about the way I judge dogs. A dog of the lowest quality thinks only of catching its fill of prey—that is, it has the nature of a wildcat. One of middling quality always seems to be looking up at the sun.[1] But one of the highest quality acts as though it had lost its own identity. And I'm even better at judging horses than I am at judging dogs. When I judge a horse, if he can gallop as straight as a plumb line, arc as neat as a curve, turn as square as a T square, and round as true as a compass, then I'd say he was a horse for the kingdom to boast of. But not a horse for the whole world to boast of. A horse the whole world can boast of—his talents are already complete. He seems

1. It is proud and self-confident.

dazed, he seems lost, he seems to have become unaware of his own identity, and in this way he overtakes, passes, and leaves the others behind in the dust. You can't tell where he's gone to!"

Marquis Wu, greatly pleased, burst out laughing.

When Xu Wugui emerged from the interview, Nü Shang said, "Sir, may I ask what you were talking to our ruler about? When I talk to him, I talk to him back and forth about the *Odes* and *Documents*, about ritual and music; and then I talk to him up and down about the *Golden Tablets* and the *Six Bow-Cases*.[2] I have made proposals that led to outstanding success in more cases than can be counted, and yet he never so much as bared his teeth in a smile. Now what were you talking to him about that you managed to delight him in this fashion?"

2. Probably works on military affairs, though their identity is uncertain.

Xu Wugui said, "I was merely explaining to him how I judge dogs and horses, that was all."

"Was that all?" said Nü Shang.

"Haven't you ever heard about the men who are exiled to Yue?" said Xu Wugui. "A few days after they have left their homelands, they are delighted if they come across an old acquaintance. When a few weeks or a month has passed, they are delighted if they come across someone they had known by sight when they were at home. And by the time a year has passed, they are delighted if they come across someone who even looks as though he might be a countryman. The longer they are away from their countrymen, the more deeply they long for them—isn't that it? A man who has fled into the wilderness, where goosefoot and woodbine tangle the little trails of the polecat and the weasel, and has lived there in emptiness and isolation for a long time, will be delighted if he hears so much as the rustle of a human footfall. And how much more so if he hears his own brothers and kin chattering and laughing at his side! It has been a long time, I think, since one who speaks like a True Man has sat chattering and laughing at our ruler's side."

* * *

Xu Wugui was received in audience by Marquis Wu. "Sir," said Marquis Wu, "for a long time now, you have lived in your mountain forest, eating acorns and chestnuts, getting along on wild leeks and scallions, and scorning me completely. Now is it old age, or perhaps a longing for the taste of meat and wine, that has brought you here? Or perhaps you have come to bring a blessing to my altars of the soil and grain."

Xu Wugui said, "I was born to poverty and lowliness and have never ventured to eat or drink any of your wine or meat, my lord. I have come in order to comfort you."

"What?" said the ruler. "Why should you comfort me?"

"I want to bring comfort to your spirit and body."

"What do you mean by that?" asked Marquis Wu.

Xu Wugui said, "Heaven and earth provide nourishment for all things alike. To have ascended to a high position cannot be considered an advantage; to live in lowliness cannot be considered a handicap. Now you, as the sole ruler of this land of ten thousand chariots, may tax the resources of the entire populace of your realm in nourishing the appetites of your ears and eyes, your nose and mouth. But the spirit will not permit such a way of life. The spirit loves harmony and hates licentiousness. Licentiousness is a kind of sickness, and that is why I have come to offer my comfort. I just wonder, my lord, how aware you are of your own sickness."[3]

Marquis Wu said, "I have, in fact, been hoping to see you for a long time, sir. I would like to cherish my people, practice righteousness, and lay down the weapons of war—how would that do?"

"It won't!" said Xu Wugui "To cherish the people is to open the way to harming them! To practice righteousness and lay down your weapons is to sow the seeds for more weapon wielding! If you go at it this way, I'm afraid you will never succeed. All attempts to create something admirable are the weapons of evil. You may think you are practicing benevolence and righteousness, but in effect

3. The meaning is doubtful. As Fukunaga points out, the sentence seems to be related to *Daodejing* LXXI.

you will be creating a kind of artificiality. When a model exists, copies will be made of it; when success has been gained, boasting follows; when debate[4] exists, there will be outbreaks of hostility. On the other hand, it will not do, my lord, to have files of marching soldiers filling the whole area in your fortress towers, or ranks of cavalry drawn up before the Palace of the Black Altar. Do not store in your heart what is contrary to your interests. Do not try to outdo others in skill. Do not try to overcome others by stratagems. Do not try to conquer others in battle. If you kill the officials and people of another ruler and annex his lands, using them to nourish your personal desires and your spirit, then I cannot say which contender is the better fighter and to which the real victory belongs! If you must do something, cultivate the sincerity that is in your breast and use it to respond without opposition to the true form of Heaven and earth. Then the people will have won their reprieve from death. What need will there be for you to resort to this 'laying down of weapons'?"

4. I follow Fukunaga in taking *bian* as a loan for the *bian* that means argument or debate.

The Yellow Emperor set out to visit Great Clod at Juci Mountain.[5] Fang Ming was his carriage driver, while Chang Yu rode at his right side; Zhang Ruo and Xi Peng led the horses, and Kun Hun and Gu Ji followed behind the carriage. By the time they reached the wilds of Xiangcheng, all seven sages had lost their way and could find no one to ask for directions. Just then they happened on a young boy herding horses and asked him for directions. "Do you know the way to Juci Mountain?" they inquired.

"Yes."

"And do you know where Great Clod is to be found?"

"Yes."

"What an astonishing young man!" said the Yellow Emperor. "You not only know the way to Juci Mountain, but you even know where Great Clod is to be found! Do you mind if I ask you about how to govern the empire?"

5. Great Clod (I take *wei* as standing for *kuai*) here represents the way. The names of the Yellow Emperor's attendants probably have some allegorical significance as well, but their exact meaning is uncertain, and it seems best not to attempt to translate them.

"Governing the empire just means doing what I'm doing here, doesn't it?" said the young boy. "What about it is special? When I was little, I used to go wandering within the Six Realms, but in time I contracted a disease that blurred my eyesight. An elderly gentleman advised me to mount the chariot of the sun and go wandering in the wilds of Xiangcheng, and now my illness is getting a little better. Soon I can go wandering once more, this time beyond the Six Realms. Governing the empire just means doing what I'm doing—I don't see why it has to be anything special."

"It's true that governing the empire is not something that need concern you, sir," said the Yellow Emperor. "Nevertheless, I would like to ask you how it should be done."

The young boy made excuses, but when the Yellow Emperor repeated his request, the boy said, "Governing the empire, I suppose, is not much different from herding horses. Get rid of whatever is harmful to the horses—that's all."

The Yellow Emperor, addressing the boy as "Heavenly Master," bowed twice, touching his head to the ground, and retired.

The wise man is not happy without the modulations of idea and thought; the rhetorician is not happy without the progression of argument and rebuttal; the examiner is not happy without the tasks of interrogation and intimidation. All are penned in by these things. Men who attract the attention of the age win glory at court; men who hit it off well with the people shine in public office; men of strength and sinew welcome hardship; men of bravery and daring are spurred on by peril; men of arms and armor delight in combat; men of haggard-hermit looks reach out for fame; men of laws and regulations long for broader legislation; men of ritual and instruction revere appearances; men of benevolence and righteousness value human

relationships. The farmer is not content if he does not have his work in the fields and weed patches; the merchant is not content if he does not have his affairs at the marketplace and well side. The common people work hardest when they have their sunup-to-sundown occupations; the hundred artisans are most vigorous when they are exercising their skills with tools and machines. If his goods and coins do not pile up, the greedy man frets; if his might and authority do not increase, the ambitious man grieves. Servants to circumstance and things, they delight in change, and if the moment comes when they can put their talents to use, then they cannot keep from acting. In this way, they all follow along with the turning years, letting themselves be changed by things.[6] Driving their bodies and natures on and on, they drown in the ten thousand things and, to the end of their days never turn back. Pitiful, are they not?

6. I follow Ma Xulun in reading *er* in place of *bu*.

Zhuangzi said, "If an archer, without taking aim at the mark, just happens to hit it, and we dub him a skilled archer, then everyone in the world can be an Archer Yi—all right?"

"All right," said Huizi.

Zhuangzi said, "If there is no publicly accepted 'right' in the world, but each person takes right to be what he himself thinks is right, then everyone in the world can be a Yao—all right?"

"All right," said Huizi.

Zhuangzi said, "Well then, here are the four schools of the Confucians, Mo, Yang, and Bing[7] and, with your own, that makes five. Now which of you is, in fact, right? Or is it perhaps like the case of Lu Ju? His disciple said to him, 'Master, I have grasped your Way. I can build a fire under the cauldron in winter and make ice in summer.' 'But that is simply using the yang to attract the yang, and the yin to attract the yin,' said Lu Ju.[8] 'That is not what I call the Way! I will show you my Way!' Thereupon he tuned two lutes, placed one in the hall, and the other in an inner

7. The philosophers Mo Di and Yang Zhu appeared on p. 61. Bing is the polite name of the logician Gongsun Long (see p. 135); some scholars take the fourth philosopher to be Song Keng (see p. 291).

8. Winter is dominated by yin, the element of cold and water; summer by yang, the element of heat and fire. But to produce fire, the disciple must have utilized some source of heat, and to produce ice, some source of cold; hence he was merely "using the yang to attract the yang," etc.

room. When he struck the *gong* note on one lute, the *gong* on the other lute sounded; when he struck the *jue* note, the other *jue* sounded—the pitch of the two instruments was in perfect accord. Then he changed the tuning of one string so that it no longer corresponded to any of the five notes. When he plucked this string, it set all the twenty-five strings of the other instrument to jangling. But he was still using sounds to produce his effect; in this case it just happened to be the note that governs the other notes. Now is this the way it is in your case?"[9]

Huizi said, "The followers of Confucius, Mo, Yang, and Bing often engage with me in debate, each of us trying to overwhelm the others with phrases and to silence them with shouts—but so far they have never proved me wrong. So what do you make of that?"

Zhuangzi said, "A man of Qi sold his own son into service in Song, having dubbed him Gatekeeper and maimed him;[10] but when he acquired any bells or chimes, he wrapped them up carefully to prevent breakage. Another man went looking for a lost son but was unwilling to go any farther than the border in his search—there are men as mixed up as this, you know. Or like the man of Chu who had been maimed and sold into service as a gatekeeper and who, in the middle of the night when no one else was around, picked a fight with the boatman. Though he didn't actually arouse any criticism, what he did was enough to create the grounds for a nasty grudge."[11]

Zhuangzi was accompanying a funeral when he passed by Huizi's grave. Turning to his attendants, he said, "There was once a plasterer who, if he got a speck of mud on the tip of his nose no thicker than a fly's wing, would get his friend Carpenter Shi to slice it off for him. Carpenter Shi, whirling his hatchet with a noise like the wind, would accept the assignment and proceed to slice, removing every bit of mud without injury to the nose, while the plasterer just stood there completely unperturbed. Lord Yuan of Song, hearing of this feat, summoned Carpenter Shi and said,

9. The point of the story seems to be that although Lu Ju made fun of his disciple for "simply using the yang to attract the yang," his own stunts were confined to the same level; that is, he used sounds to produce sounds. In the same way, the various philosophers debate back and forth, but none ever succeeds in going beyond the level of the relative.

10. It was the custom to employ condemned criminals who had had their feet cut off or maimed as gatekeepers, though not, as in this case, deliberately to maim men for that purpose.

11. This last paragraph is all but unintelligible as it stands. For the most part, I follow Fukunaga's emendations and interpretations. Zhuangzi is warning Huizi that his debates with the other philosophers may actually put him in peril.

'Could you try performing it for me?' But Carpenter Shi replied, 'It's true that I was once able to slice like that—but the material I worked on has been dead these many years.' Since you died, Master Hui, I have had no material to work on. There's no one I can talk to any more."

When Guan Zhong fell ill, Duke Huan went to inquire how he was.[12] "Father Zhong," he said, "you are very ill. If—can I help but say it?—if your illness should become critical, then to whom could I entrust the affairs of the state?"

12. On Guan Zhong and Duke Huan, see p. 150.

Guan Zhong said, "To whom would Your Grace like to entrust them?"

"Bao Shuya," said the duke.

"That will never do! He is a fine man, a man of honesty and integrity. But he will have nothing to do with those who are not like himself. And if he once hears of someone's error, he won't forget it to the end of his days. If he were given charge of the state, he would be sure to tangle with you on the higher level and rile the people below him. It would be no time at all before he did something you considered unpardonable."

"Well then, who will do?" asked the duke.

"If I must give an answer, then I would say that Xi Peng will do. He forgets those in high places and does not abandon those in low ones.[13] He is ashamed that he himself is not like the Yellow Emperor, and pities those who are not like himself. He who shares his virtue with others is called a sage; he who shares his talents with others is called a worthy man. If he uses his worth in an attempt to oversee others, then he will never win their support; but if he uses it to humble himself before others, then he will never fail to win their support. With such a man, there are things within the state that he doesn't bother to hear about, things within the family that he doesn't bother to look after. If I must give an answer, I would say that Xi Peng will do."

13. Following the version in *Liezi,* sec. 6, I supply a *bu* before the second verb. There are many versions of this anecdote found in early philosophical texts, and this sentence appears in different form in each.

* * *

The king of Wu, boating on the Yangtze, stopped to climb a mountain noted for its monkeys. When the pack of monkeys saw him, they dropped what they were doing in terror and scampered off to hide in the deep brush. But there was one monkey who, lounging about nonchalantly, picking at things, scratching, decided to display his skill to the king. When the king shot at him, he snatched hold of the flying arrows with the greatest nimbleness and speed. The king thereupon ordered his attendants to hurry forward and join in the shooting, and the monkey was soon captured and killed. The king turned to his friend Yan Buyi and said, "This monkey, flouting its skill, trusting to its tricks, deliberately displayed its contempt for me—so it met with this end. Take warning from it! Ah—you must never let your expression show arrogance toward others! "

When Yan Buyi returned, he put himself under the instruction of Dong Wu, learning to wipe the expression from his face, to discard delight, to excuse himself from renown—and at the end of three years, everyone in the state was praising him.

Ziai of Nanpo[14] sat leaning on his armrest, staring up at the sky and breathing. Yan Chengzi entered and said, "Master, you surpass all other things! Can you really make the body like a withered tree and the mind like dead ashes?"

"Once I lived in a mountain cave. At that time, Tian He came to pay me one visit, and the people of the state of Qi congratulated him three times.[15] I must have had hold of[16] something in order for him to find out who I was; I must have been peddling something in order for him to come and buy. If I had not had hold of something, then how would he have been able to find out who I was? If I had not been peddling something, then how would he have been able to buy? Ah, how I pitied those men who destroy themselves! Then again, I pitied those who pity others, and again, I pitied those who pity those who pity others. But all that was long ago."

14. Presumably the same as Ziqi of South Wall; see p. 7.

15. Tian He was a high minister of Qi who became its virtual ruler; see p. 69. The people congratulated him because he recognized and paid honor to the sage recluse Ziqi.

16. I follow Xi Tong in taking *xian* as an error for *you.* Ziqi means that by becoming a recluse, he was deliberately courting notoriety and hence was no better than any other seeker of fame.

* * *

When Confucius visited Chu, the king of Chu ordered a toast. Sunshu Ao came forward and stood with the wine goblet, while Yiliao from south of the Market took some of the wine and poured a libation, saying, "[You have the wisdom of] the men of old, have you not? On this occasion, perhaps you would speak to us about it."

Confucius said, "I have heard of the speech that is not spoken, though I have never tried to speak about it. Shall I take this occasion to speak about it now? Yiliao from south of the Market juggled a set of balls, and the trouble between the two houses was resolved. Sunshu Ao rested comfortably, waving his feather fan, and the men of Ying put away their arms. I wish I had a beak three feet long!"[17]

These were men who followed what is called the Way that is not a way, and this exchange of theirs is what is called the debate that is not spoken. Therefore, when virtue is resolved in the unity of the Way and words come to rest at the place where understanding no longer understands, we have perfection. The unity of the Way is something that virtue can never master;[18] what understanding does not understand is something that debate can never encompass. To apply names in the manner of the Confucians and Mohists is to invite evil. The sea does not refuse the rivers that come flowing eastward into it—it is the perfection of greatness. The sage embraces all heaven and earth, and his bounty extends to the whole world, yet no one knows who he is or what family he belongs to. For this reason, in life he holds no titles, in death he receives no posthumous names. Realities do not gather about him, names do not stick to him—this is what is called the Great Man.

A dog is not considered superior merely because it is good at barking; a man is not considered worthy merely because he is good at speaking. Much less, then, is he to be considered great. That which has become great does not think it worth trying to become great, much less to be-

17. In 479 BCE, the year of Confucius's death, a nobleman of one branch of the royal family of Chu led an uprising. He tried to enlist the support of Xiong Yiliao from south of the Market (see sec. 20, p. 157), first attempting to persuade him, then threatening him at the point of a sword, but Yiliao steadfastly refused. Partly as a result, the revolt quickly failed, and peace was restored among the various branches of the royal family. The juggling of the balls presumably symbolized unconcern in the face of danger. Sunshu Ao, a high minister of Chu who lived a generation before Confucius, governed so effectively that he was able to rest in ease, and the people of the Chu capital, Ying, with no fear of foreign invasion, could lay away their arms; see p. 174. Both men appear here as examples of the superiority of silence over talk. The "beak three feet long" apparently represents the "speech that is not spoken," that is, the state of enlightenment; compare sec. 12, p. 89: "You may join in the cheeping and chirping, and when you have joined in the cheeping and chirping, you may join with Heaven and earth."

18. Following texts that read *zhou* instead of *tong*.

come virtuous. Nothing possesses a larger measure of greatness than Heaven and earth, yet when have they ever gone in search of greatness? He who understands what it means to possess greatness does not seek, does not lose, does not reject, and does not change himself for the sake of things. He returns to himself and finds the inexhaustible; he follows antiquity and discovers the imperishable—this is the sincerity of the Great Man.

Ziqi had eight sons, and lining them up in front of him, he summoned Jiufang Yin and said, "Please physiognomize my sons for me and tell me which one is destined for good fortune."

Jiufang Yin replied, "Kun—he is the one who will be fortunate."

Ziqi, both astonished and pleased, said, "How so?"

"Kun will eat the same food as the lord of a kingdom and will continue to do so to the end of his days."

Tears sprang from Ziqi's eyes, and in great dejection he said, "Why should my boy be brought to this extreme?"

"He who eats the same food as the ruler of a kingdom will bring bounty to all his three sets of relatives, not to mention his own father and mother," said Jiufang Yin. "Yet now when you hear of this, sir, you burst out crying—this will only drive the blessing away! The son is auspicious enough, but the father is decidedly inauspicious!"

Ziqi said, "Yin, what would you know about this sort of thing! You say Kun will be fortunate—but you are speaking solely of the meat and wine that are to affect his nose and mouth. How could you understand where such things come from! Suppose, although I have never been a shepherd, a flock of ewes were suddenly to appear in the southwest corner of my grounds or that, although I have no taste for hunting, a covey of quail should suddenly appear in the southeast corner—if this were not to be considered peculiar, then what would be? When my son and I go wandering, we wander through Heaven and earth. He and I seek our delight in Heaven and our food from the

earth. He and I do not engage in any undertakings, do not engage in any plots, do not engage in any peculiarities. He and I ride on the sincerity of Heaven and earth and do not allow things to set us at odds with it. He and I stroll and saunter in unity, but never do we try to do what is appropriate to the occasion. Now you tell me of this vulgar and worldly 'reward' that is to come to him. As a rule, where there is some peculiar manifestation, there must invariably have been some peculiar deed to call it forth. But surely this cannot be due to any fault of my son and me—it must be inflicted by Heaven. It is for this reason that I weep!"

Not long afterward, Ziqi sent his son Kun on an errand to the state of Yan, and along the way he was seized by bandits. They considered that he would be difficult to sell as a slave in his present state but that if they cut off his feet, they could dispose of him easily.[19] Accordingly, they cut off his feet and sold him in the state of Qi. As it happened, he was made gatekeeper of the inner chamber in the palace of Duke Kang[20] and so was able to eat meat until the end of his days.

19. As we have seen earlier, men whose feet were maimed were employed as gatekeepers because they couldn't run away.

20. Following Sun Yirang's emendations.

Nie Que happened to meet Xu You. "Where are you going?" he asked.

"I'm running away from Yao."

"Why is that?"

"Because Yao is so earnestly and everlastingly benevolent! I'm afraid he'll make himself the laughingstock of the world. In later ages, men may even end up eating one another because of him![21] There is nothing difficult about attracting the people. Love them and they will feel affection for you; benefit them and they will flock to you; praise them and they will do their best; do something they dislike and they will scatter. Love and benefit are the products of benevolence and righteousness. There are few men who will renounce benevolence and righteousness, but many who will seek to benefit by them. To prac-

21. Compare sec. 23, p. 190.

tice benevolence and righteousness in such a fashion is at best a form of insincerity, at worst a deliberate lending of weapons to the evil[22] and rapacious. Moreover, to have one man laying down decisions and regulations for the 'benefit' of the world is like trying to take in everything at a single glance. Yao understands that the worthy man can benefit the world, but he does not understand that he can also ruin the world. Only a man who has gotten outside the realm of 'worthiness' can understand that!"

22. Reading *xiong* in place of *qin*.

There are the smug-and-satisfied, there are the precariously perched, and there are the bent-with-burdens. What I call the smug-and-satisfied are those who, having learned the words of one master, put on a smug and satisfied look, privately much pleased with themselves, considering that what they've gotten is quite sufficient, and not even realizing that they haven't begun to get anything at all. These are what I call the smug-and-satisfied.

What I call the precariously perched are like the lice on a pig. They pick out a place where the bristles are long and sparse and call it their spacious mansion, their ample park; or a place in some corner of the hams or hoofs, between the nipples, or down around the haunches, and call it their house of repose, their place of profit. They do not know that one morning the butcher will give a swipe of his arm, spread out the grass, light up the fire, and that they will be roasted to a crisp along with the pig. Their advancement in the world is subject to such limitations as this, and their retirement from it is subject to similar limitations. This is what I call the precariously perched.

What I call the bent-with-burdens are those like Shun. The mutton doesn't long for the ants; it is the ants that long for the mutton. Mutton has a rank odor, and Shun must have done rank deeds for the hundred clans to have delighted in him so. Therefore, though he changed his residence three times, each place he lived in turned into a city, and by the time he reached the wilderness of Deng,

he had a hundred thousand households with him. Yao heard of the worthiness of Shun and raised him up from the barren plains, saying, "May I hope that you will come and bestow your bounty on us?" When Shun was raised up from the barren plains, he was already well along in years, and his hearing and eyesight were failing, and yet he was not able to go home and rest. This is what I call the bent-with-burdens.

Therefore the Holy Man hates to see the crowd arriving, and if it does arrive, he does not try to be friendly with it; not being friendly with it, he naturally does nothing to benefit it. So he makes sure that there is nothing he is very close to and nothing he is very distant from. Embracing virtue, infused with harmony, he follows along with the world—this is what is called the True Man. He leaves wisdom to the ants, takes his cue from the fishes, leaves willfulness to the mutton.[23]

Use the eye to look at the eye, the ear to listen to the ear, and the mind to restore the mind. Do this, and your levelness will be as though measured with the line; your transformations will be a form of compliance. The True Man of ancient times used Heaven to deal with man; he did not use man to work his way into Heaven. The True Man of ancient times got it and lived, lost it and died, got it and died, lost it and lived. Medicines serve as an example.[24] There are monkshood, balloonflower, cockscomb, and chinaroot; each has a time when it is the sovereign remedy, though the individual cases are too numerous to describe.

Goujian, with his three thousand men in armor and shield, took up his position at Kuaiji; at that time, Zhong alone was able to understand how a perishing state can be saved, but he alone did not understand how the body may be brought to grief.[25] Therefore it is said, The owl's eyes have their special aptness, the stork's legs have their proper proportions; to try to cut away anything would make the creatures sad.

23. The ants and mutton (the text says "sheep," but presumably the word "meat" has dropped out) appeared earlier; on the fishes who "forget one another in the rivers and lakes," see sec. 6, p. 50.

24. As there are times when now one medicine, now another, will be appropriate, so there are times when life is appropriate, times when death is. The remainder of the chapter is rather disconnected in thought, and it is often difficult to make out the author's intent.

25. Goujian, king of Yue, was defeated by the troops of Wu (see p. 5) and forced to flee with a band of followers to the top of Mount Kuaiji. There he plotted revenge with Zhong and another trusted minister. But later, when he had successfully turned the tables and defeated Wu, he grew suspicious of Zhong and forced him to commit suicide.

It is said, When the wind passes over it, the river loses something; when the sun passes over it, it loses something. But even if we asked the wind and sun to remain constantly over the river, the river would not regard this as the beginning of any real trouble for itself—it relies on the springs that feed it and goes on its way. The water sticks close to the land; the shadow sticks close to the form; things stick close to things. Therefore keen sight may be a danger to the eye; sharp hearing may be a danger to the ear; and the pursuit of thought may be a danger to the mind. All the faculties that are stored up in man are a potential source of danger, and if this danger becomes real and is not averted, misfortunes will go on piling up in increasing number. A return to the original condition takes effort; its accomplishment takes time. And yet men look on these faculties as their treasures—is it not sad? Therefore we have this endless destruction of states and slaughter of the people—because no one knows enough to ask about This![26]

26. The Way.

The foot treads a very small area of the ground, but although the area is small, the foot must rely on the support of the untrod ground all around before it can go forward in confidence. The understanding of man is paltry, but although it is paltry, it must rely on all those things that it does not understand before it can understand what is meant by Heaven. To understand the Great Unity, to understand the Great Yin, to understand the Great Eye, to understand the Great Equality, to understand the Great Method, to understand the Great Trust, to understand the Great Serenity—this is perfection. With the Great Unity you may penetrate it;[27] with the Great Yin, unknot it; with the Great Eye, see it; with the Great Equality, follow it; with the Great Method, embody it; with the Great Trust, reach it; with the Great Serenity, hold it fast.

27. The Way.

End with what is Heavenly, follow what is bright, hide in what is pivotal, begin in what is objective—then your comprehension will seem like noncomprehension; your

understanding will seem like no understanding; not understanding it, you will later understand it. Your questions about it cannot have a limit, and yet they cannot not have a limit. Vague and slippery, there is yet some reality there. Past and present, it does not alter—nothing can do it injury. We may say that there is one great goal, may we not? Why not inquire about it? Why act in such perplexity? If we use the unperplexed to dispel perplexity and return to unperplexity, this will be the greatest unperplexity.

25

ZEYANG

When Zeyang was traveling in Chu, Yi Jie spoke to the king of Chu about him but gave up and went home without having persuaded the king to grant Zeyang an interview. Zeyang went to see Wang Guo and said, "Sir, I wonder if you would mention me to the king."[1]

Wang Guo replied, "I would not be as good at that as Gong Yuexiu."

Zeyang said, "Gong Yuexiu? What does he do?"

"In winter he spears turtles by the river; in summer he loafs around the mountains, and if anyone comes along and asks him about it, he says, 'This is my house!' Now since Yi Jie was unable to persuade the king, what could I do?—I am not even a match for Yi Jie. Yi Jie is the kind of man who has understanding, though he lacks real virtue. He is not permissive with himself but puts his whole spirit into pleasing his friends. He has always been dazzled and misled by wealth and eminence—so he is not the kind to help others out with virtue but instead will help them out with harm. A man who is chilled will think spring has come if he piles on enough clothes; a man suffering from the heat will think winter has returned if he finds a cool breeze.[2] Now the king of Chu is the kind of man who is majestic and stern in bearing, and if offended, he is as unforgiving as a tiger. No one but a gross flatterer or a man of the most perfect virtue can hope to talk him into anything.

"The true sage, now—living in hardship, he can make his family forget their poverty; living in affluence, he can make kings and dukes forget their titles and stipends and humble themselves before him. His approach to things is

1. Zeyang or Peng Yang (the name appears both ways in the passage) is vaguely identified as a native of Lu. In hopes of official appointment, he is obviously seeking an introduction to the king of Chu through various courtiers.

2. I fail to see how this saying, if I understand it correctly, is meant to apply to the context.

to go along with them and be merry; his approach to men is to take pleasure in the progress of others and to hold on to what is his own. So there may be times when, without saying a word, he induces harmony in others; just standing alongside others, he can cause them to change until the proper relationship between father and son has found its way into every home.[3] He does it all in a spirit of unity and effortlessness—so far is he removed from the hearts of men. This is why I say you should wait for Gong Yuexiu."

3. The latter part of the sentence is unintelligible in the original, and the translation is no more than a guess.

The sage penetrates bafflement and complication, rounding all into a single body, yet he does not know why—it is his inborn nature. He returns to fate and acts accordingly, using Heaven as his teacher, and men follow after, pinning labels on him. But if he worried about how much he knew and his actions were never constant for so much as a year or a season,[4] then how could he ever find a stopping place?

4. I follow Ma Xulun in the interpretation of *qi*; the sentence is vague, and there are many other interpretations.

When people are born with good looks, you may hand them a mirror, but if you don't tell them, they will never know that they are better looking than others. Whether they know it or don't know it, whether they are told of it or are not told of it, however, their delightful good looks remain unchanged to the end, and others can go on endlessly admiring them—it is a matter of inborn nature. The sage loves other men, and men accordingly pin labels on him, but if they do not tell him, then he will never know that he loves other men. Whether he knows it or doesn't know it, whether he is told of it or is not told of it, however, his love for men remains unchanged to the end, and others can find endless security in it—it is a matter of inborn nature.

The old homeland, the old city—just to gaze at it from afar is to feel a flush of joy. Even when its hills and mounds are a tangle of weeds and brush, and nine out of ten of the ones you knew have gone to lie under them, still you feel joyful. How much more so, then, when you see those you

used to see, when you hear the voices you used to hear—they stand out like eighty-foot towers among the crowd.[5]

Mr. Renxiang held on to the empty socket and followed along to completion.[6] Joining with things, he knew no end, no beginning, no year, no season.[7] And because he changed day by day with things, he was one with the man who never changes—so why should he ever try to stop doing this? He who tries to make Heaven his teacher will never get Heaven to teach him—he will end up following blindly along with all other things, and then no matter how he goes about it, what can he do? The sage has never begun to think of Heaven, has never begun to think of man, has never begun to think of a beginning, has never begun to think of things. He moves in company with the age, never halting; wherever he moves, he finds completion and no impediment. Others try to keep up with him, but what can they do?

Tang got hold of the groom and guardsman Deng Heng and had him be his tutor. He followed him and treated him as a teacher but was not confined by him—so he could follow along to completion, becoming, as a result, a mere holder of titles. This is called making yourself superfluous, a method by which two manifestations can be attained.[8] Confucius's injunction "Be done with schemes!"—you could let that be your tutor as well. Or Mr. Yongcheng's saying, "Be done with days and there will be no more years! No inside, no outside."

King Ying of Wei made a treaty with Marquis Tian Mou of Qi, but Marquis Tian Mou violated it.[9] King Ying, enraged, was about to send a man to assassinate him. Gongsun Yan, the minister of war, heard of this and was filled with shame. "You are the ruler of a state of ten thousand chariots," he said to the king, "and yet you would send a commoner to carry out your revenge! I beg to be given command of two hundred thousand armored troops so that I may attack him for you, make prisoners of his

5. Any number of different translations could be made of this haunting and troublesome paragraph, all as tentative as the one I offer here. It has traditionally been interpreted to express the joy a person experiences when he returns to his inborn nature.

6. Compare sec. 2, p. 10: "When the hinge is fitted into the socket, it can respond endlessly." Mr. Renxiang is vaguely identified as an ancient sage ruler.

7. I take *qi* as in the earlier passage; see n. 4.

8. Compare sec. 2, p. 11: "This is called walking two roads." It would seem that Tang turned over the actual affairs of government to Deng Heng and retained only the title of ruler for himself. But this whole passage is barely intelligible, and there are many interpretations.

9. There is some doubt about the names and identity of these noblemen.

people, and lead away his horses and cattle. I will make him burn with anger so fierce that it will break out on his back.[10] Then I will storm his capital, and when Tian Ji[11] tries to run away, I will strike him in the back and break his spine!"

Jizi, hearing this, was filled with shame and said, "If one sets out to build an eighty-foot wall, and then, when it is already seven-tenths finished,[12] deliberately pulls it down, the convict laborers who built it will look upon it as a bitter waste. Now for seven years we have not had to call out the troops, and this peace has been the foundation of your sovereignty. Gongsun Yan is a troublemaker—his advice must not be heeded!"

Huazi, hearing this, was filled with disgust and said, "He who is so quick to say 'Attack Qi!' is a troublemaker, and he who is so quick to say 'Don't attack Qi!' is a troublemaker! And he who says that both those who are for and against the attack are troublemakers is a troublemaker, too!"

"Then what should I do?" said the ruler.

"Just try to find the Way, that's all."

Huizi, hearing this, introduced Dai Jinren to the ruler. Dai Jinren said, "There is a creature called the snail—does Your Majesty know it?"

"Yes."

"On top of its left horn is a kingdom called Buffet, and on top of its right horn is a kingdom called Maul.[13] At times they quarrel over territory and go to war, strewing the field with corpses by the ten thousands, the victor pursuing the vanquished for half a month before returning home."

"Pooh!" said the ruler. "What kind of empty talk is this?"

"But Your Majesty will perhaps allow me to show you the truth in it. Do you believe that there is a limit to the four directions, to up and down?"

"They have no limits," said the ruler.

10. Men who develop ulcers on their back as a result of intense anger and frustration are mentioned in other early Chinese texts.

11. The commander of the Qi army.

12. Following Yu Yue, I read *qi* in place of *shi*.

13. I borrow these translations of the names with gratitude from Waley (*Three Ways of Thought*, p. 64).

"And do you know that when the mind has wandered in these limitless reaches and returns to the lands we know and travel, they seem so small that it is not certain whether or not they even exist?"

"Yes," said the ruler.

"And among these lands we know and travel is the state of Wei, and within the state of Wei is the city of Liang, and within the city of Liang is Your Majesty. Is there any difference between you and the ruler of Maul?"

"No difference," said the king.

After the visitor left, the king sat stupefied, as though lost to the world. The interview over, Huizi appeared before him. "That visitor of ours is a Great Man," said the king.

"The sages themselves are unworthy of comparison with him!" Huizi said, "Blow on a flute, and you get a nice shrill note; but blow on the ring of your sword hilt, and all you get is a feeble wheeze. People are inclined to praise the sages Yao and Shun, but if you started expounding on Yao and Shun in the presence of Dai Jinren, it would sound like one little wheeze!"

When Confucius was traveling to the capital of Chu, he stopped for the night at a tavern at Ant Knoll. Next door a crowd of husbands and wives, menservants and maidservants, had climbed up to the rooftop [to watch].[14] Zilu said, "Who are all those people milling around?"

"They are the servants of a sage," said Confucius. "He has buried himself among the people, hidden himself among the fields. His reputation fades away, but his determination knows no end. Though his mouth speaks, his mind has never spoken. Perhaps he finds himself at odds with the age and, in his heart, disdains to go along with it. He is one who has 'drowned in the midst of dry land.' I would guess that it is Yiliao from south of the Market."[15]

"May I go next door and call him over?" asked Zilu.

14. The text says only that they had climbed to the roof (if that is, in fact, the meaning of *dengjí*). Commentators disagree as to why they were there, but it seems most natural to suppose that they had gathered to gawk at Confucius, the pseudo sage, unaware that they were actually in the employ of a real sage.

15. See sec. 20, p. 157, and sec. 24, p. 208.

"Let it be!" said Confucius. "He knows that I am out to make a name for myself, and he knows I am on my way to the capital of Chu. He is sure to assume that I am trying to get the king of Chu to give me a position and will accordingly take me for a sycophant. A man like that is ashamed even to hear the words of a sycophant, much less appear in person before him! What makes you think he is still at home, anyway?"

Zilu went next door to have a look and found the house deserted.

16. A disciple of Confucius.

The border guard of Zhangwu said to Zilao,[16] "In running the government, you mustn't be slipshod; in ordering the people, you mustn't be slapdash! In the past, I used to grow grain. I plowed in a slipshod way and got a slipshod crop in return. I weeded in a slapdash way and got a slapdash crop in return. The following year, I changed my methods, plowing deeper than before and raking with great care—the grain grew thick and luxuriant, and I had all I wanted to eat for the whole year!"

Zhuangzi, hearing of this, said, "People of today, when they come to ordering their bodies and regulating their minds, too, often do it in a manner like that which the border guard described. They turn their backs on the Heavenly part, deviate from the inborn nature, destroy the true form, and annihilate the spirit, just to be doing what the crowd is doing. So he who is slipshod with his inborn nature will find the evils of desire and hate affecting his inborn nature like weeds and rushes. When they first sprout up, he thinks they will be a comfort to the body, but in time they end by stifling the inborn nature. Side by side, they begin to break out and ooze forth, not on just one part of the body, but all over. Festering ulcers and boils, internal fevers and pus-filled urine—these are the results!"

Bo Ju, having studied under Lao Dan, said, "I would like permission to go wandering about the world."

"Let it be!" said Lao Dan. "The world is right here."

When Bo Ju repeated his request, Lao Dan said, "Where will you go first?"

"I will begin with Qi." When he arrived in Qi, he saw the body of a criminal who had been executed.[17] Pushing and dragging until he had it laid out in proper position, he took off his formal robes and covered it with them, wailing to Heaven and crying out, "Alas, alas! The world is in dire misfortune, and you have been quicker than the rest of us to encounter it. 'Thou shalt not steal; thou shalt not murder!' they say. But when glory and disgrace have once been defined, you will see suffering; when goods and wealth have once been gathered together, you will see wrangling. To define something that brings suffering to men, to gather together what sets them to wrangling, inflicting misery and weariness on them, never granting them a time of rest, and yet to hope somehow that they will not end up like this—how could it be possible?

17. Bodies of executed criminals were exposed in the marketplace.

"The gentlemen of old attributed what success they had to the people and what failure they had to themselves, attributed what was upright to the people and what was askew to themselves. Therefore, if there was something wrong with the body of even a single being, they would retire and take the blame themselves. But that is not the way it is done today. They make things obscure and then blame people for not understanding;[18] they enlarge the difficulties and then punish people for not being able to cope with them; they pile on responsibilities and then penalize people for not being able to fulfill them; they make the journey longer and then chastise people for not reaching the end of it. When the knowledge and strength of the people are exhausted, they will begin to piece them out with artifice; and when day by day the amount of artifice in the world increases, how can men keep from resorting to artifice? A lack of strength invites artifice; a lack of knowledge invites deceit; a lack of goods invites theft. But these thefts and robberies—who in fact deserves the blame for them?"

18. Following Yu Yue, I read *guo* in place of *yu*, but perhaps the phrase should be further emended.

* * *

Qu Boyu has been going along for sixty years and has changed sixty times. There was not a single instance in which what he called right in the beginning he did not, in the end, reject and call wrong. So now there's no telling whether what he calls right at the moment is not, in fact, what he called wrong during the past fifty-nine years. The ten thousand things have their life, yet no one sees its roots; they have their comings forth, yet no one sees the gate. Men all pay homage to what understanding understands, but no one understands enough to rely on what understanding does not understand and thereby come to understand. Can we call this anything but great perplexity? Let it be, let it be! There is no place you can escape it. This is what is called saying both "that is so" and "is that so?"[19]

19. Compare sec. 2, p. 17, "If so were really so," etc.

Confucius said to the Grand Historiographers Da Tao, Bo Changqian, and Xi Wei, "Duke Ling of Wei drank wine and wallowed in pleasure, paying no heed to the government of the state; he went hunting and gaming with nets and stringed arrows, ignoring his obligations to the other feudal lords. How then does he come to be called Duke Ling?"[20]

Da Tao said, "It fitted the facts."

Bo Changqian said, "Duke Ling had three wives with whom he would bathe in the same tub. But when Shi Qiu appeared in his presence to offer a gift of cloth, the duke would accept it in person and respectfully attend Shi Qiu.[21] He was so depraved as to bathe with his wives and yet so correct in his behavior before a worthy man—this is why he was titled Duke Ling."

Xi Wei said, "When Duke Ling died, we divined to see if he should be buried in the family graveyard, but the omens were unfavorable. Then we divined to see if he should be buried at Sand Hill, and the omens were favorable. Digging down several fathoms, we found a stone coffin, and when we had washed and examined it, we dis-

20. Ling was the posthumous title bestowed on him by the court historiographers, whose duty it was to choose a title that was appropriate to the life and moral qualities of the deceased ruler. Ling may have either good or bad connotations, depending on how one interprets it. In what follows, it is apparent that Confucius is taking it in a good sense, Da Tao in a bad one, and Bo Changqian in both senses.

21. This is Fukunaga's guess as to what this impenetrable sentence means; he emends *suo* to *er*.

covered an inscription that said: 'You cannot depend on your heirs—Duke Ling will seize this plot for his own burial.'[22] So it appears that Duke Ling had already been titled Ling for a long long time. How could these two here know enough to understand this!"

22. Following texts that read *mai* in place of *li*.

Little Understanding said to Great Impartial Accord, "What is meant by the term 'community words'?"

Great Impartial Accord said, "'Community words' refers to the combining of ten surnames and a hundred given names into a single social unit.[23] Differences are combined into a sameness; samenesses are broken up into differences. Now we may point to each of the hundred parts of a horse's body and never come up with a 'horse'—yet here is the horse, tethered right before our eyes. So we take the hundred parts and set up the term 'horse.' Thus it is that hills and mountains pile up one little layer on another to reach loftiness; the Yangtze and the Yellow River combine stream after stream to achieve magnitude; and the Great Man combines and brings together things to attain generality.[24] Therefore, when things enter his mind from the outside, there is a host to receive them but not to cling to them; and when things come forth from his mind, there is a mark to guide them but not to constrain them.[25] The four seasons each differ in breath, but Heaven shows no partiality[26] among them, and therefore the year comes to completion. The five government bureaus differ in function, but the ruler shows no partiality among them, and therefore the state is well ordered. In both civil and military affairs, the Great Man shows no partiality, and therefore his virtue is complete.[27] The ten thousand things differ in principle, but the Way shows no partiality among them, and therefore they may achieve namelessness.[28] Being nameless, they are without action; without action, yet there is nothing they do not do.

"The seasons have their end and beginning, the ages their changes and transformations. Bad fortune and good, tripping and tumbling, come now with what repels you,

23. That is, "community words" are general terms or concepts that subsume a number of differing particulars. This section in parts resembles the discussion of semantics in sec. 17, pp. 129–131, and in *Xunzi*, sec. 22.

24. *Gong*, "common," "public," "generally accepted"; translated earlier as "impartial" in order to bring out the contract with "partiality."

25. Compare the similar passage in sec. 14, p. 114.

26. Following Ma Xulun's emendation. The word "breath" refers to the prevailing wind, temperature, and other weather phenomena associated with each season.

27. This sentence does not fit into the parallelism and is probably defective.

28. That is, can become one with the nameless Way.

now with what you welcome. Set in your own opinion, at odds with others, now you judge things to be upright, now you judge them to be warped. But if you could only be like the great swamp, which finds accommodation for a hundred different timbers, or take your model from the great mountain, whose trees and rocks share a common groundwork! This is what is meant by the term 'community words.'"

Little Understanding said, "Well, then, if we call these [general concepts] the Way, will that be sufficient?"

"Oh, no," said Great Impartial Accord. "If we calculate the number of things that exist, the count certainly does not stop at ten thousand. Yet we set a limit and speak of the 'ten thousand things'—because we select a number that is large and agree to apply it to them. In the same way, heaven and earth are forms that are large, the yin and yang are breaths that are large, and the Way is the generality that embraces them. If from the point of view of largeness we agree to apply [the name 'Way'] to it, then there will be no objection. But if, having established this name, we go on and try to compare it to the reality, then it will be like trying to compare a dog to a horse—the distance between them is impossibly far."[29]

Little Understanding said, "Here within the four directions and the six realms, where do the ten thousand things spring from when they come into being?"

Great Impartial Accord said, "The yin and yang shine on each other, maim each other, heal each other; the four seasons succeed each other, give birth to each other, slaughter each other. Desire and hatred, rejection and acceptance, thereupon rise up in succession;[30] the pairing of halves between male and female thereupon becomes a regular occurrence. Security and danger trade places with each other; bad and good fortune give birth to each other; tense times and relaxed ones buffet each other; gathering together and scattering bring it all to completion. These names and realities can be recorded; their details and minute parts can be noted. The principle of

29. That is, whatever name we agree to use in designating the Way, we must not suppose that it can in any sense adequately describe or convey an idea of the Way itself.

30. Following Wang Yun's interpretation.

following one another in orderly succession, the property of moving in alternation, turning back when they have reached the limit, beginning again when they have ended—these are inherent in things. But that which words can adequately describe, that which understanding can reach to, extends only as far as the level of 'things,' no further. The man who looks to the Way does not try to track down what has disappeared, does not try to trace the source of what springs up. This is the point at which debate comes to a stop."

Little Understanding said, "Ji Zhen's contention that 'nothing does it' and Jiezi's contention that 'something makes it like this'—of the views of these two schools, which correctly describes the truth of the matter, and which is one sided in its understanding of principles?"[31]

Great Impartial Accord said, "Chickens squawk, dogs bark—this is something men understand. But no matter how great their understanding, they cannot explain in words how the chicken and the dog have come to be what they are, nor can they imagine in their minds what they will become in the future. You may pick apart and analyze till you have reached what is so minute that it is without form, what is so large that it cannot be encompassed. But whether you say that 'nothing does it' or that 'something makes it like this,' you have not yet escaped from the realm of 'things,' and so in the end you fall into error. If 'something makes it like this,' then it is real; if 'nothing does it,' then it is unreal. When there are names and realities, you are in the presence of things. When there are no names and realities, you exist in the absence of things.[32] You can talk about it, you can think about it; but the more you talk about it, the further away you get from it.

"Before they are born, things cannot decline to be born; already dead, they cannot refuse to go. Death and life are not far apart, though the principle that underlies them cannot be seen. 'Nothing does it,' 'something makes it like this'—these are speculations born out of doubt. I look for the roots of the past, but they extend back and back without end. I search for the termination of the

31. Ji Zhen and Jiezi are philosophers of whom little is known. As we see here, the latter taught the existence of some prime mover or governor of the universe, while the former denied it.

32. Are these two sentences meant to express a contrast between the relativistic and the absolute viewpoints, or to be two statements of the relativistic viewpoint? I am unable to decide.

future, but it never stops coming at me. Without end, without stop, it is the absence of words, which shares the same principle with things themselves. But 'nothing does it,' 'something makes it like this'—these are the commencement of words, and they begin and end along with things.

"The Way cannot be thought of as being, nor can it be thought of as nonbeing. In calling it the Way, we are only adopting a temporary expedient. 'Nothing does it,' 'something makes it like this'—these occupy a mere corner of the realm of things. What connection could they have with the Great Method? If you talk in a worthy manner, you can talk all day long, and all of it will pertain to the Way. But if you talk in an unworthy manner, you can talk all day long, and all of it will pertain to mere things. The perfection of the Way and things—neither words nor silence is worthy of expressing it. Not to talk, not to be silent—this is the highest form of debate."

26

EXTERNAL THINGS

External things cannot be counted on. Hence Longfeng was executed, Bi Gan was sentenced to death, Prince Ji feigned madness, E Lai was killed, and Jie and Zhou were overthrown.[1] There is no ruler who does not want his ministers to be loyal. But loyal ministers are not always trusted. Hence Wu Yun was thrown into the Yangzi, and Chang Hong died in Shu, where the people stored away his blood, and after three years it was transformed into green jade.[2] There is no parent who does not want his son to be filial. But filial sons are not always loved. Hence Xiaoji grieved, and Zeng Shen sorrowed.[3]

When wood rubs against wood, flames spring up. When metal remains by the side of fire, it melts and flows away. When the yin and yang go awry, then heaven and earth see astounding sights. Then we hear the crash and roll of thunder, and fire comes in the midst of rain and burns up the great pagoda tree. Delight and sorrow are there to trap man on either side so that he has no escape. Fearful and trembling, he can reach no completion. His mind is as though trussed and suspended between heaven and earth, bewildered and lost in delusion. Profit and loss rub against each other and light the countless fires that burn up the inner harmony of the mass of men. The moon cannot put out the fire, so that in time, all is consumed, and the Way comes to an end.[4]

Zhuang Zhou's family was very poor, and so he went to borrow some grain from the marquis of Jianhe. The marquis said, "Why, of course. I'll soon be getting the tribute money from my fief, and when I do, I'll be glad

1. Guan Longfeng, minister to the tyrant Jie, and Prince Bi Gan, minister to the tyrant Zhou, appeared on p. 23. Prince Ji was a relative of Zhou who had to feign madness in order to escape execution. E Lai assisted Zhou and was put to death when Zhou was overthrown.

2. Wu Yun, or Wu Zixu, the loyal minister of Wu, appeared on p. 140. He was forced by the king to commit suicide, and his body was thrown into the Yangzi. Chang Hong is mentioned in the *Zuozhuan* as a minister of the Zhou court who was killed in 492 BCE. But if this is the same man, the story of his exile and suicide in Shu and the miraculous transformation of his blood must come from later legend.

3. Xiaoji was the eminently filial son of King Wuding of the Shang; he was said to have been persecuted by an evil stepmother. Zeng Shen, a disciple of Confucius and likewise a paragon of filial piety, was despised by his father.

4. This paragraph presents numerous difficulties of interpretation, and the translation is tentative at many points. In places the language appears to be that of ancient Chinese medicine, with its theories of the influences of the yin and yang acting within the body. Thus the moon may represent the watery force of the yin, or perhaps the cold light of the mind.

to lend you three hundred pieces of gold. Will that be all right?"

Zhuang Zhou flushed with anger and said, "As I was coming here yesterday, I heard someone calling me on the road. I turned around and saw that there was a perch in the carriage rut. I said to him, 'Come, perch—what are you doing here?' He replied, 'I am a Wave Official of the Eastern Sea. Couldn't you give me a dipperful of water so I can stay alive?' I said to him, 'Why, of course. I'm just about to start south to visit the kings of Wu and Yue. I'll change the course of the West River and send it in your direction. Will that be all right?' The perch flushed with anger and said, 'I've lost my element! I have nowhere to go! If you can get me a dipper of water, I'll be able to stay alive. But if you give me an answer like that, then you'd best look for me in the dried fish store!'"

Prince Ren made an enormous fishhook with a huge line, baited it with fifty bullocks, settled himself on top of Mount Kuaiji, and cast with his pole into the eastern sea. Morning after morning, he dropped the hook, but for a whole year he got nothing. At last a huge fish swallowed the bait and dived down, dragging the enormous hook. It plunged to the bottom in a fierce charge, rose up and shook its dorsal fins until the white waves were like mountains and the sea waters lashed and churned. The noise was like that of gods and demons, and it spread terror for a thousand *li*. When Prince Ren had landed his fish, he cut it up and dried it, and from Zhihe east, from Cangwu north, there was no one who did not get his fill. Since then, the men of later generations who have piddling talents and a penchant for odd stories all astound one another by repeating the tale.

Now if you shoulder your pole and line, march to the ditches and gullies, and watch for minnows and perch, then you'll have a hard time ever landing a big fish. If you parade your little theories and fish for the post of district magistrate, you will be far from the Great Understanding.

So if a man has never heard of the style of Prince Ren, he's a long way from being able to join with the men who run the world.

The Confucians rob graves in accordance with the *Odes* and ritual. The big Confucian announces to his underlings: "The east grows light! How is the matter proceeding?"

The little Confucians say: "We haven't got the grave clothes off him yet, but there's a pearl in his mouth![5] Just as the *Ode* says:

Green, green the grain
Growing on grave mound slopes;
If in life you gave no alms
In death how do you deserve a pearl?"

They push back his sidelocks, press down his beard, and then one of them pries into his chin with a little metal gimlet and gently pulls apart the jaws so as not to injure the pearl in his mouth.

5. The pearl or other precious stone customarily placed in the mouth of the corpse at burial.

A disciple of Lao Laizi[6] was out gathering firewood when he happened to meet Confucius. He returned and reported, "There's a man over there with a long body and short legs, his back a little humped and his ears set way back, who looks as though he were trying to attend to everything within the four seas. I don't know who it can be."

Lao Laizi said, "That's Kong Qiu. Tell him to come over here!"

When Confucius arrived, Lao Laizi said, "Qiu, get rid of your proud bearing and that knowing look on your face, and you can become a gentleman!"

Confucius bowed and stepped back a little, a startled and changed expression on his face, and then asked, "Do you think I can make any progress in my labors?"

Lao Laizi said, "You can't bear to watch the sufferings of one age, and so you go and make trouble for ten thousand

6. A Daoist sage and reputed author of a work in sixteen sections that is no longer extant. He is sometimes identified with Laozi.

ages to come![7] Are you just naturally a boor? Or don't you have the sense to understand the situation? You take pride in practicing charity and making people happy[8]—the shame of it will follow you all your days! These are the actions, the 'progress' of mediocre men—men who pull one another around with fame, drag one another into secret schemes, join together to praise Yao and condemn Jie, when the best thing would be to forget them both and put a stop to praise! What is contrary cannot fail to be injured; what moves [when it shouldn't] cannot fail to be wrong. The sage is hesitant and reluctant to begin an affair, and so he always ends in success. But what good are these actions of yours? They end in nothing but a boast!"[9]

7. Following texts that read *wu* in place of *ao*.

8. The meaning is very doubtful.

9. This last speech of Lao Laizi presents numerous difficulties, and the translation is tentative.

Lord Yuan of Song one night dreamed he saw a man with disheveled hair who peered in at the side door of his chamber and said, "I come from the Zailu Deeps. I was on my way as envoy from the Clear Yangzi to the court of the Lord of the Yellow River when a fisherman named Yu Ju caught me!"

When Lord Yuan woke up, he ordered his men to divine the meaning, and they replied, "This is a sacred turtle." "Is there a fisherman named Yu Ju?" he asked, and his attendants replied, "There is." "Order Yu Ju to come to court!" he said.

The next day Yu Ju appeared at court, and the ruler said, "What kind of fish have you caught recently?"

Yu Ju replied, "I caught a white turtle in my net. It's five feet around."

"Present your turtle!" ordered the ruler. When the turtle was brought, the ruler could not decide whether to kill it or let it live, and being in doubt, he consulted his diviners, who replied, "Kill the turtle and divine with it—it will bring good luck." Accordingly the turtle was stripped of its shell, and of seventy-two holes drilled in it for prognostication, not one failed to yield a true answer.[10]

10. Small indentations were drilled in the carapace, and heat was applied: divination was based on the shape of the cracks that resulted.

Confucius said, "The sacred turtle could appear to Lord Yuan in a dream, but it couldn't escape from Yu Ju's net. It knew enough to give correct answers to seventy-two queries, but it couldn't escape the disaster of having its belly ripped open. So it is that knowledge has its limitations, and the sacred has that which it can do nothing about. Even the most perfect wisdom can be outwitted by ten thousand schemers. Fish do not [know enough to] fear a net but only to fear pelicans. Discard little wisdom, and great wisdom will become clear. Discard goodness, and goodness will come of itself. The little child learns to speak, though it has no learned teachers—because it lives with those who know how to speak."

Huizi said to Zhuangzi, "Your words are useless!"

Zhuangzi said, "A man has to understand the useless before you can talk to him about the useful. The earth is certainly vast and broad, though a man uses no more of it than the area he puts his feet on. If, however, you were to dig away all the earth from around his feet until you reached the Yellow Springs,[11] then would the man still be able to make use of it?"

"No, it would be useless," said Huizi.

"It is obvious, then," said Zhuangzi, "that the useless has its use."

11. See p. 136, n. 17.

Zhuangzi said, "If you have the capacity to wander, how can you keep from wandering? But if you do not have the capacity to wander, how can you wander? A will that takes refuge in conformity, behavior that is aloof and eccentric—neither of these, alas, is compatible with perfect wisdom and solid virtue. You stumble and fall but fail to turn back; you race on like fire and do not look behind you. But though you may be one time a ruler, another time a subject, this is merely a matter of the times. Such distinctions change with the age, and you cannot call either one or the other lowly. Therefore I say, the Perfect Man is never a stickler in his actions.

"To admire antiquity and despise the present—this is the fashion of scholars. And if one is to look at the present age after the fashion of Xiwei, then who can be without prejudice?[12] Only the Perfect Man can wander in the world without taking sides, can follow along with men without losing himself. His teachings are not to be learned, and one who understands his meaning has no need for him.[13]

"The eye that is penetrating sees clearly, the ear that is penetrating hears clearly, the nose that is penetrating distinguishes odors, the mouth that is penetrating distinguishes flavors, the mind that is penetrating has understanding, and the understanding that is penetrating has virtue. In all things, the Way does not want to be obstructed, for if there is obstruction, there is choking; if the choking does not cease, there is disorder; and disorder harms the life of all creatures.

"All things that have consciousness depend on breath. But if they do not get their fill of breath, it is not the fault of Heaven. Heaven opens up the passages and supplies them day and night without stop. But man, on the contrary, blocks up the holes. The cavity of the body is a many-storied vault; the mind has its Heavenly wanderings. But if the chambers are not large and roomy, then the wife and mother-in-law will fall to quarreling. If the mind does not have its Heavenly wanderings, then the six apertures of sensation will defeat one another.

"The great forests, the hills and mountains, excel man in the fact that their growth is irrepressible. [In man,] virtue spills over into a concern for fame, and a concern for fame spills over into a love of show. Schemes are laid in time of crisis; wisdom is born from contention; obstinacy comes from sticking to a position; government affairs are arranged for the convenience of the mob.[14] In spring, when the seasonable rains and sunshine come, the grass and trees spring to life, and the sickles and hoes are, for the first time, prepared for use. At that time, more

12. Xiwei, identified as a mythical ruler of high antiquity, appeared on p. 45, as the sage who "held up heaven and earth." The Confucians and Mohists are the most notorious extollers of antiquity, but the same tendency is discernible at times in the Daoist school, for example, in Laozi's description of the ideal simplicity and primitiveness of the society of very ancient times. I suspect that "the fashion of Xiwei" is a reference to these advocates of ancient simplicity in the Daoist school, though our understanding of the passage is greatly hampered by the fact that we know almost nothing about the Xiwei legend. As this passage makes clear, Zhuangzi's ideal "wandering"—that is, living in accordance with the Way—does not permit either a forced conformity with the world or a forced withdrawal from, and denial of, the world.

13. The second part of the sentence is obscure in the original.

14. I take fame, show, schemes, wisdom, and the arranging of government affairs for the convenience of the mob to be "unnatural" and undesirable aims and activities that interfere with man's growth.

than half the grass and trees that had been pushed over begin to grow again, though no one knows why.[15]

"Stillness and silence can benefit the ailing, massage can give relief to the aged, and rest and quiet can put a stop to agitation. But these are remedies that the troubled and weary man has recourse to. The man who is at ease does not need them and has never bothered to ask about them. The Holy Man does not bother to ask what methods the sage uses to reform the world. The sage does not bother to ask what methods the worthy man uses to reform the age. The worthy man does not bother to ask what methods the gentleman uses to reform the state. The gentleman does not bother to ask what methods the petty man uses to get along with the times.

"There was a man of Yan Gate who, on the death of his parents, won praise by starving and disfiguring himself and was rewarded with the post of Official Teacher. The other people of the village likewise starved and disfigured themselves, and more than half of them died. Yao offered the empire to Xu You, and Xu You fled from him. Tang offered it to Wu Guang, and Wu Guang railed at him. When Ji Tuo heard of this, he took his disciples and went off to sit by the Kuan River, where the feudal lords went to console him for three years. Shentu Di, for the same reason, jumped into the Yellow River.[16]

"The fish trap exists because of the fish; once you've gotten the fish, you can forget the trap. The rabbit snare exists because of the rabbit; once you've gotten the rabbit, you can forget the snare. Words exist because of meaning; once you've gotten the meaning, you can forget the words. Where can I find a man who has forgotten words so I can have a word with him?"

15. This whole paragraph, and especially the last sentence, is very difficult to interpret, and there is no agreement among commentators as to the exact meaning.

16. Xu You, the recluse who refused Yao's throne, appeared on p. 3. A similar story is told about King Tang and the recluse Wu Guang. Ji Tuo and Shentu Di, along with Wu Guang, were mentioned on p. 43, but we know nothing of their stories. Apparently they withdrew or committed suicide out of sympathy for the insult that had been done to Wu Guang in offering him a throne.

27

IMPUTED WORDS

Imputed words make up nine-tenths of it; repeated words make up seven-tenths of it; goblet words come forth day after day, harmonizing things in the Heavenly Equality.[1]

These imputed words that make up nine-tenths of it are like persons brought in from outside for the purpose of exposition. A father does not act as go-between for his own son because the praises of the father would not be as effective as the praises of an outsider. It is the fault of other men, not mine, [that I must resort to such a device, for if I were to speak in my own words], then men would respond only to what agrees with their own views and reject what does not, would pronounce "right" what agrees with their own views and "wrong" what does not.

These repeated words that make up seven-tenths of it are intended to put an end to argument. They can do this because they are the words of the elders. If, however, one is ahead of others in age but does not have a grasp of the warp and woof, the root and branch of things, that is commensurate with his years, then he is not really ahead of others. An old man who is not in some way ahead of others has not grasped the Way of man, and if he has not grasped the Way of man, he deserves to be looked on as a mere stale remnant of the past.

With these goblet words that come forth day after day, I harmonize all things in the Heavenly Equality, leave them to their endless changes, and so live out my years. As long as I do not say anything about them, they are a unity. But the unity and what I say about it have ceased to be a unity; what I say and the unity have ceased to be a unity.[2]

1. See p. 17. The passage that follows describes three literary devises used in the *Zhuangzi* as a whole: (1) *yuyan*, "imputed words," words put into the mouth of historical or fictional persons to make them more compelling; (2) *chongyan*, "repeated words" (another interpretation would make it *zhongyan* or "weighty words"), words of the wise old men of the past that are "repeated" or quoted to give authority to the argument; and (3) *zhiyan*, "goblet words," words that are like a goblet that tips when full and rights itself when empty, that is, that adapt to and follow along with the fluctuating nature of the world and thus achieve a state of harmony.

2. Compare sec. 2, p. 12, but it seems odd that the two clauses should repeat the same idea.

Therefore I say, we must have no-words! With words that are no-words, you may speak all your life long, and you will never have said anything. Or you may go through your whole life *without* speaking them, in which case you will never have stopped speaking.

There is that which makes things acceptable; there is that which makes things unacceptable; there is that which makes things so; there is that which makes things not so. What makes them so? Making them so makes them so. What makes them not so? Making them not so makes them not so. What makes them acceptable? Making them acceptable makes them acceptable. What makes them not acceptable? Making them not acceptable makes them not acceptable. Things all must have that which is so; things all must have that which is acceptable. There is nothing that is not so, nothing that is not acceptable.[3] If there were no goblet words coming forth day after day to harmonize all by the Heavenly Equality, then how could I survive for long?

The ten thousand things all come from the same seed, and with their different forms they give place to one another. Beginning and end are part of a single ring, and no one can comprehend its principle. This is called Heaven the Equalizer, which is the same as the Heavenly Equality.

Zhuangzi said to Huizi, "Confucius has been going along for sixty years, and he has changed sixty times. What at the beginning he used to call right he has ended up calling wrong. So now there's no telling whether what he calls right at the moment is not, in fact, what he called wrong during the past fifty-nine years."[4]

Huizi said, "Confucius keeps working away at it, trying to make knowledge serve him."

"Oh, no—Confucius has given all that up," said Zhuangzi. "It's just that he never talks about it. Confucius said, 'We receive our talents from the Great Source, and with the spirit hidden within us,[5] we live.' [As for you, you]

3. Compare sec. 2, p. 10.

4. The same remark was made on p. 222 in reference to Qu Boyu.

5. Following Zhang Binglin's interpretation.

sing on key, you talk by the rules, you line up 'profit' and 'righteousness' before us, but your 'likes' and 'dislikes,' your 'rights' and 'wrongs,' are merely something that command lip service from others, that's all. If you could make men pay service with their minds and never dare stand up in defiance—this would settle things for the world so they would stay settled. But let it be, let it be! As for me, what hope have I of ever catching up with Confucius?"

Zengzi twice held office, each time with a change of heart.[6] "The first time, when I was taking care of my parents, I received a salary of only three *fu* of grain, and yet my heart was happy," he said. "The second time I received a salary of three thousand *zhong*, but I no longer had them to take care of, and my heart was sad."

6. Zeng Shen, the paragon of filial piety, appeared earlier; see esp. sec. 26, p. 227.

One of the disciples asked Confucius, "May we say that someone like Zeng Shen has escaped the crime of entanglement?"

"But he was already entangled! If he hadn't been entangled, how could he have had any cause for sorrow? He would have regarded three *fu* or three thousand *zhong* as so many sparrows or mosquitoes passing in front of him!"

Yan Cheng Ziyou said to Ziqi of East Wall, "When I began listening to your words, the first year I was a bumpkin; the second I followed along; the third I worked into it; the fourth I was just another thing; the fifth it began to come; the sixth the spirits descended to me; the seventh the Heavenly part was complete; the eighth I didn't understand death and didn't understand life; and with the ninth I reached the Great Mystery.

"When the living start doing things, they are dead. When they strive for public causes because private ones mean death, they are following a path. But what lives in the light is following no path at all.[7] What is the result then? How can there be any place that is fitting? How can

7. Literally, "what lives in the yang"; compare sec. 2, p. 8. "And when their minds draw near to death, nothing can restore them to the light."

there be any place that isn't fitting? Heaven has its cycles and numbers, earth its flats and slopes[8]—yet why should I seek to comprehend them? No one knows when they will end—how then can we say that they are fated to die? No one knows when they began—how then can we say that they are not fated to die? There seems to be something that responds—how then can we say there are no spirits? There seems to be something that does not respond—how then can we say that spirits do exist?"

8. Following Zhang Binglin's interpretation.

Penumbra said to Shadow, "A little while ago you were looking down, and now you're looking up; a little while ago your hair was bound up, and now it's hanging loose; a little while ago you were sitting, and now you're standing up; a little while ago you were walking, and now you're still—why is this?"

Shadow said, "Quibble, quibble! Why bother asking about such things? I do them, but I don't know why. I'm the shell of the cicada, the skin of the snake—something that seems to be but isn't. In firelight or sunlight, I draw together; in darkness or night, I disappear. But do you suppose I have to wait around for those things? (And how much less so in the case of that which waits for nothing!) If those things come, then I come with them; if they go, then I go with them; if they come with the Powerful Yang, then I come with the Powerful Yang. But this Powerful Yang—why ask questions about it?"[9]

9. The term "Powerful Yang" appeared in sec. 22, p. 180; the yang is the element of fire and hence is the essence of the firelight and sunlight mentioned earlier. This whole section is a reworking of the passage in sec. 2, p. 18.

Yang Ziju went south to Pei, and when he got to Liang, he went out to the edge of the city to greet Lao Dan, who had been traveling west to Qin, and escort him in. Laozi stood in the middle of the road, looked up to heaven, and sighed, saying, "At first I thought that you could be taught, but now I see it's hopeless!"

Yang Ziju made no reply, but when they reached the inn, he fetched a basin of water, a towel, and a comb and, taking off his shoes outside the door of the room, came

crawling forward on his knees and said, "Earlier I had hoped to ask you, sir, what you meant by your remark, but I saw that you were occupied and didn't dare. Now that you have a free moment, may I ask where my fault lies?"

Laozi said, "High and mighty, proud and haughty—who could stand to live with you![10] The greatest purity looks like shame; abundant virtue seems to be insufficient."[11]

When Yang Ziju first arrived at the inn, the people in the inn came out to greet him. The innkeeper stood ready with a mat, his wife with towel and comb, while the other guests moved politely off their mats, and those who had been warming themselves at the stove stepped aside. But when Yang returned from his interview with Laozi, the people at the inn tried to push him right off his own mat.[12]

10. According to another interpretation, these four adjectives are descriptions of good qualities, that is, of what Laozi wants Yang to become. Fukunaga takes them as synonymous with those in sec. 7, p. 55, translated as "peaceful and easy, wide-eyed, and blank."

11. Almost identical with a passage in *Daodejing* XLI.

12. Because he has ceased to look and act like a man of any importance, that is, had become a true follower of the Way.

28

GIVING AWAY A THRONE

Yao wanted to cede the empire to Xu You, but Xu You refused to accept it.[1] Then he tried to give it to Zichou Zhifu. Zichou Zhifu said, "Make me the Son of Heaven?—that would be all right, I suppose. But I happen to have a deep-seated and worrisome illness that I am just now trying to put in order. So I have no time to put the empire in order." The empire is a thing of supreme importance, yet he would not allow it to harm his life. How much less, then, any other thing! Only he who has no use for the empire is fit to be entrusted with it.

1. On Yao, Xu You, and the ceding of the throne, see p. 3. In this chapter, the writer illustrates the theme with tales of various historical or legendary figures.

Shun wanted to cede the empire to Zizhou Zhibo, but Zizhou Zhibo said, "I happen to have a deep-seated and worrisome illness that I am just now trying to put in order. So I have no time to put the empire in order." The empire is a great vessel, yet he would not exchange his life for it. This is how the possessor of the Way differs from the vulgar man.

Shun tried to cede the empire to Shan Quan, but Shan Quan said, "I stand in the midst of space and time. Winter days, I dress in skins and furs; summer days, in vine cloth and hemp. In spring, I plow and plant—this gives my body the labor and exercise it needs; in fall, I harvest and store away—this gives my form the leisure and sustenance it needs. When the sun comes up, I work; when the sun goes down, I rest. I wander free and easy between heaven and earth, and my mind has found all that it could wish for. What use would I have for the empire? What a pity that you don't understand me!" In the end, he would

not accept but went away, entering deep into the mountains, and no one ever knew where he had gone.

Shun wanted to cede the empire to his friend, the farmer of Stone Door. The farmer of Stone Door said, "Such vigor and vitality you have, my lord! You are a gentleman of perseverance and strength!" Then, surmising that Shun's virtue would hardly amount to very much, he lifted his wife on his back, took his son by the hand, and disappeared among the islands of the sea, never to return to the end of his days.

When the Great King Danfu was living in Bin, the Di tribes attacked his territory.[2] He offered them skins and silks, but they refused them; he offered them dogs and horses, but they refused them; he offered them pearls and jades, but they refused them. What the men of the Di tribes were after was his land. The Great King Danfu said, "To live among the older brothers and send the younger brothers to their death; to live among the fathers and send the sons to their death—this I cannot bear! My people, be diligent and remain where you are. What difference does it make whether you are subjects of mine or of the men of Di? I have heard it said, one must not injure that which he is nourishing for the sake of that by which he nourishes it."[3] Then, using his riding whip as a cane, he departed, but his people, leading one another, followed him and, in time, founded a new state at the foot of Mount Qi.

The Great King Danfu may be said to have known how to respect life. He who knows how to respect life, though he may be rich and honored, will not allow the means of nourishing life to injure his person. Though he may be poor and humble, he will not allow concerns of profit to entangle his body. The men of the present age, if they occupy high office and are honored with titles, all think only of how serious a matter it would be to lose them. Eyes

2. Danfu, ancestor of the royal house of Zhou, was the grandfather of King Wen, the founder of the Zhou dynasty.

3. That is, the lives of his people are far more precious to the ruler than the possession of his territory. This moral and the story of Danfu that illustrates it are famous in early Chinese literature and are found in numerous texts of the period.

fixed on profit, they make light of the risk to their lives. Are they not deluded indeed?

The men of Yue three times in succession assassinated their ruler. Prince Sou, fearful for his life, fled to the Cinnabar Cave, and the state of Yue was left without a ruler. The men of Yue, searching for Prince Sou and failing to find him, trailed him to the Cinnabar Cave, but he refused to come forth. They smoked him out with mugwort and placed him in the royal carriage. As Prince Sou took hold of the strap and pulled himself up into the carriage, he turned his face to heaven and cried, "To be a ruler! A ruler! Could I alone not have been spared this?" It was not that he hated to become their ruler; he hated the perils that go with being a ruler. Prince Sou, we may say, was the kind who would not allow the state to bring injury to his life. This, in fact, was precisely why the people of Yue wanted to obtain him for their ruler.

The states of Han and Wei were fighting over a piece of territory. Master Huazi went to see Marquis Zhaoxi, the ruler of Han. Marquis Zhaoxi had a worried look on his face. Master Huazi said, "Suppose the men of the empire were to draw up a written agreement and place it before you, and the inscription read: 'Seize this with your left hand and you will lose your right hand; seize it with your right hand and you will lose your left; yet he who seizes this will invariably gain possession of the empire.' Would you be willing to seize it?"

"I would not!" said Marquis Zhaoxi.

"Very good!" exclaimed Master Huazi. "From this I can see that your two hands are more important to you than the empire. And of course, your body as a whole is a great deal *more* important than your two hands, while the state of Han is a great deal *less* important than the empire as a whole. Moreover, this piece of territory that you are fighting over is a great deal less important than the

state of Han as a whole. And yet you make yourself miserable and endanger your life, worrying and fretting because you can't get possession of it!"

"Excellent!" said Marquis Zhaoxi. "Many men have given me advice, but I have never been privileged to hear words such as these!" Master Huazi, we may say, understood the difference between important and unimportant things.

The ruler of Lu, having heard that Yan He was a man who had attained the Way, sent a messenger with gifts to open relations with him. Yan He was in his humble, back-alley home, wearing a robe of coarse hemp and feeding a cow, when the messenger from the ruler of Lu arrived, and he came to the door in person. "Is this the home of Yan He?" asked the messenger. "Yes, this is He's house," said Yan He. The messenger then presented his gifts, but Yan He said, "I'm afraid you must have gotten your instructions mixed up. You'll surely be blamed if you give these to the wrong person, so you'd better check once more." The messenger returned, checked his instructions, and then went looking for Yan He a second time, but he was never able to find him. Men like Yan He truly despise wealth and honor.

Hence it is said, The Truth of the Way lies in looking out for oneself; its fringes and leftovers consist in managing the state and its great families; its offal and weeds consist in governing the empire. The accomplishments of emperors and kings are superfluous affairs as far as the sage is concerned, not the means by which to keep the body whole and to care for life. Yet how many gentlemen of the vulgar world today endanger themselves and throw away their lives in the pursuit of mere things! How can you help pitying them? Whenever the sage makes a move, you may be certain that he has looked carefully to see where he is going and what he is about. Now suppose there was a man here who took the priceless pearl of the marquis of Sui and used it as a pellet to shoot at a sparrow a thousand

yards up in the air—the world would certainly laugh at him. Why? Because that which he is using is of such great value, and that which he is trying to acquire is so trifling. And life—surely it is of greater value than the pearl of the marquis of Sui!

Master Liezi was living in poverty, and his face had a hungry look. A visitor mentioned this to Ziyang, the prime minister of Zheng, saying, "Lie Yukou appears to be a gentleman who has attained the Way. Here he is living in Your Excellency's state, and in utter poverty! It would almost seem that Your Excellency has no fondness for such gentlemen, does it not?"

Ziyang immediately ordered his officials to dispatch a gift of grain. Master Liezi received the messenger, bowed twice, and refused the gift. When the messenger had left and Master Liezi had gone back into his house, his wife, filled with bitterness, beat her breast and said, "I have heard that the wives and children of men who have attained the Way all live in ease and happiness—but here *we* are with our hungry looks! His Excellency, realizing his error, has sent the Master something to eat, but the Master refuses to accept it—I suppose this is what they call Fate!"

Master Liezi laughed and said, "His Excellency does not know me personally—he sent me the grain simply because of what someone had told him. And someday he could just as well condemn me to punishment, again simply because of what someone told him. That's why I refused to accept."

In the end, as it happened, rebellion broke out among the people of Zheng, and Ziyang was murdered.

When King Zhao of Chu was driven from his state, the sheep butcher Yue fled at the same time and followed King Zhao into exile.[4] When King Zhao regained control of the state, he set about rewarding his followers, but when it came the turn of the sheep butcher Yue, Yue said, "His Majesty lost control of the state, and I lost my job as

4. King Zhao was forced by the invading armies of Wu to flee his state in 506 BCE; he returned the following year.

sheep butcher. Now His Majesty has regained the state, and I have also gotten back my sheep-butchering job. So my 'title and stipend' have already been restored to me. Why should there be any talk of a reward?"

"Force him to take it!" ordered the king.

But the sheep butcher Yue said, "The fact that His Majesty lost the kingdom was no fault of mine—therefore I would not venture to accept any punishment for it. And the fact that His Majesty has regained the kingdom is no accomplishment of mine—therefore I would not venture to accept any reward for it."

"Bring him into my presence!" ordered the king.

But the sheep butcher Yue said, "According to the laws of the state of Chu, a man must have received weighty awards and accomplished great deeds before he may be granted an audience with the ruler. Now I was not wise enough to save the state or brave enough to die in combat with the invaders. When the armies of Wu entered the city of Ying, I was afraid of the dangers ahead, so I ran away from the invaders. I did not purposely follow after His Majesty. Now His Majesty wishes to disregard the laws and break the precedents by granting me an audience. But in view of the facts, that would not win me any kind of reputation in the world!"

The king said to Ziqi, his minister of war, "The sheep butcher Yue is a man of mean and humble position, and yet his pronouncements on righteousness are lofty indeed! I want you to promote him to one of the 'three banner' offices."[5]

When told of this, the sheep butcher Yue said, "I am fully aware that the 'three banner' rank is a far more exalted place than a sheep butcher's stall and that a stipend of ten thousand *zhong* is more wealth than I will ever acquire slaughtering sheep. But how could I, merely out of greed for title and stipend, allow my ruler to gain a reputation for irresponsibly handing out such favors? I dare not accept. Please let me go back to my sheep

5. Some versions of the text call them the "three scepter" offices; they are defined by commentators as the three highest ministerial posts in the state of Chu.

butcher's stall." And in the end, he refused to accept the position.

Yuan Xian lived in the state of Lu, in a tiny house that was hardly more than four walls. It was thatched with growing weeds, had a broken door made of woven brambles and branches of mulberry for the doorposts; jars with the bottoms out, hung with pieces of coarse cloth for protection from the weather, served as windows for its two rooms.[6] The roof leaked, and the floor was damp, but Yuan Xian sat up in dignified manner, played his lute, and sang. Zigong, wearing an inner robe of royal blue and an outer one of white, and riding in a grand carriage whose top was too tall to get through the entrance to the lane, came to call on Yuan Xian. Yuan Xian, wearing a bark cap and slippers with no heels, and carrying a goosefoot staff, came to the gate to greet him.

"Goodness!" exclaimed Zigong. "What distress you are in, sir!"

Yuan Xian replied, "I have heard that if one lacks wealth, that is called poverty; and if one studies but cannot put into practice what he has learned, that is called distress. I am poor, but I am not in distress!"

Zigong backed off a few paces with a look of embarrassment. Yuan Xian laughed and said, "To act out of worldly ambition, to band with others in cliquish friendships, to study in order to show off to others, to teach in order to please one's own pride, to mask one's evil deeds behind benevolence and righteousness, to deck oneself out with carriages and horses—I could never bear to do such things!"

6. Yuan Xian, a disciple of Confucius, was famous for his indifference to poverty. Zigong, who figures in this anecdote, was the most affluent of Confucius's disciples.

Zengzi[7] lived in the state of Wei, wearing a robe of quilted hemp with the outside worn through, his face blotchy and swollen, his hands and feet hard and callused. He would go three days without lighting a fire, ten years without making himself a new suit of clothes. If he tried to

7. Zeng Shen; see p. 227.

straighten his cap, the chin strap would break; if he pulled together his lapels, his elbows poked through the sleeves; if he stepped into his shoes, his heels broke out at the back. Yet, shuffling along, he would sing the sacrificial hymns of Shang in a voice that filled heaven and earth, as though it issued from a bell or a chiming stone. The Son of Heaven could not get him for his minister; the feudal lords could not get him for their friend. Hence he who nourishes his will forgets about his bodily form; he who nourishes his bodily form forgets about questions of gain; and he who arrives at the Way forgets about his mind.

Confucius said to Yan Hui, "Come here, Hui. Your family is poor and your position very lowly. Why don't you become an official?"

Yan Hui replied, "I have no desire to become an official. I have fifty *mou* of farmland outside the outer wall,[8] which is enough to provide me with porridge and gruel, and I have ten *mou* of farmland inside the outer wall, which is enough to keep me in silk and hemp. Playing my lute gives me enjoyment enough; studying the Way of the Master gives me happiness enough. I have no desire to become an official."

Confucius's face took on a sheepish expression, and he said, "Excellent, Hui—this determination of yours! I have heard that he who knows what is enough will not let himself be entangled by thoughts of gain; that he who really understands how to find satisfaction will not be afraid of other kinds of loss; and that he who practices the cultivation of what is within him will not be ashamed because he holds no position in society. I have been preaching these ideas for a long time, but now for the first time I see them realized in you, Hui. This is what *I* have gained."

Prince Mou of Wei, who was living in Zhongshan, said to Zhanzi, "My body is here beside these rivers and seas, but my mind is still back there beside the palace towers of Wei. What should I do about it?"[9]

8. About enough land to feed four people; cf. *Mencius* IA, 24.

9. Prince Mou of Wei appeared on p. 135. Apparently he was trying, without much success, to live the life of a hermit. Zhanzi, or Zhan He, is mentioned in early texts as a Daoist adept.

"Attach more importance to life!" said Zhanzi. "He who regards life as important will think lightly of material gain."

"I know that's what I should do," said Prince Mou. "But I can't overcome my inclinations."

"If you can't overcome your inclinations, then follow them!" said Zhanzi.

"But won't that do harm to the spirit?"

"If you can't overcome your inclinations and yet you try to force yourself not to follow them, this is to do a double injury to yourself. Men who do such double injury to themselves are never found in the ranks of the long-lived!"

Wei Mou was a prince of a state of ten thousand chariots, and it was more difficult for him to retire and live among the cliffs and caves than for an ordinary person. Although he did not attain the Way, we may say that he had the will to do so.

Confucius was in distress between Chen and Cai. For seven days, he ate no properly cooked food but only a soup of greens without any grain in it. His face became drawn with fatigue, but he sat in his room playing the lute and singing. Yan Hui was outside picking vegetables, and Zilu and Zigong were talking with him. "Our Master was twice driven out of Lu," they said. "They wiped out his footprints in Wei, chopped down a tree on him in Song, made trouble for him in Shang and Zhou, and are now besieging him here at Chen and Cai. Anyone who kills him will be pardoned of all guilt, and anyone who wishes to abuse him is free to do so. Yet he keeps playing and singing, strumming the lute without ever letting the sound die away. Can a gentleman really be as shameless as all this?"

Yan Hui, having no answer, went in and reported what they had said to Confucius. Confucius pushed aside his lute, heaved a great sigh, and said, "Those two are picayune men! Call them in here—I'll talk to them."

When Zilu and Zigong had entered the room, Zilu said, "I guess you could say that all of us are really blocked in this time."[10]

Confucius said, "What kind of talk is that! When the gentleman gets through to the Way, this is called 'getting through.' When he is blocked off from the Way, this is called 'being blocked.' Now I embrace the way of benevolence and righteousness and, with it, encounter the perils of an age of disorder. Where is there any 'being blocked' about this? So I examine what is within me and am never blocked off from the Way. I face the difficulties ahead and do not lose its Virtue. When the cold days come and the frost and snow have fallen, then I understand how the pine and the cypress flourish.[11] These perils here in Chen and Cai are a blessing to me!" Confucius then turned complacently back to his lute and began to play and sing again. Zilu excitedly snatched up a shield and began to dance, while Zigong said, "I did not realize that Heaven is so far above, earth so far below!"

The men of ancient times who had attained the Way were happy if they were blocked in, and happy if they could get through. It was not the fact that they were blocked or not that made them happy. As long as you have really gotten hold of the Way,[12] then being blocked or getting through are no more than the orderly alternation of cold and heat, of wind and rain. Therefore Xu You enjoyed himself on the sunny side of the Ying River, and Gong Bo found what he wanted on top of a hill.[13]

Shun wanted to cede the empire to his friend, a man from the north named Wuze. Wuze said, "What a peculiar man this ruler of ours is! First he lived among the fields and ditches, then he went wandering about the gate of Yao. Not content to let it rest at that, he now wants to take his disgraceful doings and dump them all over me. I would be ashamed even to see him!" Thereupon he threw himself into the deeps at Chingling.

* * *

10. The passage that follows involves a great deal of wordplay on the various meanings of *qiong* (to be blocked, hence, to be in trouble, in distress, etc.) and *da* (to get through, hence to master, to succeed).

11. A paraphrase of Confucius's remarks in *Analects* IX, 27: "Only when the year grows cold do we see that the pine and cypress are the last to fade."

12. Reading *de* (get) in place of *de* (virtue); compare the parallel text in *Lüshi chunchiu,* ch. 14, sec. 6.

13. Gong Bo was said to have occupied the throne for fourteen years (842–828 BCE) but abdicated and retired to a place called Mount Gong.

When Tang was about to attack Jie, he went to Bian Sui for help in plotting the strategy.[14] "It's nothing I'd know anything about!" said Bian Sui.

"Who would be good?" asked Tang.

"I don't know."

Tang then went to Wu Guang and asked for help. "It's nothing I'd know anything about!" said Wu Guang.

"Who would be good?" asked Tang.

"I don't know."

"How about Yi Yin?" asked Tang.

"A man of violence and force, willing to put up with disgrace—I know nothing else about him."

In the end Tang went to Yi Yin, and together they plotted the attack. Having overthrown Jie, Tang then offered to cede the throne to Bian Sui, Bian Sui refused, saying, "When you were plotting to attack Jie, you came to me for advice—so you must have thought I was capable of treason. Now you have defeated Jie and want to cede the throne to me—so you must think I am avaricious. I was born into this world of disorder, and now a man with no understanding of the Way twice comes and tries to slop his disgraceful doings all over me! I can't bear to go on listening to such proposals again and again!" Thereupon he threw himself into the Chou River and drowned.

Tang tried to cede the throne to Wu Guang, saying, "The wise man does the plotting, the military man the seizing, and the benevolent man the occupying—such was the way of antiquity. Now why will you not accept the position?"

But Wu Guang refused, saying, "To depose your sovereign is no act of righteousness; to slaughter the people is no act of benevolence; to inflict trouble on other men and enjoy the benefits yourself is no act of integrity. I have heard it said, If the man is without righteousness, do not take his money; if the world is without the Way, do not tread on its soil. And you expect me to accept such a position of honor? I can't bear the sight of you any longer!"

14. Tang attacked and overthrew his sovereign, Jie, the last ruler of the Xia dynasty, and founded the Shang or Yin dynasty.

Thereupon he loaded a stone onto his back and drowned himself in the Lu River.

Long ago, when the Zhou dynasty first came to power, there were two gentlemen who lived in Guzhu named Bo Yi and Shu Qi. They said to each other, "We hear that in the western region there is a man who seems to possess the Way. Let us try going to look for him." When they reached the sunny side of Mount Qi, King Wu, hearing of them, sent his younger brother Dan to meet them.[15] He offered to draw up a pact with them, saying, "You will be granted wealth of the second order and offices of the first rank, the pact to be sealed in blood and buried."[16]

The two men looked at each other and laughed, saying, "Hah—how peculiar! This is certainly not what *we* would call the Way! In ancient times, when Shennong held possession of the empire, he performed the seasonal sacrifices with the utmost reverence, but he did not pray for blessings. In his dealings with men, he was loyal and trustworthy and observed perfect order, but he did not seek anything from them. He delighted in ruling for the sake of ruling; he delighted in bringing order for the sake of order. He did not use other men's failures to bring about his own success; he did not use other men's degradation to lift himself up. Just because he happened along at a lucky time, he did not try to turn it to his own profit. Now the Zhou, observing that the Yin have fallen into disorder, suddenly makes a show of its rule, honoring those who know how to scheme, handing out bribes,[17] relying on weapons to maintain its might, offering sacrifices and drawing up pacts to impress men with its good faith, lauding its achievements in order to seize gain—this is simply to push aside disorder and replace it with violence!

"We have heard that the gentlemen of old, if they happened upon a well-ordered age, did not run away from public office; but if they encountered an age of disorder, they did not try to hold on to office at any cost. Now the world is in darkness, and the virtue of the Zhou in

15. Dan is better known by his title, the Duke of Zhou. Other versions of the story make it clear that the "man who seems to possess the Way," whose reputation had attracted the brothers, was King Wu's father, King Wen, who was already dead by this time.

16. According to ancient custom, an animal was sacrificed, and the parties to the pact smeared the corners of their mouths with its blood; then the text of the agreement was also smeared with blood and was buried beneath the sacrificial altar.

17. Following Wang Niansun's suggestions, I omit the word *xia.*

decline.[18] Rather than remain side by side with the Zhou and defile our bodies, it would be better to run away and thus protect the purity of our conduct!" The two gentlemen thereupon went north as far as Mount Shouyang, where they eventually died of starvation.

Men such as Bo Yi and Shu Qi will have nothing to do with wealth and eminence if they can possibly avoid it. To be lofty in principle and meticulous in conduct, delighting in one's will alone without stooping to serve the world—such was the ideal of these two gentlemen.

18. That is, King Wu, by resorting to arms and overthrowing the Yin dynasty, has shown himself far inferior to his father, King Wen, or his great grandfather, the Great King Danfu of the anecdote on p. 240. But some commentators would emend this to read "the virtue of the Yin."

29

ROBBER ZHI

Confucius was a friend of Liuxia Ji, who had a younger brother known as Robber Zhi. Robber Zhi, with a band of nine thousand followers, rampaged back and forth across the empire, assaulting and terrorizing the feudal lords, tunneling into houses, prying open doors,[1] herding off men's horses and cattle, seizing their wives and daughters. Greedy for gain, he forgot his kin, gave not a look to father or mother, elder or younger brother, and performed no sacrifices to his ancestors. Whenever he approached a city, if it was that of a great state, the inhabitants manned their walls; if that of a small state, they fled into their strongholds. The ten thousand people all lived in dread of him.

1. Following the emendation suggested by Sun Yirang.

Confucius said to Liuxia Ji, "One who is a father must be able to lay down the law to his son, and one who is an elder brother must be able to teach his younger brother. If a father cannot lay down the law to his son and an elder brother cannot teach his younger brother, then the relationship between father and son and elder and younger brother loses all value. Now here you are, sir, one of the most talented gentlemen of the age, and your younger brother is Robber Zhi, a menace to the world, and you seem unable to teach him any better! If I may say so, I blush for you. I would therefore like to go on your behalf and try to persuade him to change his ways."

Liuxia Ji said, "You have remarked, sir, that a father must be able to lay down the law to his son, and an elder brother must be able to teach his younger brother. But if the son will not listen when his father lays down the law, or if the younger brother refuses to heed his elder brother's

teachings, then even with eloquence such as yours, what is there to be done? Moreover, Zhi is a man with a mind like a jetting fountain, a will like a blast of wind, with strength enough to fend off any enemy, and cunning enough to gloss over any evil. If you go along with his way of thinking, he is delighted, but if you go against him, he becomes furious, and it is nothing to him to curse people in the vilest language. You must not go near him!"

But Confucius paid no attention, and with Yan Hui as his carriage driver, and Zigong on his right, he went off to visit Robber Zhi. Robber Zhi was just at that time resting with his band of followers on the sunny side of Mount Tai and enjoying a late afternoon snack of minced human livers. Confucius stepped down from the carriage and went forward till he saw the officer in charge of receiving guests. "I am Kong Qiu, a native of Lu, and I have heard that your general is a man of lofty principles," he said, respectfully bowing twice to the officer. The officer then entered and relayed the message. When Robber Zhi heard this, he flew into a great rage. His eyes blazed like shining stars, and his hair stood on end and bristled beneath his cap. "This must be none other than that crafty hypocrite Kong Qiu from the state of Lu! Well, tell him this for me. You make up your stories, invent your phrases, babbling absurd eulogies of Kings Wen and Wu. Topped with a cap like a branching tree, wearing a girdle made from the ribs of a dead cow, you pour out your flood of words, your fallacious theories. You eat without ever plowing, clothe yourself without ever weaving. Wagging your lips, clacking your tongue, you invent any kind of 'right' or 'wrong' that suits you, leading astray the rulers of the world, keeping the scholars of the world from returning to the Source, capriciously setting up ideals of 'filial piety' and 'brotherliness,' all the time hoping to worm your way into favor with the lords of the fiefs or the rich and eminent! Your crimes are huge, your offenses grave.[2] You had better run home as fast as you can, because if you don't, I will take your liver and add it to this afternoon's menu!"

2. Following the emendation suggested by Yu Yue.

Confucius sent in word again, saying, "I have the good fortune to know your brother Ji, and therefore I beg to be allowed to gaze from a distance at your feet beneath the curtain."[3]

3. A phrase of utmost politeness; Confucius would not venture to come close or look up at the face of his host but only gaze at his feet where they show beneath the curtain of state.

When the officer relayed this message, Robber Zhi said, "Let him come forward." Confucius came scurrying forward, declined the mat that was set out for him, stepped back a few paces, and bowed twice to Robber Zhi. Robber Zhi, still in a great rage, sat with both legs sprawled out, leaning on his sword, his eyes glaring. In a voice like the roar of a nursing tigress, he said, "Qiu, come forward! If what you have to say pleases my fancy, you live. If it rubs me the wrong way, you die!"

Confucius said, "I have heard that in all the world there are three kinds of virtue. To grow up to be big and tall, with matchless good looks, so that everyone, young or old, eminent or humble, delights in you—this is the highest kind of virtue. To have wisdom that encompasses heaven and earth, to be able to speak eloquently on all subjects—this is middling virtue. To be brave and fierce, resolute and determined, gathering a band of followers around you—this is the lowest kind of virtue. Any man who possesses even one of these virtues is worthy to face south and call himself the Lonely One.[4] And now here you are, General, with all three of them! You tower eight feet two inches in height; radiance streams from your face and eyes; your lips are like gleaming cinnabar; your teeth like ranged seashells; your voice attuned to the *huang zhong* pitch pipe—and yet your only title is 'Robber Zhi.' If I may say so, General, this is disgraceful—a real pity indeed! But if you have a mind to listen to my proposal, then I beg to be allowed to go as your envoy south to Wu and Yue, north to Qi and Lu, east to Song and Wei, and west to Jin and Chu, persuading them to create for you a great walled state several hundred *li* in size, to establish a town of several hundred thousand households, and to honor you as one of the feudal lords. Then you may make a new beginning with the world, lay down your weapons and disperse your

4. That is, become a ruler. The Chinese ruler faces south and refers to himself as the "Lonely One," either because of the uniqueness of his position or, if he has inherited the throne, because his father is dead.

followers, gather together and cherish your brothers and kinsmen, and join with them in sacrifices to your ancestors. This would be the act of a sage, a gentleman of true talent, and the fondest wish of the world."

Robber Zhi, furious as ever, said, "Qiu, come forward! Those who can be swayed with offers of gain or reformed by a babble of words are mere idiots, simpletons, the commonest sort of men! The fact that I am big and tall and so handsome that everyone delights to look at me—this is a virtue inherited from my father and mother. Even without your praises, do you think I would be unaware of it? Moreover, I have heard that those who are fond of praising men to their faces are also fond of damning them behind their backs.

"Now you tell me about this great walled state, this multitude of people, trying to sway me with offers of gain, to lead me by the nose like any common fool. But how long do you think I could keep possession of it? There is no walled state larger than the empire itself, and yet, though Yao and Shun possessed the empire, their heirs were left with less land than it takes to stick the point of an awl into. Tang and Wu set themselves up as Son of Heaven, yet in ages after, their dynasties were cut off and wiped out. Was this not because the gains they had acquired were so great?

"Moreover, I have heard that in ancient times the birds and beasts were many and the people few. Therefore the people all nested in the trees in order to escape danger, during the day gathering acorns and chestnuts, at sundown climbing back up to sleep in their trees. Hence they were called the people of the Nest Builder. In ancient times the people knew nothing about wearing clothes. In summer they heaped up great piles of firewood; in winter they burned them to keep warm. Hence they were called 'the people who know how to stay alive.' In the age of Shennong, the people lay down peaceful and easy, woke up wide-eyed and blank. They knew their mothers but not their fathers and lived side by side with

the elk and the deer. They plowed for their food, wove for their clothing, and had no thought in their hearts of harming one another. This was Perfect Virtue at its height!

"But the Yellow Emperor could not attain such virtue. He fought with Chi You in the field of Zhuolu until the blood flowed for a hundred *li*.[5] Yao and Shun came to the throne, setting up a host of officials; Tang banished his sovereign Jie; King Wu murdered his sovereign Zhou; and from this time on, the strong oppressed the weak, the many abused the few. From Tang and Wu until the present, all have been no more than a pack of rebels and wrongdoers. And now you come cultivating the ways of Kings Wen and Wu, utilizing all the eloquence in the world in order to teach these things to later generations! In your flowing robes and loose-tied sash, you speak your deceits and act out your hypocrisies, confusing and leading astray the rulers of the world, hoping thereby to lay your hands on wealth and eminence. There is no worse robber than you! I don't know why, if the world calls me Robber Zhi, it doesn't call you Robber Qiu!

"With your honeyed words you persuaded Zilu to become your follower, to doff his jaunty cap, unbuckle his long sword, and receive instruction from you, so that all the world said, 'Kong Qiu knows how to suppress violence and put a stop to evil.' But in the end Zilu tried to kill the ruler of Wei, bungled the job, and they pickled his corpse and hung it up on the eastern gate of Wei. This was how little effect your teachings had on him![6] You call yourself a gentleman of talent, a sage? Twice they drove you out of Lu; they wiped out your footprints in Wei, made trouble for you in Qi, and besieged you at Chen and Cai—no place in the empire will have you around! You gave instruction to Zilu, and pickling was the disaster it brought him. You can't look out for yourself to begin with, or for others either—so how can this 'Way' of yours be worth anything?

5. Chi You is a legendary being, often described as part man and part animal, who is associated in Chinese mythology with warfare and the invention of weapons.

6. According to legend, Zilu, before he met Confucius, was a brash warrior noted for his courage. In the revolt in Wei, which took place in 480 BCE, he seems to have fought and died out of a sense of loyalty to the man whose retainer he was; see *Zuozhuan,* Duke Ai, fifteenth year.

"There is no one more highly esteemed by the world than the Yellow Emperor, and yet even the Yellow Emperor could not preserve his virtue intact but fought on the field of Zhuolu until the blood flowed for a hundred *li*. Yao was a merciless father, Shun was an unfilial son, Yu was half paralyzed, Tang banished his sovereign Jie, King Wu attacked his sovereign Zhou, and King Wen was imprisoned at Youli.[7] All these seven men[8] are held in high esteem by the world, and yet a close look shows that all of them, for the sake of gain, brought confusion to the Truth within them, that they forcibly turned against their true form and inborn nature. For doing so, they deserve the greatest shame!

"When the world talks of worthy gentlemen, we hear 'Bo Yi and Shu Qi.' Yet Bo Yi and Shu Qi declined the rulership of the state of Guzhu and instead went and starved to death on Shouyang Mountain, with no one to bury their bones and flesh. Bao Jiao made a great show of his conduct and condemned the world; he wrapped his arms around a tree and stood there till he died. Shentu Di offered a remonstrance that was unheeded; he loaded a stone onto his back and threw himself into a river, where the fish and turtles feasted on him. Jie Zitui was a model of fealty, going so far as to cut a piece of flesh from his thigh to feed his lord, Duke Wen. But later, when Duke Wen overlooked him, he went off in a rage, wrapped his arms around a tree, and burned to death.[9] Wei Sheng made an engagement to meet a girl under a bridge. The girl failed to appear and the water began to rise, but instead of leaving, he wrapped his arms around the pillar of the bridge and died. These six men were no different from a flayed dog, a pig sacrificed to the flood, a beggar with his alms gourd in his hand. All were ensnared by thoughts of reputation and looked lightly on death, failing to remember the Source or to cherish the years that fate had given them.

"When the world talks about loyal ministers, we are told that there were none to surpass Prince Bi Gan and

7. Yao killed his eldest son; Shun banished his mother's younger brother; and Yu worked so hard trying to control the flood that he became paralyzed on one side. Confucian writers on the whole recognize the various assertions here made as historical fact but offer justifications for them all.

8. Reading "seven" instead of "six." Some commentators would retain the "six" and delete King Wen's name from the list.

9. Bao Jiao is said to have been a recluse who refused to acknowledge allegiance to any sovereign but lived in the forest and ate acorns. When someone pointed out that even this constituted a utilization of the land resources of the ruler, he committed suicide in the bizarre fashion mentioned here. Shentu Di has already appeared on pp. 43 and 233. Jie Zitui, retainer to Prince Chonger of Jin, faithfully served the prince during nineteen years of exile, saving him from starvation in the manner described. But when the prince returned to Jin in 636 BCE and became its ruler, he forgot to reward Jie Zitui. Angered, Jie withdrew to a forest; when the ruler tried to smoke him out, he chose to die in the fire.

Wu Zixu. Yet Wu Zixu sank into the river, and Bi Gan had his heart cut out.[10] These two men are called loyal ministers by the world, and yet they ended up as the laughingstock of the empire. Looking at all these men, from the first I mentioned down to Wu Zixu and Bi Gan, it is obvious that none is worth respecting.

10. On Prince Bi Gan, see p. 23, on Wu Zixu, see p. 140, n. 2.

"Now in this sermon of yours, Qiu, if you tell me about the affairs of ghosts, then I have no way of judging what you say. But if you tell me about the affairs of men—and it is no more than what you've said so far—then I've heard it all already!

"And now I'm going to tell *you* something—about man's true form. His eyes yearn to see colors, his ears to hear sound, his mouth to taste flavors, his will and spirit to achieve fulfillment. A man of the greatest longevity will live a hundred years; one of middling longevity, eighty years; and one of the least longevity, sixty years. Take away the time lost in nursing illnesses, mourning the dead, worry and anxiety, and in this life there are no more than four or five days in a month when a man can open his mouth and laugh. Heaven and earth are unending, but man has his time of death. Take this time-bound toy, put it down in these unending spaces, and whoosh!—it is over as quickly as the passing of a swift horse glimpsed through a crack in the wall! No man who is incapable of gratifying his desires and cherishing the years that fate has given him can be called a master of the Way. What you have been telling me—I reject every bit of it! Quick, now—be on your way. I want no more of your talk. This 'Way' you tell me about is inane and inadequate, a fraudulent, crafty, vain, hypocritical affair, not the sort of thing that is capable of preserving the Truth within. How can it be worth discussing!"

Confucius bowed twice and scurried away. Outside the gate, he climbed into his carriage and fumbled three times in an attempt to grasp the reins, his eyes blank and unseeing, his face the color of dead ashes. Leaning on the cross-

bar, head bent down, he could not seem to summon up any spirit at all.

Returning to Lu, he had arrived just outside the eastern gate of the capital when he happened to meet Liuxia Ji. "I haven't so much as caught sight of you for the past several days," said Liuxia Ji, "and your carriage and horses look as though they've been out on the road—it couldn't be that you went to see my brother Zhi, could it?"

Confucius looked up to heaven, sighed, and said, "I did."

"And he was enraged by your views, just as I said he would be?" said Liuxia Ji.

"He was," said Confucius. "You might say that I gave myself the burning moxa treatment when I wasn't even sick. I went rushing off to pat the tiger's head and braid its whiskers—and very nearly didn't manage to escape from its jaws!"

Zizhang said to Man Goude, "Why don't you think more about your conduct?[11] No distinguished conduct means no trust; no trust means no official position; no official position means no gain. So if it's reputation you have your eye on or gain you're scheming for, then righteous conduct is the real key. And if you set aside considerations of reputation and gain and return to the true nature of the heart, then, too, I would say that you ought not to let a single day pass without taking thought for your conduct."

Man Goude said, "Those who are shameless get rich; those who are widely trusted become famous. The really big reputation and gain seem to go to men who are shameless and trusted. So if your eyes are set on reputation and you scheme for gain, then trust is the real key. And if you set aside considerations of reputation and gain and return to the heart, then in your conduct, I think you ought to hold fast to the Heaven within you."[12]

Zizhang said, "In ancient times, the tyrants Jie and Zhou enjoyed the honor of being Son of Heaven and

11. The point of departure for this colloquy, as Legge pointed out, is probably the remark in *Analects* II, 18, that "Zizhang studies with a view to official emolument." Man Goude is a fictitious name meaning "Full of Ill-Gotten Gains."

12. That is, act naturally.

possessed all the wealth of the empire. Yet now if you say to a mere slave or groom, 'Your conduct is like that of a Jie or Zhou,' he will look shamefaced and, in his heart, will not acquiesce to such charges, for even a petty man despises the names of Jie and Zhou. Confucius and Mo Di, on the other hand, were impoverished commoners. Yet now if you say to the highest minister of state, 'Your conduct is like that of Confucius or Mo Di,' he will flush and alter his expression and protest that he is not worthy of such praise, for a gentleman sincerely honors their names. Therefore, to wield the power of a Son of Heaven does not necessarily mean to be honored, and to be poor and a commoner does not necessarily mean to be despised. The difference between being honored and being despised lies in the goodness or badness of one's conduct."

Man Goude said, "The petty thief is imprisoned but the big thief becomes a feudal lord, and we all know that righteous gentlemen are to be found at the gates of the feudal lords. In ancient times, Xiaobo, Duke Huan of Qi, murdered his elder brother and took his sister-in-law for a wife, and yet Guan Zhong was willing to become his minister. Chang, Viscount Tian Cheng, murdered his sovereign and stole his state, and yet Confucius was willing to receive gifts from him.[13] In pronouncement they condemned them, but in practice they bowed before them. Think how this contradiction between the facts of word and deed must have troubled their breasts! Could the two help but clash? So the book says, Who is bad? Who is good? The successful man becomes the head, the unsuccessful man becomes the tail."

13. On Duke Huan and Guan Zhong, see p. 150; on Tian Cheng, see p. 68.

"But," said Zizhang, "if you take no thought for conduct, then there ceases to be any ethical ties between near and distant kin, any fitting distinctions between noble and humble, any proper order between elder and younger. How is one to maintain the distinctions decreed by the five moral principles and the six social relationships?"

Man Goude said, "Yao killed his eldest son; Shun exiled his mother's younger brother—does this indicate any

ethical ties between near and distant kin? Tang banished his sovereign Jie; King Wu killed his sovereign Zhou—does this indicate any fitting distinctions between noble and humble? King Ji received the inheritance; the Duke of Zhou killed his elder brother—does this indicate any proper order between elder and younger?[14] The Confucians with their hypocritical speeches, the Mohists with their talk of universal love—do these indicate any attempt to maintain the distinctions decreed by the five moral principles and the six social relationships? Now your thoughts are all for reputation, mine all for gain, but neither reputation nor gain, in fact, accords with reason or reflects any true understanding of the Way. The other day when we referred the matter to Wu Yue for arbitration, he gave this answer:[15]

"'The petty man will die for riches, the gentleman will die for reputation. In the manner in which they alter their true form and change their inborn nature, they differ. But insofar as they throw away what is already theirs and are willing to die for something that is not theirs, they are identical. So it is said, Do not be a petty man—return to and obey the Heaven within you; do not be a gentleman—follow the reason of Heaven. Crooked or straight, pursue to the limit the Heaven in you. Turn your face to the four directions; ebb and flow with the seasons. Right or wrong, hold fast to the round center on which all turns; in solitude bring your will to completion; ramble in the company of the Way. Do not strive to make your conduct consistent;[16] do not try to perfect your righteousness, or you will lose what you already have. Do not race after riches; do not risk your life for success, or you will let slip the Heaven within you. Bi Gan's heart was cut out; Wu Zixu's eyes were plucked from their sockets—loyalty brought them this misfortune. Honest Gong informed on his father; Wei Sheng died by drowning—trustworthiness was their curse. Bao Jiao stood there till he dried up; Shenzi would not defend himself—integrity did them this injury. Confucius did not see his mother; Kuangzi did

14. King Ji, a younger son of the Great King Danfu (see p. 240) succeeded his father instead of his elder brother; the usual explanation is that the elder brother, realizing Ji's worth, deliberately withdrew and went into exile. The Duke of Zhou (reluctantly, we are told), executed his elder brother who was plotting revolt.

15. The name Wu Yue means "without bonds"; his answer, like all the speeches in this anecdote, is highly contrived and couched in rhymed and elaborately balanced phrases.

16. Following Wang Niansun's interpretation.

not see his father—righteousness was their mistake.[17] These are the tales handed down from ages past, retold by the ages that follow. They show us that the gentleman who is determined to be upright in word and consistent in conduct will, as a result, bow before disaster, will encounter affliction.'"

17. Some of these figures appeared earlier, esp. on p. 257. Honest Gong of Chu informed the authorities when his father stole a sheep but, instead of receiving praise, was sentenced to death for his unfilial conduct. Shenzi is probably Shensheng, prince of Jin, who refused to clear himself of the false charge of trying to poison his father because to do so would expose his father to ridicule. Nothing definite is known about the charges against Confucius and Kuangzi, though commentators speculate that the meaning is that they were not present at the death of their parents.

Never-Enough said to Sense-of-Harmony, "After all, there are no men who do not strive for reputation and seek gain. If you're rich, people flock to you; flocking to you, they bow and scrape; and when they bow and scrape, this shows they honor you. To have men bowing and scraping, offering you honor—this is the way to ensure length of years, ease to the body, joy to the will. And now you alone have no mind for these things. Is it lack of understanding? Or is it that you know their worth but just haven't the strength to work for them? Are you, then, deliberately striving 'to be upright and never forgetful'?"

Sense-of-Harmony said, "You and your type look at those who were born at the same time and who dwell in the same community, and you decide that you are gentlemen who are far removed from the common lot, who are superior to the times. This shows that you have no guiding principle by which to survey the ages of past and present, the distinctions between right and wrong. Instead you join with the vulgar in changing as the world changes, setting aside what is most valuable, discarding what is most worthy of honor, thinking that there is something that has to be done, declaring that this is the way to ensure length of years, ease to the body, joy to the will—but you are far from the mark indeed! The agitation of grief and sorrow, the solace of contentment and joy—these bring no enlightenment to the body. The shock of fear and terror, the elation of happiness and delight—these bring no enlightenment to the mind. You know you are doing what there is to do, but you don't know why there should be things to do. This way, you might possess all the honor

of the Son of Heaven, all the wealth of the empire, and yet never escape from disaster."

"But," said Never-Enough, "there is no advantage that riches cannot bring to a man—the ultimate in beauty, the heights of power, things that the Perfect Man cannot attain to, that the worthy man can never acquire. They buy the strength and daring of other men that make one awesome and powerful; they purchase the knowledge and schemes of other men that make one wise and well informed; they borrow the virtue of other men that make one a man of worth and goodness. With no kingdom to reign over, the rich man commands as much respect as a ruler or a father. Beautiful sounds and colors, rich flavors, power and authority—a man need not send his mind to school before it will delight in them, need not train his body before it will find peace in them. What to desire, what to hate, what to seek, what to avoid—no one needs a teacher in these matters; they pertain to the inborn nature of man. Don't think this applies only to me. Where is there a man in the whole world who would be willing to give them up?"

Sense-of-Harmony said, "When the wise man goes about doing something, he always moves for the sake of the hundred clans and does not violate the rules. Thus, if there is enough, he does not scramble for more. Having no reason to, he seeks nothing. But if there is not enough, he seeks, scrambling in all four directions, yet he does not think of himself as greedy. If there is a surplus, he gives it away. He can discard the whole empire and yet not think of himself as high-minded. Greed or high-mindedness, in fact, have nothing to do with standards imposed from the outside—they represent a turning within to observe the rules that are found there. So a man may wield all the power of a Son of Heaven and yet not use his high position to lord it over others; he may possess all the wealth in the empire and yet not exploit his riches to make a mockery of others. He calculates the risk, thinks of what may be

contrary and harmful to his inborn nature. Therefore he may decline what is offered him, but not because he hopes for reputation and praise. Yao and Shun ruled as emperors and there was harmony—but not because they sought to bring benevolence to the world; they would not have let 'goodness' injure their lives. Shan Quan and Xu You had the opportunity to become emperors and declined, but not because they wished to make an empty gesture of refusal; they would not have let such matters bring harm to themselves. All these men sought what was to their advantage and declined what was harmful. The world praises them as worthies, and it is all right if they enjoy such repute—but they were not striving for any reputation or praise."

"But in order to maintain a reputation like theirs," said Never-Enough, "one must punish the body and give up everything sweet, skimp and save merely to keep life going—in which case one is no different from a man who goes on year after year in sickness and trouble, never allowed to die!"

Sense-of-Harmony said, "A just measure brings fortune, an excess brings harm—this is so of all things, but much more so in the case of wealth. The ears of the rich man are regaled with sounds of bell and drum, flute and pipe; his mouth is treated to the flavor of grass- and grain-fed animals, of rich wine, until his desires are aroused and he has forgotten all about his proper business—this may be called disorder. Mired and drowned by swelling passions, he is like a man who carries a heavy load up the slope of a hill—this may be called suffering. Greedy for riches, he brings illness on himself; greedy for power, he drives himself to exhaustion. In the quietude of his home, he sinks into languor; body sleek and well nourished, he is puffed up with passion—this may be called disease. In his desire for wealth, his search for gain, he crams his rooms to overflowing, as it were, and does not know how to escape, yet he lusts for more and cannot desist—this may be called shame. More wealth piled up than he could ever

use, yet he is covetous and will not leave off, crowding his mind with care and fatigue, grasping for more and more with never a stop—this may be called worry. At home he is suspicious of the inroads of pilferers and inordinate demanders; abroad he is terrified of the attacks of bandits and robbers. At home he surrounds himself with towers and moats; abroad he dares not walk alone—this may be called terror. These six—disorder, suffering, disease, shame, worry, and terror—are the greatest evils in the world. Yet all are forgotten, and he does not know enough to keep watch out for them. And once disaster has come, then, though he seeks with all his inborn nature and exhausts all his wealth in hopes of returning even for one day to the untroubled times, he can never do so.

"Therefore he who sets his eyes on reputation will find that it is nowhere to be seen; he who seeks for gain will find that it is not to be gotten. To entrap the mind and the body in a scramble for such things—is this not delusion indeed?"

30

DISCOURSING ON SWORDS[1]

1. The title may also be interpreted to mean "Delighting in Swords." Why both meanings are appropriate will become apparent.

In ancient times, King Wen of Zhao was fond of swords. Expert swordsmen flocked to his gate, and more than three thousand of them were supported as guests in his household, day and night, engaging in bouts in his presence till the dead and wounded numbered more than a hundred men a year. Yet the king's delight never seemed to wane, and things went on in this way for three years while the state sank into decline and the other feudal lords conspired against it.

The crown prince Kui, distressed at this, summoned his retainers around him and said, "I will bestow a thousand pieces of gold on any man who can reason with the king and make him give up these sword fights!"

"Zhuangzi is the one who can do it," said his retainers.

The crown prince thereupon sent an envoy with a thousand pieces of gold to present to Zhuangzi, but Zhuangzi refused to accept the gift. Instead he accompanied the envoy on his return and went to call on the crown prince. "What instructions do you have for me, that you present me with a thousand pieces of gold?" he asked.

"I had heard, sir," said the crown prince, "that you are an enlightened sage, and I wished in all due respect to offer this thousand in gold as a gift to your attendants. But if you refuse to accept it, then I dare say no more about the matter."

Zhuangzi said, "I have heard that the crown prince wishes to employ me because he hopes I can rid the king of this passion of his. Now if, in attempting to persuade His Majesty, I should arouse his anger and fail to satisfy

your hopes, then I would be sentenced to execution. In that case, what use could I make of the gold? And if I should be able to persuade His Majesty and satisfy your hopes, then what could I ask for in the whole kingdom of Zhao that would not be granted me?"

"The trouble is," said the crown prince, "that my father, the king, refuses to see anyone but swordsmen."

"Fine!" said Zhuangzi. "I am quite able to handle a sword."

"But the kind of swordsmen my father receives," said the crown prince, "all have tousled heads and bristling beards, wear slouching caps tied with plain, coarse tassels, and robes that are cut short behind; they glare fiercely and have difficulty getting out their words. Men like that he is delighted with! Now, sir, if you should insist on going to see him in scholarly garb, the whole affair would go completely wrong from the start."

"Then allow me to get together the garb of a swordsman," said Zhuangzi. After three days, he had his swordsman's costume ready and went to call on the crown prince. The crown prince and he then went to see the king. The king, drawing his sword, waited with bare blade in hand. Zhuangzi entered the door of the hall with unhurried steps, looked at the king but made no bow.

The king said, "Now that you have gotten the crown prince to prepare the way for you, what kind of instruction is it you intend to give me?"

"I have heard that Your Majesty is fond of swords, and so I have come with my sword to present myself before you."

"And what sort of authority does your sword command?" asked the king.

"My sword cuts down one man every ten paces, and for a thousand *li* it never ceases its flailing!"

The king, greatly pleased, exclaimed, "You must have no rival in the whole world!"

Zhuangzi said, "The wielder of the sword makes a display of emptiness, draws one out with hopes of advantage, is behind time in setting out, but beforehand in arriving.[2] May I be allowed to try what I can do?"

2. The sentence is deliberately cryptic and capable of interpretation on a variety of levels.

The king said, "You may leave now, sir, and go to your quarters to await my command. When I am ready to hold the bout, I will request your presence again."

The king then spent seven days testing the skill of his swordsmen. More than sixty were wounded or died in the process, leaving five or six survivors who were ordered to present themselves with their swords outside the king's hall. Then the king sent for Zhuangzi, saying, "Today let us see what happens when you cross swords with these gentlemen."

Zhuangzi said, "It is what I have long wished for."

"What weapon will you use, sir," asked the king, "a long sword or a short one?"

"I am prepared to use any type at all. It happens that I have three swords—Your Majesty has only to indicate which you wish me to use. If I may, I will first explain them, and then put them to the test."

"Let me hear about your three swords," said the king.

"There is the sword of the Son of Heaven, the sword of the feudal lord, and the sword of the commoner."

"What is the sword of the Son of Heaven like?" asked the king.

"The sword of the Son of Heaven? The Valley of Yan and the Stone Wall are its point; Qi and Dai its blade; Jin and Wey its spine; Zhou and Song its sword guard; Han and Wei its hilt.[3] The four barbarian tribes enwrap it; the four seasons enfold it; the seas of Bo surround it; the mountains of Chang girdle it. The five elements govern it; the demands of punishment and favor direct it. It is brought forth in accordance with the yin and yang, held in readiness in spring and summer, wielded in autumn and winter. Thrust it forward, and there is nothing that will stand before it; raise it on high, and there is nothing above it; press it down, and there is nothing beneath it; whirl it

3. These all are feudal states or strategic places of northern China surrounding the state of Zhao.

about, and there is nothing surrounding it. Above, it cleaves the drifting clouds; below, it severs the sinews of the earth. When this sword is once put to use, the feudal lords return to their former obedience, and the whole world submits. This is the sword of the Son of Heaven."

King Wen, dumbfounded, appeared to be at an utter loss. Then he said, "What is the sword of the feudal lord like?"

"The sword of the feudal lord? It has wise and brave men for its point, men of purity and integrity for its blade, men of worth and goodness for its spine, men of loyalty and sageliness for its sword guard, heroes and prodigies for its hilt. This sword too, thrust forward, meets nothing before it; raised, it encounters nothing above; pressed down, it encounters nothing beneath it; whirled about, it meets nothing surrounding it. Above, it takes its model from the roundness of heaven, following along with the three luminous bodies of the sky.[4] Below, it takes its model from the squareness of earth, following along with the four seasons. In the middle realm, it brings harmony to the wills of the people and peace to the four directions. This sword, once put into use, is like the crash of a thunderbolt: none within the four borders of the state will fail to bow down in submission; none will fail to heed and obey the commands of the ruler. This is the sword of the feudal lord."

4. The stars collectively make up the third luminous body.

The king said, "What is the sword of the commoner like?"

"The sword of the commoner? It is used by men with tousled heads and bristling beards, with slouching caps tied with plain, coarse tassels and robes cut short behind, who glare fiercely and speak with great difficulty, who slash at one another in Your Majesty's presence. Above, it lops off heads and necks; below, it splits open livers and lungs. Those who wield this sword of the commoner are no different from fighting cocks—any morning their lives may be cut off. They are of no use in the administration of the state.

"Now Your Majesty occupies the position of a Son of Heaven, and yet you show this fondness for the sword of the commoner.[5] If I may be so bold, I think it rather unworthy of you!

The king thereupon led Zhuangzi up into his hall, where the royal butler came forward with trays of food, but the king merely paced round and round the room.

"Your Majesty should seat yourself at ease and calm your spirits," said Zhuangzi. "The affair of the sword is all over and finished!"

After this, King Wen did not emerge from his palace for three months, and his swordsmen all committed suicide in their quarters.

5. The state of Zhao, situated in north central China, was never very powerful, and its king, only one among many feudal rulers of the time, in no sense occupied anything that could be called "the position of a Son of Heaven." If the writer has not abandoned all pretense at historicity, he must mean that if the king of Zhao were to rule wisely, he might in time gain sufficient power and prestige to become a contender for the position of Son of Heaven.

31

THE OLD FISHERMAN

Confucius, after strolling through the Black Curtain Forest, sat down to rest on the Apricot Altar.[1] While his disciples turned to their books, he strummed his lute and sang. He had not gotten halfway through the piece he was playing when an old fisherman appeared, stepped out of his boat, and came forward. His beard and eyebrows were pure white; his hair hung down over his shoulders; and his sleeves flapped at his sides. He walked up the embankment, stopped when he reached the higher ground, rested his left hand on his knee, propped his chin with his right, and listened until the piece was ended. Then he beckoned to Zigong and Zilu, both of whom came forward at his call. The stranger pointed to Confucius and said, "What does he do?"

"He is a gentleman of Lu," replied Zilu.

The stranger then asked what family he belonged to, and Zilu replied, "The Kong family."

"This man of the Kong family," said the stranger, "what's his occupation?"

Zilu was still framing his reply when Zigong answered, "This man of the Kong family in his inborn nature adheres to loyalty and good faith, in his person practices benevolence and righteousness; he brings a beautiful order to rites and music and selects what is proper in human relationships. Above, he pays allegiance to the sovereign of the age; below, he transforms the ordinary people through education and, in this way, brings profit to the world. Such is the occupation of this man of the Kong family!"

1. The word "altar" here refers to a mesa or flat-topped hill rising out of the lowland.

"Does he have any territory that he rules over?" asked the stranger, pursuing the inquiry.

"No," said Zigong.

"Is he the counselor to some king or feudal lord?"

"No," said Zigong.

The stranger then laughed and turned to go, saying as he walked away, "As far as benevolence goes, he is benevolent all right. But I'm afraid he will not escape unharmed. To weary the mind and wear out the body, putting the Truth in peril like this—alas, I'm afraid he is separated from the Great Way by a vast distance indeed!"

Zigong returned and reported to Confucius what had happened. Confucius pushed aside his lute, rose to his feet, and said, "Perhaps this man is a sage!" Then he started down the embankment after him, reaching the edge of the lake just as the fisherman was about to take up his punting pole and drag his boat into the water. Glancing back and catching sight of Confucius, he turned and stood facing him. Confucius hastily stepped back a few paces, bowed twice, and then came forward.

"What do you want?" asked the stranger.

"A moment ago, sir," said Confucius, "you made a few cryptic remarks and then left. Unworthy as I am, I'm afraid I do not understand what they mean. If I might be permitted to wait on you with all due humility and be favored with the sound of your august words, my ignorance might in time be remedied."

"Goodness!" exclaimed the stranger. "Your love of learning is great indeed!"[2]

Confucius bowed twice and then, straightening up, said, "Ever since childhood I have cultivated learning, until at last I have reached the age of sixty-nine. But I have never yet succeeded in hearing the Perfect Teaching. Dare I do anything, then, but wait with an open mind?"

"Creatures follow their own kind; a voice will answer to the voice that is like itself," said the stranger; "this has been the rule of Heaven since time began. With your permission, therefore, I will set aside for the moment my

2. A jocular reference to Confucius's remark that in any village of ten houses, one might find a person as loyal and true to his word as he, but none with such a great love of learning. *Analects* V, 27.

own ways and try applying myself to the things that you are concerned about.[3] What you are concerned about are the affairs of men. The Son of Heaven, the feudal lords, the high ministers, the common people—when these four are of themselves upright, this is the most admirable state of order. But if they depart from their proper stations, there is no greater disorder. When officials attend to their duties and men worry about their undertakings, there is no overstepping of the mark.

3. Another possible interpretation would be, "I will explain my own ways and try applying them to the things," etc.

"Fields gone to waste, rooms unroofed, clothing and food that are not enough, taxes and labor services that you can't keep up with, wives and concubines never in harmony, senior and junior out of order—these are the worries of the common man. Ability that does not suffice for the task, official business that doesn't go right, conduct that is not spotless and pure, underlings who are lazy and slipshod, success and praise that never come your way, titles and stipends that you can't hold on to—these are the worries of the high minister. A court lacking in loyal ministers, a state and its great families in darkness and disorder, craftsmen and artisans who have no skill, articles of tribute that won't pass the test, inferior ranking at the spring and autumn levees at court, failure to ingratiate himself with the Son of Heaven—these are the worries of a feudal lord.

"The yin and yang out of harmony, cold and heat so untimely that they bring injury to all things, feudal lords violent and unruly, wantonly attacking one another till they all but destroy the common people, rites and music improperly performed, funds and resources that are forever giving out, human relationships that are not ordered as they should be, the hundred clans contumacious and depraved—these are the worries of the Son of Heaven and his chancellors. Now on the higher level, you do not hold the position of a ruler, a feudal lord, or a chancellor, and on the lower level, you have not been assigned to the office of a high minister with its tasks and duties. Yet you presume to 'bring a beautiful order to rites and music, to

select what is proper in human relationships' and, in this way, to 'transform the ordinary people.' This is undertaking rather a lot, isn't it?

"Moreover, there are eight faults that men may possess, and four evils that beset their undertakings—you must not fail to examine these carefully. To do what it is not your business to do is called officiousness. To rush forward when no one has nodded in your direction is called obsequiousness. To echo a man's opinions and try to draw him out in speech is called sycophancy. To speak without regard for what is right or wrong is called flattery. To delight in talking about other men's failings is called calumny. To break up friendships and set kinfolk at odds is called maliciousness. To praise falsely and hypocritically so as to cause injury and evil to others is called wickedness. Without thought for right or wrong, to try to face in two directions at once so as to steal a glimpse of the other party's wishes is called treachery. These eight faults inflict chaos on others and injury on the possessor. A gentleman will not befriend the man who possesses them; an enlightened ruler will not have him for his minister.

"As for the four evils that I spoke of, to be fond of plunging into great undertakings, altering and departing from the old accepted ways, hoping thereby to enhance your merit and fame—this is called avidity. To insist that you know it all, that everything be done your way, snatching from others and appropriating for your own use—this is called avarice. To see your errors but refuse to change, to listen to remonstrance but go on behaving worse than before—this is called obstinacy. When men agree with you, to commend them; when they disagree with you, to refuse to see any goodness in them even when it is there—this is called bigotry. These are the four evils. If you do away with the eight faults and avoid committing the four evils, then and only then will you become capable of being taught!"

Confucius looked chagrined and gave a sigh. Then he bowed twice, straightened up, and said, "Twice I have

been exiled from Lu; they wiped away my footprints in Wei, chopped down a tree on me in Song, and besieged me between Chen and Cai. I am aware of no error of my own, and yet why did I fall victim to these four persecutions?"

A pained expression came over the stranger's face and he said, "How hard it is to make you understand! Once there was a man who was afraid of his shadow and who hated his footprints, and so he tried to get way from them by running. But the more he lifted his feet and put them down again, the more footprints he made. And no matter how fast he ran, his shadow never left him, and so, thinking that he was still going too slowly, he ran faster and faster without a stop until his strength gave out and he fell down dead. He didn't understand that by lolling in the shade he could have gotten rid of his shadow and that by resting in quietude he could have put an end to his footprints. How could he have been so stupid!

"Now you scrutinize the realm of benevolence and righteousness, examine the borders of sameness and difference, observe the alternations of stillness and movement, lay down the rules for giving and receiving, regulate the emotions of love and hate, harmonize the seasons of joy and anger—and yet you barely manage to escape harm. If you were diligent in improving yourself, careful to hold fast to the Truth, and would hand over external things to other men, you could avoid these entanglements. But now, without improving yourself, you make demands on others—that is surely no way to go about the thing, is it?"

Confucius looked shamefaced and said, "Please, may I ask what you mean by 'the Truth'?"

The stranger said, "By 'the Truth' I mean purity and sincerity in their highest degree. He who lacks purity and sincerity cannot move others. Therefore he who forces himself to lament, though he may sound sad, will awaken no grief. He who forces himself to be angry, though he may sound fierce, will arouse no awe. And he who forces himself to be affectionate, though he may smile, will create no air of harmony. True sadness need make no sound

to awaken grief; true anger need not show itself to arouse awe; true affection need not smile to create harmony. When a man has the Truth within himself, his spirit may move among external things. That is why the Truth is to be prized!

"It may be applied to human relationships in the following ways: In the service of parents, it is love and filial piety; in the service of the ruler, it is loyalty and integrity; in festive wine drinking, it is merriment and joy; in periods of mourning, it is sadness and grief. In loyalty and integrity, service is the important thing; in festive drinking, merriment is the important thing; in periods of mourning, grief is the important thing; in the service of parents, their comfort is the important thing. In seeking to perform the finest kind of service, one does not always try to go about it in the same way. In ensuring comfort in the serving of one's parents, one does not question the means to be employed. In seeking the merriment that comes with festive drinking, one does not fuss over what cups and dishes are to be selected. In expressing the grief that is appropriate to periods of mourning, one does not quibble over the exact ritual to be followed.

"Rites are something created by the vulgar men of the world; the Truth is that which is received from Heaven. By nature it is the way it is and cannot be changed. Therefore the sage patterns himself on Heaven, prizes the Truth, and does not allow himself to be cramped by the vulgar. The stupid man does the opposite of this. He is unable to pattern himself on Heaven and instead frets over human concerns. He does not know enough to prize the Truth, but instead, plodding along with the crowd, he allows himself to be changed by vulgar ways and so is never content. Alas, that you fell into the slough of human hypocrisy at such an early age and have been so late in hearing of the Great Way! "

Confucius once more bowed twice, straightened up, and said, "Now that I have succeeded in meeting you, it would seem as though Heaven has blessed me. If, Master,

you would not consider it a disgrace for one like myself to enter the ranks of those who wait on you, and to be taught by you in person, then may I be so bold as to inquire where your lodgings are? I would like to be allowed to go there, receive instruction, and at last learn the Great Way!"

The stranger replied, "I have heard it said, If it is someone you can go with, then go with him to the very end of the mysterious Way; but if it is someone you cannot go with, someone who does not understand the Way, then take care and have nothing to do with him—only then may you avoid danger to yourself. Keep working at it! Now I will leave you, I will leave you." So saying, he poled away in his boat, threading a path through the reeds.

Yan Yuan brought the carriage around; Zilu held out the strap for pulling oneself up, but Confucius, without turning in their direction, waited until the ripples on the water were stilled and he could no longer hear the sound of the pole before he ventured to mount.

Zilu, following by the side of the carriage, said, "I have been permitted to serve you for a long time, Master, but I have never seen you encounter anyone who filled you with such awe. The rulers of ten thousand chariots, the lords of a thousand chariots, when they receive you, invariably seat you on the same level as themselves and treat you with the etiquette due to an equal, and still you maintain a stiff and haughty air. But now this old fisherman, pole in hand, presents himself in front of you, and you double up at the waist, as bent as a chiming stone,[4] and bow every time you reply to his words—this is going too far, isn't it? Your disciples all are wondering about it. Why should a fisherman deserve such treatment?"

4. Chiming stones were shaped like an inverted "V."

Confucius leaned forward on the crossbar, sighed, and said, "You certainly are hard to change! All this time you have been immersed in the study of ritual principles, and you still haven't gotten rid of your mean and servile ways of thinking. Come closer, and I will explain to you. To meet an elder and fail to treat him with respect is a breach

of etiquette. To see a worthy man and fail to honor him is to lack benevolence. If the fisherman were not a Perfect Man, he would not be able to make other men humble themselves before him. And if men, in humbling themselves before him, lack purity of intention, then they will never attain the Truth. As a result, they will go on forever bringing injury on themselves. Alas! There is no greater misfortune than for a man to lack benevolence. And yet you alone dare to invite such misfortune!

"Moreover, the Way is the path by which the ten thousand things proceed. All things that lose it, die; all that get it, live. To go against it in one's undertakings is to fail; to comply with it is to succeed. Hence, wherever the Way is to be found, the sage will pay homage there. As far as the Way is concerned, this old fisherman may certainly be said to possess it. How, then, would I dare fail to show respect to him!"

32

LIE YUKOU

Lie Yukou was going to Qi, but halfway there he turned around and came home. By chance he met Bohun Wuren. "What made you turn around and come back?" asked Bohun Wuren.

"I was scared."

"Why were you scared?"

"I stopped to eat at ten soup stalls along the way, and at five of them they served me soup ahead of everybody else!"

"What was so scary about that?" said Bohun Wuren.

"If you can't dispel the sincerity inside you, it oozes[1] out of the body and forms a radiance that, once outside, overpowers men's minds and makes them careless of how they treat their own superiors and old people. And it's from this kind of confusion that trouble comes. The soup sellers have nothing but their broths to peddle, and their margin of gain can't be very large.[2] If people with such skimpy profits and so little power still treat me like this, then what would it be like with the ruler of Qi, the lord of a state of ten thousand chariots? Body wearied by the burden of such a state, wisdom exhausted in its administration, he would want to shift his affairs onto me and make me work out some solution—that was what scared me!"

"You sized it up very well," said Bohun Wuren. "But even if you stay at home, people are going to flock around you."

Not long afterward, Bohun Wuren went to Liezi's house and found the area outside his door littered with shoes.[3] He stood gazing north, staff held straight up, chin

1. Following Sun Yirang's emendation.

2. Supplying a negative from the parallel passage in *Liezi*, sec. 2.

3. Chinese at this time sat on mats on the floor; consequently they removed their shoes before stepping up into a house.

wrinkled where it rested on it. After standing there a while, he went away without a word. The servant in charge of receiving guests went in and reported this to Liezi. Liezi snatched up his shoes and ran barefoot after him, overtaking him at the gate. "Now that you've come all this way, don't you have any 'medicine' to give me?"[4]

4. That is, good advice.

"It's no use. I told you from the beginning that people would come flocking around you, and here they are flocking around you. It's not that you're able to make them come to you—it's that you're unable to keep them from coming. But what good is it to you? If you move other people and make them happy, you must be showing them something unusual in yourself. And if you move others, you invariably upset your own basic nature, in which case there's nothing more to be said. These men you wander around with—none will give you any good advice. All they have are petty words, the kind that poison a man. No one understands, no one comprehends—so who can give any help to anyone else? The clever man wears himself out, the wise man worries. But the man of no ability has nothing he seeks. He eats his fill and wanders idly about. Drifting like an unmoored boat, emptily and idly he wanders along."

There was a man from Zheng named Huan who, after three years of reciting and memorizing texts at a place called Qiushi, finally became a Confucian scholar. As the Yellow River spreads its moisture for nine *li* along its banks, so Huan's affluence spread to his three sets of relatives. He saw to it that his younger brother Di became a Mohist, and the Confucian and the Mohist debated with each other, but their father always took sides with the younger brother. Ten years of this, and Huan committed suicide. Appearing to his father in a dream, he said, "It was *I* who made it possible for your son to become a Mohist. Why don't you try taking a look at my grave—I have become the berries on the catalpa and the cypress there!"[5]

5. Is the fact that he has changed into berries an indication of unappeased anger that will not let him rest in his grave, or has it some other significance? I do not know.

When the Creator rewards a man, he does not reward what is man-made in the man but what is Heaven-made. It was what was in the younger brother that made him a Mohist. Yet there are those like Huan who think they are different from others and even despise their own kin. Like men from Qi drinking at a well, they try to elbow one another away.[6] So it is said, In the world today, we have nothing but Huans—they all think that they alone are right. But the man who truly possesses Virtue is not even aware of it, much less the man who possesses the Way. In ancient times it was said of men like Huan that they had committed the crime of hiding from Heaven.

6. The story to which this refers is unknown.

The sage rests where there is rest and does not try to rest where there is no rest. The common run of men try to rest where there is no rest and do not rest where rest is to be found.

Zhuangzi said, To know the Way is easy; to keep from speaking about it is hard. To know and not to speak—this gets you to the Heavenly part. To know and to speak—this gets you to the human part. Men in the old days looked out for the Heavenly, not the human.

Zhuping Man studied the art of butchering dragons under Crippled Yi. It cost him all the thousand pieces of gold he had in his house, and after three years he'd mastered the art, but there was no one who could use his services.

The sage looks at the inevitable and decides that it is not inevitable—therefore he has no recourse to arms. The common man looks at what is not inevitable and decides that it is inevitable—therefore he has frequent recourse to arms. He who turns to arms is always seeking something. He who trusts to arms is lost.

The understanding of the little man never gets beyond gifts and wrappings, letters and calling cards. He wastes his spirit on the shallow and trivial and yet wants to be the savior of both the world and the Way, to blend both form and emptiness in the Great Unity. Such a man will blunder

and go astray in time and space; his body entangled, he will never come to know the Great Beginning. But he who is a Perfect Man lets his spirit return to the Beginningless, to lie down in pleasant slumber in the Village of Not-Anything-at-All; like water he flows through the Formless or trickles forth from the Great Purity. How pitiful—you whose understanding can be encompassed in a hair tip, who know nothing of the Great Tranquillity!

A man of Song, one Cao Shang, was sent by the king of Song as envoy to the state of Qin. On his departure, he was assigned no more than four or five carriages, but the king of Qin, greatly taken with him, bestowed on him an additional hundred carriages. When he returned to Song, he went to see Zhuangzi and said, "Living in poor alleyways and cramped lanes, skimping, starving, weaving one's own sandals, with withered neck and sallow face—that sort of thing I'm no good at. But winning instant recognition from the ruler of a state of ten thousand chariots and returning with a hundred of them in one's retinue—that's where I excel!"

Zhuangzi said, "When the king of Qin falls ill, he calls for his doctors. The doctor who lances a boil or drains an abscess receives one carriage in payment, but the one who licks his piles for him gets five carriages. The lower down the area to be treated, the larger the number of carriages. From the large number of carriages you've got, I take it you must have been treating his piles. Get out!"

Duke Ai of Lu said to Yan He, "If I were to make Confucius my pillar and stanchion, do you think it would improve the health of the state?"

"Beware—that way lies danger! Confucius will deck things out in feathers and paint and conduct his affairs with flowery phrases, mistaking side issues for the crux. He is willing to distort his inborn nature in order to make himself a model for the people, not even realizing that he is acting in bad faith. He takes everything to heart, sub-

mits all to the judgment of the spirit—how could such a man be worth putting in charge of the people? Does he meet with your approval? Would you like to provide for his support? It would be a mistake, but you may do it if you like. Yet one who would induce the people to turn their backs on reality and study hypocrisy is hardly fit to be made a model for the people. If we are to take thought for later ages, it would be best to drop the scheme.

"Governing is a difficult thing. To dispense favors to men without ever forgetting that you are doing so—this is not Heaven's way of giving. Even merchants and peddlers are unwilling to be ranked with such a person; and although their occupations may seem to rank them with him, in their hearts they will never acquiesce to such a ranking.[7] External punishments are administered by implements of metal and wood; internal punishments are inflicted by frenzy and excess. When the petty man meets with external punishments, the implements of metal and wood bear down on him; when he incurs internal punishment, the yin and yang eat him up.[8] To escape both external and internal punishment—only the True Man is capable of this."

7. Meaning very doubtful.

8. An upset in the balance of the yin and yang within the body will bring on a consuming sickness; see p. 26, n. 9.

Confucius said, "The mind of man is more perilous than mountains or rivers, harder to understand than Heaven. Heaven at least has its fixed times of spring and fall, winter and summer, daybreak and dusk. But man is thick-skinned and hides his true form deep within. Thus he may have an earnest face and yet be supercilious; he may seem to have superior qualities and yet be worthless. He may appear to be going about things in a scatterbrained way and yet know exactly what he is doing. Seeming to be firm, he may in fact be lax; seeming to be mild, he may in fact be ruthless. Therefore those who flock to righteousness like thirsty men to water may later flee from it as though from fire.

"For this reason the gentleman will employ a man on a distant mission and observe his degree of loyalty, will

employ him close at hand and observe his degree of respect. He will hand him troublesome affairs and observe how well he manages them, will suddenly ask his advice and observe how wisely he answers. He will exact some difficult promise from him and see how well he keeps it, turn over funds to him and see with what benevolence he dispenses them, inform him of the danger he is in and note how faithful he is to his duties. He will get him drunk with wine and observe how well he handles himself, place him in mixed company and see what effect beauty has on him. By applying these nine tests, you may determine who is the unworthy man."

Zheng Kaofu—when he received his first appointment to office, he bowed his head; when he received his second appointment, he bent his back; when he received his third appointment, he hunched far over; hugging the wall, he scurried along.[9] Who would dare to ignore his example? But the ordinary man—on receiving his first appointment, he begins to strut; on receiving his second appointment, he does a dance in his carriage; on receiving his third appointment, he addresses his father's brothers by their personal names. What a difference from the ways of Yao and Xu You!

There is no greater evil than for the mind to be aware of virtue and to act as though it were a pair of eyes. For when it starts acting like a pair of eyes, it will peer out from within, and when it peers out from within, it is ruined. There are five types of dangerous virtue, of which inner virtue is the worst.[10] What do I mean by inner virtue? He who possesses inner virtue thinks himself always in the right and denigrates those who do not do as he does. There are eight extremes that bring a man trouble, three conditions necessary for advancement, and six respositories of punishment.[11] Beauty, a fine beard, a tall stature, brawn, strength, style, bravery, decisiveness—when a man has all these to a degree that surpasses others, they bring him trouble. Tagging along with things,

9. Zheng Kaofu, "The Upright Ancestor," was a forebear of Confucius who served at the court of Song in the eighth century BCE. The three appointments represent three advancements in court rank. According to *Zhuozhuan, Zhao* seventh year, the passage describing him here was part of the inscription on a bronze vessel used in his mortuary temple.

10. The writer nowhere states what the other four types are.

11. Following Xi Tong, I read *xing* to mean "punishment."

bobbing and weaving, cringing and fawning—if a man can do all three of these in a way that others do not, then he will succeed in advancing. Wisdom and knowledge, and the outward recognition they involve; bravery and decisiveness, and the numerous resentments they arouse; benevolence and righteousness, and all the responsibilities they involve—these six are what bring you punishment.[12] He who has mastered the true form of life is a giant; he who has mastered understanding is petty. He who has mastered the Great Fate follows along; he who has mastered the little fates must take what happens to come his way.[13]

12. The end of this sentence has dropped out of most texts.

13. There would seem to be a play on the various meanings of *ming*—"appointment," "fate," "command," etc.; see p. 28, n. 12. Some commentators take it to mean "life span."

There was a man who had an audience with the king of Song and received from him a gift of ten carriages. With his ten carriages, he went bragging and strutting to Zhuangzi. Zhuangzi said, "There's a poor family down by the river who make their living by weaving articles out of mugwort. The son was diving in the deepest part of the river and came upon a pearl worth a thousand pieces of gold. His father said to him, 'Bring a rock and smash it to bits! A pearl worth a thousand in gold could only have come from under the chin of the Black Dragon who lives at the bottom of the ninefold deeps. To be able to get the pearl, you must have happened along when he was asleep. If the Black Dragon had been awake, do you think there'd have been so much as a shred of you left?' Now the state of Song is deeper than the ninefold deeps, and the king of Song more truculent than the Black Dragon. In order to get these carriages, you must have happened along when he was asleep. If the king of Song had been awake, you'd have ended up in little pieces!"

Someone sent gifts to Zhuangzi with an invitation to office. Zhuangzi replied to the messenger in these words: "Have you ever seen a sacrificial ox? They deck him out in embroidery and trimmings, gorge him on grass and beanstalks. But when at last they lead him off into the

great ancestral temple, then, although he might wish he could become a lonely calf once more, is it possible?"

When Zhuangzi was about to die, his disciples expressed a desire to give him a sumptuous burial. Zhuangzi said, "I will have heaven and earth for my coffin and coffin shell, the sun and moon for my pair of jade disks, the stars and constellations for my pearls and beads, and the ten thousand things for my parting gifts. The furnishings for my funeral are already prepared—what is there to add?"

"But we're afraid the crows and kites will eat you, Master!" said his disciples.

Zhuangzi said, "Above ground, I'll be eaten by crows and kites; below ground, I'll be eaten by mole crickets and ants. Wouldn't it be rather bigoted to deprive one group in order to supply the other?

"If you use unfairness to achieve fairness, your fairness will be unfair. If you use a lack of proof to establish proofs, your proofs will be proofless. The bright-eyed man is no more than the servant of things, but the man of spirit knows how to find real proofs. The bright-eyed is no match for the man of spirit—from long ago this has been the case. Yet the fool trusts to what he can see and immerses himself in the human. All his accomplishments are beside the point—pitiful, isn't it!"

33

THE WORLD

Many are the men in the world who apply themselves to doctrines and policies, and each believes he has something that cannot be improved on. What in ancient times was called the "art of the Way'—where does it exist? I say, there is no place it does not exist. But, you ask, where does holiness descend from, where does enlightenment emerge from? The sage gives them birth, the king completes them, and all have their source in the One. He who does not depart from the Ancestor is called the Heavenly Man; he who does not depart from the Pure is called the Holy Man; he who does not depart from the True is called the Perfect Man.

To make Heaven his source, Virtue his root, and the Way his gate, revealing himself through change and transformation—one who does this is called a Sage.

To make benevolence his standard of kindness, righteousness his model of reason, ritual his guide to conduct, and music his source of harmony, serene in mercy and benevolence—one who does this is called a gentleman.

To employ laws to determine functions, names to indicate rank, comparisons to discover actual performance, investigations to arrive at decisions, checking them off, one, two, three, four, and in this way to assign the hundred officials to their ranks; to keep a constant eye on administrative affairs, give first thought to food and clothing, keep in mind the need to produce and grow, to shepherd and store away, to provide for the old and the weak, the orphan and the widow, so that all are properly nourished—these are the principles by which the people are ordered.[1]

1. Judging from the terminology, the "Sage" represents the Daoist ideal, the "gentleman," the Confucian ideal, and what follows, the Legalist ideal of government by laws and bureaucratic control. But perhaps the writer intends all these concepts of government to represent different levels in the great, eclectic concept of ideal government.

How thorough were the men of ancient times!—companions of holiness and enlightenment, pure as Heaven and earth, caretakers of the ten thousand things, harmonizers of the world, their bounty extended to the hundred clans. They had a clear understanding of basic policies and paid attention even to petty regulations—in the six avenues and the four frontiers, in what was great or small, coarse or fine, there was no place they did not move.

The wisdom that was embodied in their policies and regulations is, in many cases, still reflected in the old laws and records of the historiographers handed down over the ages. As to that which is recorded in the *Book of Odes* and *Book of Documents*, the *Ritual* and the *Music*, there are many gentlemen of Zou and Lu, scholars of sash and official rank, who have an understanding of it. The *Book of Odes* describes the will; the *Book of Documents* describes events; the *Ritual* speaks of conduct; the *Music* speaks of harmony; the *Book of Changes* describes the yin and yang; the *Spring and Autumn Annals* describes titles and functions.[2]

These various policies are scattered throughout the world and are propounded in the Middle Kingdom, the scholars of the hundred schools from time to time taking up one or the other in their praises and preachings. But the world is in great disorder, the worthies and sages lack clarity of vision, and the Way and its Virtue are no longer One. So the world too often seizes on one of its aspects, examines it, and pronounces it good. But it is like the case of the ear, the eye, the nose, and the mouth: each has its own kind of understanding, but their functions are not interchangeable. In the same way, the various skills of the hundred schools all have their strong points, and at times each may be of use. But none is wholly sufficient, none is universal. The scholar cramped in one corner of learning tries to judge the beauty of Heaven and earth, to pry into the principles of the ten thousand things, to scrutinize the perfection of the ancients, but seldom is he able to encompass the true beauty of Heaven and earth, to

2. These are the so-called Six Confucian Classics; Zou and Lu were the native states of Mencius and Confucius, respectively. It has been questioned whether there was ever an actual text called the *Music,* or whether this refers to the body of traditional court music and dances handed down by the Confucian scholars; here, however, the wording seems to indicate a written text. Descriptions such as this one of the nature of the Six Classics are found in many texts of Han or possibly pre-Han date. The description of the *Odes,* essentially a pun on the words *shi* (poetry) and *zhi* (will or emotion), could also be translated "the *Book of Odes* describes feelings," an ambiguity that has led to much discussion among scholars of literary theory.

describe the true face of holy brightness. Therefore the Way that is sagely within and kingly without has fallen into darkness and is no longer clearly perceived, has become shrouded and no longer shines forth. The men of the world all follow their own desires and make these their "doctrine." How sad!—the hundred schools going on and on instead of turning back, fated never to join again. The scholars of later ages have unfortunately never perceived the purity of Heaven and earth, the great body of the ancients, and "the art of the Way" in time comes to be rent and torn apart by the world.

To teach no extravagance to later ages, to leave the ten thousand things unadorned, to shun any glorification of rules and regulations, instead applying ink and measuring line to the correction of one's own conduct, thus aiding the world in time of crisis—there were those in ancient times who believed that the "art of the Way" lay in these things. Mo Di and Qin Guli heard of their views and delighted in them, but they followed them to excess and were too assiduous in applying them to themselves.

Mozi wrote a piece "Against Music," and another entitled "Moderation in Expenditure," declaring there was to be no singing in life, no mourning in death.[3] With a boundless love and a desire to ensure universal benefit, he condemned warfare, and there was no place in his teachings for anger. Again, he was fond of learning and broad in knowledge and, in this respect, did not differ from others. His views, however, were not always in accordance with those of the former kings, for he denounced the rites and music of antiquity. The Yellow Emperor had his Xianchi music, Yao his Dazhong, Shun his Dashao, Yu his Daxia, Tang his Dahuo, and King Wen the music of the Biyong, while King Wu and the Duke of Zhou fashioned the Wu music. The mourning rites of antiquity prescribed the ceremonies appropriate for eminent and humble, the different regulations for superior and inferior. The inner and outer coffins of the Son of Heaven were to consist of

3. These are the titles of two sections in the *Mozi,* a text embodying the teaching of Master Mo Di; Mozi's prescriptions concerning burial rites are found in another section entitled "Moderation in Funerals." In fairness, it should be noted that Mozi did not prohibit mourning outright but thought it should be drastically simplified for reasons of economy.

seven layers; those of the feudal lords, five layers; those of the high ministers, three layers; those of the officials, two layers. Yet Mozi alone declares there is to be no singing in life, no mourning in death. A coffin of paulownia wood three inches thick, with no outer shell—this is his rule, his ideal. If he teaches men in this fashion, then I fear he has no love for them; and if he adopts such practices for his own burial, then he surely has no love for himself! I do not mean to discredit his teachings entirely; and yet men want to sing, and he says, "No singing!"; they want to wail, and he says, "No wailing!"—one wonders if he is in fact human at all. A life that is all toil, a death shoddily disposed of—it is a way that goes too much against us. To make men anxious, to make them sorrowful—such practices are hard to carry out, and I fear they cannot be regarded as the Way of the Sage. They are contrary to the hearts of the world, and the world cannot endure them. Though Mozi himself may be capable of such endurance, how can the rest of the world do likewise? Departing so far from the ways of the world, they must be far removed indeed from those of the true king.

Mozi defends his teachings by saying, "In ancient times, when Yu dammed the flood waters and opened up the courses of the Yangtze and the Yellow River so that they flowed through the lands of the four barbarians and the nine provinces, joining with the three hundred famous rivers,[4] their three thousand tributaries, and the little streams too numerous to count—at that time Yu in person carried the basket and wielded the spade, gathering together and mingling the rivers of the world till there was no down left on his calves, no hair on his shins; the drenching rains washed his locks, the sharp winds combed them while he worked to establish the ten thousand states. Yu was a great sage, yet with his own body he labored for the world in such fashion!" So it is that many of the Mohists of later ages dress in skins and coarse cloth, wear wooden clogs or hempen sandals, never resting day

4. Following Yu Yue, I read *chuan* in place of *shan*.

or night, driving themselves on to the most bitter exertions. "If we cannot do the same," they say, "then we are not following the way of Yu, and are unworthy to be called Mohists!"

The disciples of Xiangli Qin, the followers of Wu Hou, and the Mohists of the south such as Ku Huo, Ji Chi, Deng Lingzi, and their like all recite the Mohist canon, and yet they quarrel and disagree in their interpretations, calling one another "Mohist factionalists." In their discussions of "hard" and "white," "difference" and "sameness," they attack back and forth; in their disquisitions on the incompatibility of "odd" and "even," they exchange volleys of refutation.[5] They regard the Grand Master of their sect as a sage, each sect trying to make its Grand Master the recognized head of the school in hopes that his authority will be acknowledged by later ages, but down to the present the dispute remains unresolved.[6]

Mo Di and Qin Guli were right in their ideas but wrong in their practices, with the result that the Mohists of later ages have felt obliged to subject themselves to hardship "till there is no down left on their calves, no hair on their shins"—their only thought being to outdo one another. Such efforts represent the height of confusion, the lowest degree of order. Nevertheless, Mozi was one who had a true love for the world. He failed to achieve all he aimed for, yet, wasted and worn with exhaustion, he never ceased trying. He was indeed a gentleman of ability!

To be unsnared by vulgar ways, to make no vain show of material things, to bring no hardship on others,[7] to avoid offending the mob, to seek peace and security for the world, preservation of the people's lives, full provender for others as well as oneself, and to rest content when these aims are fulfilled, in this way bringing purity to the heart—there were those in ancient times who believed that the "art of the Way" lay in these things. Song Jian[8] and Yin Wen heard of their views and delighted in them. They

5. "Hard," "white," etc., were topics of logical debate taken up by the Mohist school; they seem to be essentially the same as the paradoxes of the Logicians mentioned on pp. 297–298.

6. *Han Feizi,* sec. 50, mentions three rival factions of the Mohist school, each of which claimed to represent the true teaching of Mo Di. These sects were well-organized groups under the strict control of an elder or grand master (Juzi), who had the right to choose his successor from among the members of the group.

7. Following Zhang Binglin, I read *ku* in place of *gou.*

8. The name is also romanized as Song Xing; in sec. 1, p. 3, he is referred to as Song Rongzi and in other texts as Song Keng. Little is known of him and Yin Wen beyond what is recorded here.

fashioned caps in the shape of Mount Hua to be their mark of distinction.[9] In dealing with the ten thousand things, they took the "defining of boundaries" to be their starting point;[10] they preached liberality of mind,[11] which they called "the mind's activity," hoping thereby to bring men together in the joy of harmony, to ensure concord within the four seas. Their chief task lay, they felt, in the effort to establish these ideals. They regarded it as no shame to suffer insult but sought to put an end to strife among the people, to outlaw aggression, to abolish the use of arms, and to rescue the world from warfare. With these aims they walked the whole world over, trying to persuade those above them and to teach those below, and though the world refused to listen, they clamored all the louder and would not give up until men said, "High and low are sick of the sight of them, and still they demand to be seen!"

Nevertheless, they took too much thought for others and too little for themselves. "Just give us five pints of rice and that will be enough," they said, though at that rate I fear these teachers did not get their fill. Though their own disciples went hungry, however, they never forgot the rest of the world but continued day and night without stop, saying, "We are determined to make certain that all men can live!" How lofty their aims, these saviors of the world! Again they said, "The gentleman does not examine others with too harsh an eye; he does not need material things in which to dress himself." If a particular line of inquiry seemed to bring no benefit to the world, they thought it better to abandon it than to seek an understanding of it. To outlaw aggression and abolish the use of arms—these were their external aims. To lessen the desires and weaken the emotions—these were their internal aims. Whether their approach was large scaled or small, detailed or gross, these were the goals they sought—these and nothing more.

* * *

9. Flat on top, like Mount Hua, hence symbolic of equality and peace.

10. Compare sec. 1, p. 3: "He drew a clear line between the internal and the external and recognized the boundaries of true glory and disgrace."

11. Or perhaps the meaning is "they discussed the phenomena of the mind." Zhang Binglin would emend this to read "they discussed the desires of the mind."

Public-spirited and not partisan, even-minded and not given to favoritism, vacant eyed, with none for a master, trailing after things without a second thought, giving not a glance to schemes, not a moment of speculation to knowledge, choosing neither this thing nor that, but going along with all of them—there were those in ancient times who believed that the "art of the Way" lay in such things. Peng Meng, Tian Pian, and Shen Dao heard of their views and delighted in them.[12] The Way, they believed, lay in making the ten thousand things equal.[13] "Heaven is capable of sheltering but not of bearing up," they said. "Earth is capable of bearing up but not of sheltering. The Great Way is capable of embracing all things but not of discriminating among them."[14] From this they deduced that each of the ten thousand things has that which is acceptable in it and that which is not acceptable. Therefore they said, "To choose is to forgo universality; to compare things[15] is to fail to reach the goal. The Way has nothing that is left out of it."

For this reason, Shen Dao discarded knowledge, did away with self, followed what he could not help but follow, acquiescent and unmeddling where things were concerned, taking this to be the principle of the Way. "To know is not to know," he said, and so he despised knowledge and worked to destroy and slough it off. Listless and lackadaisical,[16] he accepted no responsibilities but laughed at the world for honoring worthy men. Casual and uninhibited, he did nothing to distinguish himself but disparaged the great sages of the world. Lopping off corners, chiseling away the rough places, he went tumbling and turning along with things. He put aside both right and wrong and somehow managed to stay out of trouble. With nothing to learn from knowledge or scheming, no comprehension of what comes before or after, he merely rested where he was, and that was all. Pushed, he would finally begin to move; dragged, he would at last start on his way. He revolved like a whirlwind, spun like a feather,

12. Little is known of Peng Meng and Tian Pian beyond what is recorded here. Shen Dao is often designated as a forerunner of the Legalist School; only fragments of his writings remain.

13. Following Xi Tong, I read *dao* in place of *shou.*

14. It seems odd in view of what follows that any imperfection should be imputed to the Way; perhaps the text is faulty.

15. Taking the *jíao* of the text as equivalent to the *jíao* that means "to compare," that is, to try to determine the relative value of things.

16. No one has satisfactorily explained these two characters, but on the basis of the parallel phrase in the next sentence, it seems best to follow Ma Xulun in this interpretation.

went round and round like a grindstone, keeping himself whole and free from condemnation. Without error, whether in motion or at rest, never once was he guilty of any fault. Why was this? Because a creature that is without knowledge does not face the perils that come from trying to set oneself up, the entanglements that come from relying on knowledge. In motion or in stillness, he never departs from reason—in this way he lives out his years without winning praise. Therefore Shen Dao said, "Let me become like those creatures without knowledge, that is enough.[17] Such creatures have no use for the worthies or the sages. Clod-like, they never lose the Way." The great and eminent men would get together and laugh at him, saying, "The teachings of Shen Dao are not rules for the living but ideals for a dead man. No wonder he is looked on as peculiar!"

17. That is, the whirlwind, feather, and grindstone just mentioned.

Tian Pian was a similar case. He studied under Peng Meng and learned what it means not to compare things. Peng Meng's teacher used to say, "In ancient times the men of the Way reached the point where they regarded nothing as right and nothing as wrong—that was all." But such ways are mute and muffled—how can they be captured in words? Peng Meng and Tian Pian always went contrary to other men and were seldom heeded. They could not seem to avoid lopping away at the corners. What they called the Way was not the true Way, and when they said a thing was right, they could not avoid raising the possibility that it might be wrong.[18] Peng Meng, Tian Pian, and Shen Dao did not really understand the Way, though all had at one time heard something of what it was like.

18. Compare sec. 2, p. 10: "Where there is recognition of right, there must be recognition of wrong," etc.

To regard the source as pure and the things that emerge from it as coarse, to look on accumulation as insufficiency; dwelling alone, peaceful and placid, in spiritual brightness there were those in ancient times who believed that the "art of the Way" lay in these things. The Barrier Keeper Yin and Lao Dan heard of their views and delighted in

19. Guan Yin or the Barrier Keeper Yin appeared on p. 146. A short work attributed to him is still extant but is generally agreed to be spurious. Legend says that when Laozi was leaving China, he was asked by the Barrier Keeper Yin for some written exposition of his teachings and produced the *Daodejing* as a result, though modern scholarship questions whether the name Guan Yin in fact has anything to do with barriers.

them.[19] They expounded them in terms of constant nonbeing and being and headed their doctrine with the concept of the Great Unity. Gentle weakness and humble self-effacement are its outer marks; emptiness, void, and the noninjury of the ten thousand things are its essence.

The Barrier Keeper Yin said, "When a man does not dwell in self, then things will of themselves reveal their forms to him. His movement is like that of water, his stillness like that of a mirror, his responses like those of an echo. Blank eyed, he seems to be lost; motionless, he has the limpidity of water. Because he is one with it, he achieves harmony; should he reach out for it, he would lose it. Never does he go ahead of other men, but always follows in their wake."

Lao Dan said, "Know the male but cling to the female; become the ravine of the world. Know the pure but cling to dishonor; become the valley of the world."[20] Others all grasp what is in front; he alone grasped what is behind. He said, "Take to yourself the filth of the world." Others all grasp what is full; he alone grasped what is empty. He never stored away—therefore he had more than enough; he had heaps and heaps of more than enough! In his movement, he was easygoing and did not wear himself out. Dwelling in inaction, he scoffed at skill. Others all seek good fortune; he alone kept himself whole by becoming twisted. He said, "Let us somehow or other avoid incurring blame!" He took profundity to be the root and frugality to be the guideline. He said, "What is brittle will be broken, what is sharp will be blunted." He was always generous and permissive with things and inflicted no pain on others—this may be called the highest achievement.

The Barrier Keeper Yin and Lao Dan —with their breadth and stature, they indeed were the True Men of old!

20. This first quotation tallies almost exactly with parts of *Daodejing* XXVIII. The other sayings attributed here to Laozi agree in thought and terminology with the *Daodejing* but are not to be found in exactly this form in the present text of that work.

Blank, boundless, and without form; transforming, changing, never constant. Are we dead? Are we alive? Do we stand side by side with Heaven and earth? Do we move

in the company of spiritual brightness? Absentminded, where are we going? Forgetful, where are we headed for? The ten thousand things ranged all around us; not one of them is worthy to be singled out as our destination—there were those in ancient times who believed that the "art of the Way" lay in these things. Zhuang Zhou heard of their views and delighted in them. He expounded them in odd and outlandish terms, in brash and bombastic language, in unbound and unbordered phrases, abandoning himself to the times without partisanship, not looking at things from one angle only. He believed that the world was drowned in turbidness and that it was impossible to address it in sober language. So he used "goblet words" to pour out endless changes, "repeated words" to give a ring of truth, and "imputed words" to impart greater breadth. He came and went alone with the pure spirit of Heaven and earth, yet he did not view the ten thousand things with arrogant eyes. He did not scold over "right" and "wrong" but lived with the age and its vulgarity. Though his writings are a string of queer beads and baubles, they roll and rattle and do no one any harm.[21] Though his words seem to be at sixes and sevens, yet among the sham and waggery, there are things worth observing, for they are crammed with truths that never come to an end.

21. The meaning is uncertain.

Above he wandered with the Creator, below he made friends with those who have gotten outside life and death, who know nothing of beginning or end. As for the Source, his grasp of it was broad, expansive, and penetrating; profound, liberal, and unimpeded. As for the Ancestor, he may be said to have tuned and accommodated himself to it and to have risen on it to the greatest heights. Nevertheless, in responding to change and expounding on the world of things, he set forth principles that will never cease to be valid, an approach that can never be shuffled off. Veiled and arcane, he is one who has never been completely comprehended.

* * *

Hui Shi was a man of many devices, and his writings would fill five carriages. But his doctrines were jumbled and perverse, and his words wide of the mark. His way of dealing with things may be seen from these sayings:

The largest thing has nothing beyond it; it is called the One of largeness. The smallest thing has nothing within it; it is called the One of smallness.
That which has no thickness cannot be piled up; yet it is a thousand *li* in dimension.
Heaven is as low as earth; mountains and marshes are on the same level.
The sun at noon is the sun setting. The thing born is the thing dying.
Great similarities are different from little similarities; these are called the little similarities and differences. The ten thousand things all are similar and all are different; these are called the great similarities and differences.
The southern region has no limit and yet has a limit.
I set off for Yue today and came there yesterday.[22]
Linked rings can be separated.
I know the center of the world: it is north of Yan and south of Yue.[23]
Let love embrace the ten thousand things; Heaven and earth are a single body.

With sayings such as these, Hui Shi tried to introduce a more magnanimous view of the world and to enlighten the rhetoricians. The rhetoricians of the world happily joined in with the following sayings:

An egg has feathers.
A chicken has three legs.[24]
Ying contains the whole world.[25]
A dog can be considered a sheep.

22. This paradox was quoted on p. 9. As will be seen, most of these paradoxes deal with the relativity of space and time. Since in most cases, we do not know exactly how Hui Shi and the other logicians quoted later explained their paradoxes, it seems best not to try to comment at length on their meaning.

23. Yan and Yue represented the northern and southern extremities, respectively, of the China of this time.

24. Two legs plus the concept of "leg"; compare sec. 2, p. 13.

25. Ying was the capital of the state of Chu.

Horses lay eggs.
Toads have tails.
Fire is not hot.[26]
Mountains come out of the mouth.[27]
Wheels never touch the ground.
Eyes do not see.
Pointing to it never gets to it; if it got to it, there would be no separation.[28]
The tortoise is longer than the snake.
T squares are not right angled; compasses cannot make circles.
Holes for chisel handles do not surround the handles.
The flying bird's shadow never moves.
No matter how swift the barbed arrow, there are times when it is neither moving nor at rest.
A dog is not a canine.
A yellow horse and a black cow make three.
White dogs are black.
The orphan colt never had a mother.
Take a pole one foot long, cut away half of it every day, and at the end of ten thousand generations, there will still be some left.

26. "Hot" is no more than an arbitrary label that men use to describe how they feel in the presence of fire.

27. When one pronounces their names? There are other explanations.

28. The word *zhí,* "pointing," was translated on p. 10 as "attribute," that is, what can be pointed to. The meaning here seems to be that the attributes of a thing, that which we can point to, never fully describe the thing itself; if they did, then it would be impossible to separate the thing from its attributes.

Such were the sayings that the rhetoricians used in answer to Hui Shi, rambling on without stop till the end of their days. Huan Duan and Gongsun Long were among such rhetoricians.[29] Dazzling men's minds, unsettling their views, they could outdo others in talking but could not make them submit in their minds—such were the limitations of the rhetoricians.

Hui Shi, day after day, used all the knowledge he had in his debates with others, deliberately thinking up ways to astonish the rhetoricians of the world—the preceding examples illustrate this. Nevertheless, Hui Shi's manner of speaking showed that he considered himself the ablest man alive. "Heaven and earth—perhaps they are greater!" he used to declare. All he knew how to do was play the hero; he had no real art.

29. A work in three *zuan* attributed to the latter, the *Gongsun Longzi*, is still extant. See Max Perleberg, *The Works of Kung-sun Lung-tzu* (Hong Kong, 1952).

In the south there was an eccentric named Huang Liao who asked why Heaven and earth do not collapse and crumble or what makes the wind and rain, the thunder and lightning. Hui Shi, undaunted, undertook to answer him; without stopping to think, he began to reply, touching on every one of the ten thousand things in his peroration, expounding on and on without stop in multitudes of words that never ended. But still it was not enough, and so he began to add on his astonishing assertions. Whatever contradicted other men's views he declared to be the truth, hoping to win a reputation for outwitting others. This was why he never got along with ordinary people. Weak in inner virtue, strong in his concern for external things, he walked a road that was crooked indeed! If we examine Hui Shi's accomplishments from the point of view of the Way of Heaven and earth, they seem like the exertions of a mosquito or a gnat—of what use are they to other things? True, he still deserves to be regarded as the founder of one school, though I say, if he had only shown greater respect for the Way, he would have come nearer to being right. Hui Shi, however, could not seem to find any tranquillity for himself in such an approach. Instead, he went on tirelessly separating and analyzing the ten thousand things and, in the end, was known only for his skill in exposition. What a pity—that Hui Shi abused and dissipated his talents without ever really achieving anything! Chasing after the ten thousand things, never turning back, he was like one who tries to shout an echo into silence or to prove that form can outrun shadow. How sad!

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