The Book of Lieh-tzŭ

A Classic of Tao

Translated by

A. C. GRAHAM

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Preface to the Morningside Edition

A significant change since this book was first published in 1960 is that we have learned to see philosophical Taoism in a new historical perspective. At that time it was already recognised that Lao-tzŭ, traditional founder of the School of the *Tao* (Way') and supposed contemporary of Confucius (551—479 B.C.), is probably legendary, and that the *Tao-te-ching* ascribed to him may be as late as 250 B.C., later than the authentic writings of the other great Taoist, Chuang-tzŭ (c. 320 B.C.). But it was still taken for granted that the Hundred Schools competing during this period did include the one called Taoist, the only one of them to survive throughout Chinese history side by side with the Confucian. Its doctrine was assumed to be the philosophy of the *Tao-te-ching* and *Chuang-tzŭ,* a philosophy which rejects the competing `ways' formulated as ethical and political principles by other schools for an ineffable Way on which the sage finds himself in ceasing to judge between alternatives and in returning to the spontaneity of the non-human to unite with heaven and earth. On this assumption it was puzzling that what has generally passed as Taoism for the last two thousand years is a mixture in varying proportions of Yin-Yang cosmology, ritual, meditation, magic, sexology, and alchemy, and that it still has an organised church with Lao-tzŭ as its central deity, traditionally said to have been founded by Chang Tao-ling in AM. 142. How is one to reconcile its cult of physical immortality with the ecstatic welcoming of death as one of the inevitable transformations of nature which startles us in the writings of Chuang-tzŭ? No doubt one may think of this church like others as debasing the pure doctrine of its founder, but the Christian churches never departed quite as far from the gospel as this.

We were forgetting what inside our own ttadition we know very well, that labels such as `idealist' and `materialist', 'rationalist' and `empiricist', are applied retrospectively, and reshuffled as the focus of philosophical interest shifts elsewhere. The thinkers of ancient China came to be grouped as Taoists, Legalists, Sophists, Yin-Yang, but only the Confucians and Mohists are known to have been organised schools. Down to the 2nd century B.C. Lao-tzŭ, with his art of ruling by Doing Nothing, and Chuang-tzŭ, for whom rulership and office are burdens to be cast off, are never classed together; this attracts attention especially in the last chapter of *Chuang-tzii* itself, which sketches the oldest surviving history of the early thinkers. At the end of the classical age of Chinese philosophy, about 200 B.C., various eclectic movements were emerging, one of them centered on meditative and physical exercises to develop both daimonic powers and bodily health and longevity; it claimed the authority of Lao-tzŭ. When Ssŭ-ma T'an (died Ito B.C.) retrospectively classified the thinkers in Six Schools, it was this contemporary movement that he named *Tao chia,* `School of the Way', as Hal Roth shows in *Chinese Texts and Philosophical Contexts,* ed. by Henry Rosemont, Jr. (La Salle, Ill., 1990). The tradition of supposedly degenerate Taoism has had first right to the name from the very beginning.

In the retrospective apportioning of thinkers between schools, Chuang-tzŭ was classified with Lao-tzŭ as Taoist, but being irrelevant to the serious business of government, he was long neglected. It was from about A.D. 200, when the ancient books were being viewed in a changed perspective, that the distinctive attitude to spontaneity and the Way common to the *Tao-to-ching* and *Chuang-tzii* attracted the attention of literati disillusioned with politics. It became known as Lao-Chuang, the teaching of Lao-tzŭ and Chuang-tzŭ. The accepted modern label for it is `philosophical Taoism'; but as a way of life for the unworldly or

the tired of office it remained largely dissociated from Taoist alchemy and magic, and had an offshoot in Chinese Buddhism as Ch'an or Zen. Its third great document, *Lieh-tzŭ,* although written in the name of an ancient sage mentioned by Chuang-tzŭ, is now generally dated to this period, not much earlier than its commentary by Chang Chan (c. A.D. 370). We may see it as the only one of the three books whose author would actually be thinking of himself as a philosophical Taoist.

Although in 1960 most scholars in China already recognised the late date of *Lieh-tzŭ,* most Westerners were still discinclined to question its antiquity. My own textual studies, not yet completed when this translation first appeared, supported the Chinese dating, which by now prevails also in the West. The `evidence for my opinions on the still controversial question of the date of *Lieh-tzŭ*', mentioned in the original preface as unpublished, appeared in `The Date and Composition of *Liehtzyy', Asia Major* vol. 8/2 (1961). This, as well as the ` "Being" in Western Philosophy Compared with *shih/jei* and *yu/wu* in Chinese Philosophy' also mentioned, re-appeared in my *Studies in Chinese Philosophy and Philosophical Literature* (Institute of East Asian Philosophies, National University of Singapore, 1986).

One result of the textual investigation came as a surprise to me. The present book describes the hedonist `Yang Chu' chapter as `so unlike the rest of *Lieh-tzŭ*' that it must be from another hand (p. 135 below). The thought is certainly very different, and it does show the signs of editing and interpolation by the Taoist author which are noticed on p. 136 below. But although close scrutiny generally reveals marked differences in style between the body of the book and passages borrowed from earlier sources, I could find none to distinguish the hedonist chapter from the rest. It seems likely that the Taoist is incorporating an earlier writing by himself, from a hedonist phase in his own thought. From the contrasting episodes which introduce the

`Yellow Emperor' and `King Mu' chapters (cf. pp. 6of below), one is tempted to guess that the author, like the Yellow Emperor, had a hedonistic youth and then a Confucian career in government, before finally settling for Lao-Chuang. But to read autobiography into these episodes cannot of course be more than an attractive conjecture.

There also turned out to be internal evidence (and external evidence as well; see Studies, p. 271—an addition to the original paper) that the discussion of the finite and the infinite in the first three exchanges of the `Questions of T'ang' comes from a lost part *of Chuang-tzŭ.* This adds greatly to the importance of a fascinating but obscure passage my treatment of which has left me with an uneasy conscience. The interpretation, and to some extent therefore the choice of words in translation, depended on the assumption that Chang Chan's commentary implies something missing in the text, which now seems to me very doubtful; in the neighbourhood of the supposed lacuna I was fooling myself when I claimed to be `translating very literally' (p. 96 below). In more recent work I have translated it more conservatively, substantially as follows.

> As for *nothing* it is limitless, as for *something* it is inexhaustible: how would I know it? [i.e., know of their limitedness and exhaustibility, referring back to the preceding question and answer.] But outside the limitless there is nothing else that is limitless, inside the inexhaustible there is nothing else that is inexhaustible. There is no limit but also nothing else that is limitless, no exhaustion but also nothing else that is inexhaustible. This is why I know of their limitlessness and inexhaustibility, and do not know of their limitedness and exhaustibility. [cf. p. 95 and the note on p. 18 3]

The last chapter *of Chuang-tzŭ* records paradoxes of Hui Shih (and of the sophists in general, including the `If you daily take

away half . . .', which I carelessly ascribed to Hui Shih himself on p. 95 n2 below), but without their explanations. The importance of the redating of this passage is that if it does come from Hui Shih's friend Chuang-tzŭ, we can confidently accept it as a summary of the case for Hui Shih's paradox `The South is boundless yet does have bounds'. But what are the missing steps in the argument, which Chuang-tzŭ, as an intimate of sophists, could take for granted as common knowledge? A rather feeble explanation, which was the best I could offer until recently, is that things go on generating to infinity inside infinite space, but there can be no infinite inside the infinite. We need a stronger explanation which fits symmetrically the contrasting pairs `nothing/something, limitless/inexhaustible, outside/inside'. As may be seen from the notes on p. 95 below, the sophists appreciated that a division however small will have inside it `the absolutely small', the point, also called the Lou *hou,* `dimensionless'. Assuming that the point is still `something', there can be a much neater explanation:

(I) The non-existent, Nothing, is infinite, yet there is no second infinite outside the infinite (as should follow if the infinite is what has *nothing* outside it).

(2) The existent, Something, is infinitely divisible, yet there is no second infinitely-divisible inside the infinitely-divisible (as should follow if the point is *something).*

It seems to follow that, although space cannot be finite, it cannot be infinite either.

A. C. GRAHAM, 1990

Preface

The greater part of the *Lieh-tzŭ* has already appeared in English, one chapter in A. Forke's *Yang Chu's Garden of Pleasure,* selections from the rest in Lionel Giles' *Taoist Teaching from the Book of Lieh-tzŭ,* both published in the Wisdom of the East Series. But Forke and Giles produced their excellent translations nearly half a century ago, and Western sinology has made considerable progress in the interval. In any case, a complete version is long overdue.

Sinologists may find evidence for the more controversial observations about Yang Chu and about the Taoist conception of Nothing in `The Dialogue between Yang Ju and Chyntzyy' *(Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies,* vol. 22/2, June 1959) and ` "Being" in Western Philosophy Compared with *shih/fei* and *yu-wu* in Chinese Philosophy' *(Asia Major,* New Series, vol. 7/1, autumn 1959). I have not yet published the evidence for my opinions on the still controversial question of the date of the *Lieh-tzŭ,* but hope to fill this gap in due course.

The translations of passages quoted from other Chinese texts are my own.

I am indebted to Mr D. C. Lau, both for reading and criticising the translation in manuscript, and for many stimulating conversations about Chinese philosophy. I wish also to thank Dr Waley for lending me an edition of the *Lieh-tzŭ* with his own valuable marginal notes.

A. C. GRAHAM, 1960

Pre-dynastic Emperors

(The 'Three Highnesses' and 'Five Emperors', variously classified)

Fu-hsi
Shen-nung, Nii-kua, Yellow Emperor, Chuan-hsii, etc.
Yao (abdicated to Shun)
Shun (abdicated to Yii)

The Three Dynasties

(Their founders are the 'Three Kings')

(1) Hsia *(?22o5-?1767 B.C.),* from the sage Yii (who drained the Flood) to the tyrant Chieh.
(2) Yin or Shang *(?1766-?1123),* from the sage T'ang to the tyrant Chou (not to be confused with the name of the next dynasty)
(3) Chou (?1122-255)
King Wen (?1184-?1157), fief holder under Yin
King Wu (?1156-?1x16), who overthrew Yin
Duke of Chou, brother of King Wu
King Mu (?1001-?947)

(Decline of Chou from the 8th century; the fiefs become independent states)

Duke Huan *(685-643)* of Ch'i, who won hegemony over the other states
Kuan Chung (died *645),* his minister
Tzŭ-ch'an (died *522),* minister of Cheng
Yen-tzŭ (died *493),* minister of Ch'i
Confucius (?551-?479), of Lu, and his disciples Yen Hui, Tzŭ-kung, Tzŭ-lu, Tzŭ-chang, Tzŭ-hsia, Tsai Wo
Mo-tzŭ (A. *400),* teacher of universal love, and his disciple, **Ch'in Ku-li**
Yang Chu (A. *350),* hedonist in ch. 7, Taoist elsewhere

(Ch'in dynasty **221 B.C.**). *Re-unification of China*

Taoist sages

(Yellow Emperor)

? **C. 2000 B.C.**

Yii Hsiung, tutor of King Wen

(The following indefinitely located between 600 and 300 B.C.)

Lao-tzŭ, supposed author of *Tao-te-ching*
Kuan-yin, keeper of the pass who received the *Tao-te-ching* when Lao-tzŭ departed for the West
Lieh-tzŭ, with his teacher Hu-tzŭ and his friend Po-hun Wu jen

221 B.C.

Introduction

Taoism is the greatest philosophical tradition of China after Confucianism. From its first maturity in the 3rd century B.C. we find references to a certain Lieh-tzŭ, who travelled by riding the wind. His historicity is doubtful, and it is not even clear when he is supposed to have lived; some indications point to 600, others to 400 B.C. The book which carries his name is a collection of stories, sayings and brief essays grouped in eight chapters, each loosely organised around a single theme. Among these the 'Yang Chu' chapter preaches a hedonism out of keeping with the rest of the book; but the remaining seven chapters make up the most important Taoist document after the *Tao-te-ching* and the *Chuang-tzŭ.* Some authorities still maintain that it belongs (like the latter two books) to the 3rd century B.C. It certainly contains material coming from this period; but the predominant opinion of scholars in China is now that it was written as late as A.D. 300, only a little earlier than the first extant commentary, that of Chang Chan (fl. 370). If so, it belongs to the second great creative period of Taoism, which is otherwise known mainly by works hardly suitable for translation, the commentaries of Wang Pi (226-249) on the *Tao-te-ching* and of Kuo Hsiang (died 312) on the *Chuang-tzŭ.* But apart from its value as a representative document of this period, the *Lieh-tzŭ* has the merit of being by far the most easily intelligible of the classics of Taoism. For a Westerner it is perhaps the best introduction to this strange and elusive philosophy of life; for however obscure some of it may look, it does not present the infinite possibilities of divergent interpretation and sheer misunderstanding offered by the *Tao-te-ching* itself

The Tao or 'Way', the path along which all things move, is a concept shared by all the philosophical schools of China. Heaven,

earth and the 'myriad things' between them all follow a regular course, an unvarying sequence of day and night, spring, summer, autumn and winter, growth and decay, birth and death. Man alone is uncertain of his true path. The sages of the remote past knew the right way to live and to rule the Empire. But in the degenerate present each school (Confucians, Mohists, Taoists, Legalists) has its own 'Way', which it presents as the doctrine of the ancient sages. For Chinese thinkers, who are never much interested in speculation for its own sake, the basic question is 'Where is the Way?'—that is, 'How shall I live? How should the Empire be governed?'

The Way of Confucianism is primarily a system of government and a moral code, mastered by study, thought and discipline. Man is the centre of the universe, 'making a trinity with heaven and earth'; heaven is a vaguely personal power, ruling as the Emperor, the 'Son of Heaven', rules men; destiny is the 'decree of heaven', the world order is a counterpart of the social order, and the myriad things follow a Way which is essentially moral, given life by the kindness of spring, executed by the justice of autumn. For Taoists, on the other hand, man occupies the humble position of the tiny figures in Sung landscape paintings, and lives rightly by bringing himself into accord with an inhuman Way which does not favour his ambitions, tastes and moral principles:

> Heaven and earth are ruthless;
> For them the myriad things are straw dogs.
> The sage is ruthless;
> For him the people are straw dogs.'[1]

One characteristic of this accord with the Way is 'spontaneity' (*tzŭ jan,* literally 'being so of itself')—a concept, prominent from the beginnings of Taoism, which assumes the central place in the thought of the *Lieh-tzŭ* and of philosophers of the same period

[1] *Tao-te-thing,* ch. 5.

such as Kuo Hsiang. Heaven and earth operate without thought or purpose, through processes which are *tzŭ jan,* 'so of themselves'. Man follows the same course, through the process of growth and decay, without choosing either to be born or to die. Yet alone among the myriad things he tries to base his actions on thought and knowledge, to distinguish between benefit and harm, pose alternative courses of action, form moral and practical principles of conduct. If he wishes to return to the Way he must discard knowledge, cease to make distinctions, refuse to impose his will and his principles on nature, recover the spontaneity of the newborn child, allow his actions to be 'so of themselves' like physical processes. He must reflect things like a mirror, respond to them like an echo, without intermediate thought, perfectly concentrated and perfectly relaxed, like the angler or the charioteer whose hand reacts immediately to the give and pull of the line or the reins, or like the swimmer who can find his way through the whirlpool:

> I enter the vortex with the inflow and leave with the outflow, follow the Way of the water instead of imposing a course of my own... . *I* do it without knowing how I do it.'

This does not mean that we should act 'thoughtlessly' in the English sense, that is inattentively. The spontaneous reaction can be sound only if we are fully attentive to the external situation. But we must not analyse *(pien* 'discriminate'), must not split the changing but undifferentiated world to which, in spontaneous activity, we make a varying but unified response. In thought we distinguish alternatives, joy and sorrow, life and death, liking and dislike, and we mistake the principles which guide us to the preferred alternative for the Way itself. But the alternation of joy and sorrow, life and death, is itself the Way, and we run counter to it when we strive to perpetuate joy and life. If, on the other

' **p. 44** below (also *in Chuang-tzŭ,* **ch. 19).**

hand, we cease to make distinctions, we experience, beneath joy and sorrow, the underlying joy of according with the Way.

The Taoist must 'know nothing' and 'do nothing'—two claims which are deliberately paradoxical. He knows how to act, but this awareness is a knack which cannot be reduced to communicable information; he acts, but in the manner of natural processes, not of the unenlightened man who tries to force his will on events. Translators sometimes resort to special phrases such as 'non-action' for the second of these terms *(wu-wei),* in order to avoid the impression that Taoism recommends idleness; but it seems better to choose an equivalent which, like the Chinese phrase, is strong enough to be obviously paradoxical. *Wu-wei,* 'doing nothing', is one of the main themes of the *Tao-te-ching,* where it implies governing the state by following the line of least resistance, yielding until the moment when the opposing force reaches its limit and begins to decline—for it is the Way that, to use an English instead of a Chinese expression, 'Everything that goes up must come down.' *Wu-wei is* less prominent in the *Lieh-tzŭ,* which directly discusses the principle of conquering by yielding only in a single passage)[1] With the growing stress on spontaneity, 'knowing nothing' tends to usurp the place of 'doing nothing'.

Confucians can describe their Way; it consists of explicit rules of conduct, customs, institutions. But Taoists hold that fixed standards originated when men forgot the Way and, although designed to repair the damage, only made it worse. We must respond differently to different situations; action should depend, not on subjective standards, but on the objective situation, to which we should adjust ourselves with the immediacy of the shadow adjusting itself to the moving body. It is therefore impossible to define the Way in words, just as the swimmer cannot

[1] pp. 52 if.

describe what he does to keep afloat. The *Lieh-tzŭ* opens with a denial that the Way can be taught in words, echoing the opening sentence of the *Tao-te-thing:* 'The Way that can be told is not the constant Way.'

How then can we discover the Way? By a spiritual training comparable to the physical training by which the angler, archer, swimmer or boatman learns his incommunicable skill. The Taoist classics give no details about the techniques of contemplation which lead us to the Way. Writers belonging to a branch of Taoism which aimed at physical immortality have recorded their methods in some detail—breathing exercises, sexual gymnastics, herbal drugs, alchemy; and breath control is mentioned in the *Lieh-tzŭ.* However, the cult of immortality is quite foreign to philosophical Taoism, which recommends acceptance of the Way, by which everything which is born must in due course die; indeed Pao-p'u-tzŭ (c. 300), the greatest of the Taoist alchemists, goes so far as to question the authority *of Chuang-tzŭ* and even of the *Tao-te-ching.*[2] All that philosophical Taoists tell us about their technique of meditation is its object—to return from motion to stillness, from existence to the Void, the Nothing out of which all things emerge and to which they go back in endlessly recurring cycles.

This conception of mystical contemplation as **a** withdrawal into the ground underlying the multiple and changing world is of course shared by many mystical schools, Western and Eastern. But Taoists think of this experience in terms peculiar to China. A Westerner tends to fit the mysticism of other civilisations into a Neo-Platonist frame, thinking of a primarily cognitive experience in which the seer rends the veil of illusion and discovers his oneness with the underlying Absolute, Reality, Being. For Chinese thinkers however the basic question is not 'What is the

[1] pp. **47** if. **(also in *Chnang-tzŭ,* ch. 7).**
[2] Cf. Creel *(Short Reading List,* p. **282), p. 152.**

Truth?' but 'Where is the Way?' They conceive the ground to which they return in meditation, not as ultimate Reality, but as the Way for which they are searching. This explains an apparent contradiction in the concept of the Tao. As long as they are concerned with action, Taoists, like Confucians, conceive it as a metaphorical path to be followed. But when, as in the opening section of the *Lieh-tzŭ,* they eulogise the Tao revealed in contemplation, they use such metaphors as 'root', 'ancestor', 'mother', the 'Unborn' from which all things are born. They present it as the source from which the myriad things emerge, and even contradict the metaphor of a highway by calling it the 'gate' from which the highway starts.

It is therefore a mistake for the Western reader to connect the Way with his own concepts of Being and Reality. Indeed, in terms of the Chinese words *(yu/wu, shih/hsŭ)* which are closest to these words in function, it is material things which exist and are solid (real), the Tao which is Nothing and tenuous or void (unreal). 'Nothing' is conceived (as Hegel and other Westerners have also conceived it) as a positive complement of Something, not its mere absence. The Tao is like the hole in the wheel which takes the axle, the inside of a vessel, the doors and windows of a house; they are Nothing, but we draw advantage from the wheel, vessel or house only by using its empty spaces.'

One consequence of this difference of viewpoint is that for Taoists the absolute stilling of the mind in contemplation is only a means of discovering the Way to live; it cannot be (as it may be for those who conceive it as a revelation of absolute Truth, in comparison with which all normal experience seems trivial) a state supremely valuable in itself. Just as Nothing has no significance except as the complement of Something, so the withdrawal into Nothing has no significance except in relation to the ordinary life to which the mystic returns. Pure trance states in fact

' Tao-te-ching, ch. **it.**

have a very modest place in the *Lieh-tzŭ.* We read of a certain Nan-kuo-tzŭ who sat like **a clay** image:

> Nan-kuo-tzŭ's face is full but his mind void; his ears hear nothing, his eyes see nothing, his mouth says nothing, his mind knows nothing, his body never alters.[1]

But the ideal in the *Lieh-tzŭ is* a state, not of withdrawal, but of heightened perceptiveness and responsiveness in an undifferentiated world:

> My body is in accord with my mind, my mind with my energies, my energies with my spirit, my spirit with Nothing. Whenever the minutest existing thing or the faintest sound affects me, whether it is far away beyond the eight borderlands, or close at hand between my eyebrows and eyelashes, I am bound to know it. However, I do not know whether I perceived it with the seven holes in my head and my four limbs, or knew it through my heart and belly and internal organs. It is simply self-knowledge.[2]

> Only then, when I had come to the end of everything inside me and outside me, my eyes became like my ears, my ears like my nose, my nose like my mouth; everything was the same. My mind concentrated and my body relaxed, bones and flesh fused completely, I did not notice what my body leaned against and my feet trod, I drifted with the wind East or West, like a leaf from a tree or a dry husk, **and** never knew whether it was the wind that rode me or I that rode the wind.[3]

> If nothing within you stays rigid,
> Outward things will disclose themselves.
> Moving, be like water.
> Still, be like a mirror.
> Respond like an echo.[4]

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[1] **p. 80.** [2] pp. 77 if. [3] **pp. 36** if. and 9o. [4] (also in Chuang-t4', ch. 33)·

Lieh-tzŭ riding the wind is superior only in degree to a skilful charioteer, whose dexterity is described in very similar terms:

> If you respond with the bridle to what you feel in the bit, with the hand to what you feel in the bridle, with the mind to what you feel in the hand, then you will see without eyes and urge without a goad; relaxed in mind and straight in posture, holding six bridles without confusing them, you will place the twenty-four hooves exactly where you want them, and swing round, advance and withdraw with perfect precision, Only then will you be able to drive carving a rut no wider than the chariot's wheel, on a cliff which drops at the edge of the horse's hoof, never noticing that mountains and valleys are steep and plains and marshlands are flat, seeing them as all the same.[1]

Unlike many mystical schools (including Zen Buddhism, which continued its cult of spontaneity), Taoism does not seek an absolute, unique and final illumination different in kind from all other experiences. Its ideal state of enhanced sensitivity, nourished by withdrawal into absolute stillness, is the same in kind as more ordinary and limited sorts of spontaneous dexterity. The practical applications of Taoism interested other schools such as the Legalists, who present them in the same mystical-sounding language, so that we are often in doubt whether an author is really recommending a 'mystical' attitude to life at all. Even in the case of the *Tao-te-ching,* which teaches that 'reversion is the movement of the Way',[2] that strength and hardness always revert to weakness and softness, so that the sage conquers by yielding until the turning-point, we may well ask whether the author is advising the rulers of his time to seek mystical illumination or merely to cultivate a knack of ruling in the manner of ***judo*** wrestling. *(Judo,* as is well known, is an application of this Taoist principle, which was disseminated in Japan by Zen Buddhists.)

[1] **p. 114.** [2] *Tao-te-ching, ch.* **40.**

But the question is probably an empty one. A Taoist would no doubt answer, on the one hand that the skilled wrestler is, within the limits of his art, in possession of the Way, on the other that only the fully illumined Taoist adept can entirely master the knack of responding immediately to the give and pull of political events.

Taoism represents everything which is spontaneous, imaginative, private, unconventional, in Chinese society, Confucianism everything which is controlled, prosaic, public, respectable; the division runs through the whole of Chinese civilisation. We might be inclined to call one tendency 'romantic', the other 'classical'. However, these terms imply a preconception, foreign to China, that order and spontaneity are mutually exclusive. The 'classicist', we tend to assume, forces order on to recalcitrant material by thought and effort; the 'romantic' freely expresses his emotions at the risk of disorder. But order, for the Chinese, does not depend on intellectual manipulation, and is the goal of Taoists as well as Confucians. The spontaneity of Taoism and its successor Zen is not a disruption of self-control, but an unthinking control won, like the skill of an angler or charioteer, by a long discipline. The tendency in Chinese and Japanese poetry and painting which shows the influence of Taoism and Zen is often called 'romantic', but it would be misleading to take this label too seriously. Out of seven qualities which Dr S. Hisamatsu[1] proposes as characteristic of the Zen tradition in the arts, spontaneity, distrust of symmetry, and the suggestion of a mystery which the artist refuses to define may seem 'romantic'; but simplicity, detachment, stillness, and the austerity which prefers the aged to the young and beautiful face and the withered branch to the flower, accord rather with our ideas of 'classicism'. Order and discipline are taken for granted; but the work assumes its

[1] There is an English summary of the argument of his *Zen to Bijutsu in* Sohaku Ogata, *Zen for the West* (London, 1959), pp. 24-26.

proper order following the Way only if the artist refrains from imposing order on it.

Nearly all the early Chinese philosophies, Mohism and Legalism as well as Confucianism, are primarily theories of government. They prescribe the conduct of individuals within society, but first of all they address the ruler. The Taoism of the *Tao-te-ching* is no exception to this generalisation. Its political doctrine is sometimes described as 'anarchism', since its essence is that events accord with the Way only if the ruler refrains from interfering with their natural tendency. But the fact remains that the *Tao-te-ching* assumes that there is a ruler, addresses itself to him rather than to the private individual, and advises Doing Nothing as a means of ruling, not as an abdication of ruling. Its doctrine is a development of the ancient Chinese belief (also visible in the background of Confucianism and Legalism) that the true Emperor does not need to govern at all, because the pervading influence of his *mana,* nourished by proper observance of ritual, is enough to maintain social harmony, avert natural disasters, and ensure good harvests.

However, from the first Taoism was also, notably in the *Chuang-tzŭ, a* philosophy of life for the private individual. The only fit occupation for a gentleman in traditional Chinese society was a career in the civil service; Taoism appealed especially to those who rebelled against this convention, or who failed to realise their worldly ambitions. In the reign of Wu-ti (140-87 B.C.) Confucianism finally ousted its rivals as the official theory of government and the moral code of the ruling class. The philosophical Taoism which revived about A.D. 200, in an age of political disunion and social disruption, was a private mysticism appealing, against the growing competition of Buddhism (which arrived from India in the 1st century A.D.), to individuals more interested in personal than in public life. Some Taoists of the period, such as Yiian Chi (210—263) and Pao Ching-yen (c. 300),

were 'anarchists' in a new and different sense; they completely rejected the political institutions of the Empire, and imagined a simpler society without ruler and subject.[1]

The *Lieh-tzŭ* itself reflects this tendency, although very cautiously. The hedonist chapter explicitly recommends a society in which each pursues his own pleasure without interfering with others, and 'the Way of ruler and subject is brought to an end'.[2] The Taoist chapters retain the old assumption that the power emanating from a true sage maintains the harmony of society without the need of government, but imply that he is not an Emperor; such sages have only existed either before or outside the Chinese Empire. The ideal society of which the Yellow Emperor dreams is that of Hua-hsii, mother of the first Emperor Fu-hsi, and he does not quite succeed in realising it.[3] Confucius is made to deny that any Emperor since the beginning of history has been a sage, although there may be a sage in the Western regions outside China.' In the earthly paradise in the far North 'no one is ruler or subject'.[5] Yao abdicates when he discovers that the Empire is in perfect order and no one is aware he is ruling.[6]

The Taoist, it will already be clear, cannot be a 'philosopher' in the Western sense, establishing his case by rational argument; he can only guide us in the direction of the Way by aphorisms, poetry and parable. The talents which he needs are those of an artist and not of a thinker, and in fact the three classics of Taoism are all in their different ways remarkable purely as literature (in the original Chinese, I hasten to add). The strength of the *Lieh-tzŭ* is in its stories, vivid, lively, full of marvels, often humorous, to all outward appearances guilelessly simple. More abstract passages, such as the rhapsodies about the Way with which the

[1] Cf. Lin Mou-sheng, *Men and Ideas* (New York, 1942), pp. 150-8.
[2] p. 146. [3] pp. 34 ff. [4] p. 78. [5] p. 102. [6] p. 90.

book opens, tend to be vague and long-winded, lacking both the enigmatic terseness of the *Tao-te-ching* and the lyrical drive of the *Chuang-tzŭ.*

The *Lieh-tzŭ* contains many passages which are common to other books, and seem on internal evidence to be borrowed directly from them. Nearly half of ch. 2 comes from the *Chuang-tzŭ (c.* 300 B.C.), and more than half of ch. 8 from sources of the 3rd and 2nd centuries B.C. The *Chuang-tzŭ,* although heterogeneous in authorship, shows marked differences in style from the *Lieh-tzŭ,* some of them visible even in translation. ? Stories from this source have a very simple narrative organisation, being little more than settings for dialogue; on the other hand, while the characteristic *Lieh-tzŭ* stories are straightforward prose, these are written with the metaphorical concentration of poetry, in a rhythmic prose which often changes into rhymed verse and back again.

No doubt the *Lieh-tzŭ* contains other passages taken from older works now lost. But when known parallels are excluded, its thought and style are fairly uniform. I incline to the opinion (which is however far from universally accepted) that most of it comes from one period (c. A.D. 300) and may even, except for the hedonist chapter, be the work of a single hand.

The Western reader of this book, struck first of all by its naive delight in the irrational and marvellous, may well feel that no way of thought could be more alien to the climate of twentieth-

Sixteen complete episodes (and sections from others) are from the *Chuang-tzŭ:* Lieh-tzŭ and the skull (pp. 20-22), Shun's question (pp. 29 ff.), Lieh-tzŭ and Kuan-yin (pp. 37ff.), Lieh-tzŭ s archery (pp. 38 ff.), Confucius and the boatman (pp. 43 ff.), Confucius and the swimmer (p. 44), Confucius and the catcher of cicadas (pp. **44 ff.),** the seagulls (p. 45, mentioned as Chuang-tzii in early quotations), Lieh-tzŭ and the shaman (pp. 47-49), Lieh-tzŭ and Po-hun Wu-jen (pp, 49ff.), Yang Chu and Lao-tzŭ (pp. 51 ff.), the innkeeper's concubines (p. 52), the fighting cocks (p. 56), Kuan-yin's saying (p. 90), Kuan Chung's dying advice (pp. 126 ff.), Lieh-tzŭ in poverty (p. 162).

century science. Looking more closely, he may be surprised to discover that Taoism coincides with the scientific world-view at just those points where the latter most disturbs Westerners rooted in the Christian tradition—the littleness of man in a vast universe; the inhuman Tao which all things follow, without purpose and indifferent to human needs; the transience of life, the impossibility of knowing what comes after death; unending change in which the possibility of progress is not even conceived; the relativity of values; a fatalism very close to determinism, even a suggestion that the human organism operates like a machine? The Taoist lives in a world **remarkably** like ours, but by a shift of viewpoint it does not look so bleak to him as it looks to many of us. The answer to Shun's question, 'Can one succeed in possessing the Way?', will sound to some ears like a confession that life is meaningless, that we might as well never have been born. Yet its tone is one of lyrical acceptance, of the universal order and of man's place in it:

> Your own body is not your possession.... It is the shape lent to you by heaven and earth. Your life is not your possession; it is harmony between your forces, granted for a time by heaven and earth. Your nature and destiny are not your possessions; they are the course laid down for you by heaven and earth. Your children and grandchildren are not your possessions; heaven and earth lend them to you to cast off from your body as an insect sheds its skin. Therefore you travel without knowing where you go, stay without knowing what you cling to, are fed without knowing how. You are the breath of heaven and earth which goes to and fro; how can you ever possess it? [2]

[1] pp. ur, 12o. [2] pp. 29 if. (also in *Chuang-tzŭ,* ch. 22).

1

Heaven's Gifts

The theme of this chapter is reconciliation with death. It begins by stating its metaphysical premises; all things follow a course of growth and decline between birth and death; nothing can escape change except the Tao, from which they come and to which they return. A series of anecdotes follows, illustrating the theme that we should accept death with equanimity.

The cosmology of the *Lieh-tzŭ,* and of Chinese philosophy generally, assumes that *ch'i,* `breath', `air', is the basic material of the universe. The *ch'i* is constantly solidifying or dissolving; its substantiality is a matter of degree, one term of which is the absolute tenuity, the nothingness, of the Tao itself. The universe began with the condensation of the *ch'i* out of the void, the relatively light and pure *ch'i* rising to become heaven, the heavy and impure falling to become earth. Moving, opening out, expanding, the *ch'i is* called Yang; returning to stillness, closing, contracting, it is called Yin. Between heaven and earth the Yang and Yin alternate like breathing out and in ('Is not the space between heaven and earth like a bellows?'[1]) accounting for all pairs of opposites, movement and stillness, light and darkness, male and female, hardness and softness. Solid things are begotten by the active, rarefied, Yang breath of heaven, shaped by the passive, dense, Yin breath of earth, and in due course dissolve back into the nothingness from which they came. The human body is dense *ch'i* which has solidified and assumed shape, activated by the purer, free moving *ch'i* present inside it as breath and as the vital

[1] *Tao-te-ching, ch. 5.*

energies which circulate through the limbs. (In the present translation the words 'forces' and 'energies' as well as 'breath' are used for the *ch'i* inside the body.)

The chapter gives a number of separate reasons for reconciling ourselves to death, and even to the final destruction of heaven and earth:

(1) Opposites are complementary, and one is impossible without the other. We cannot have life without having death as well.

(2) Individual identity is an illusion, and the birth and death of an individual are merely episodes in the endless transformations of the *ch'i*. ('You were never born and will never die.' 'Will heaven and earth end? They will end together with me.' 'You are the breath of heaven and earth which goes to and fro.')

(3) The nothingness from which we came is our true home, from which we cannot stray for long.

(4) We cannot conceive what it is like to be dead, so there is no need to be afraid. Perhaps we shall enjoy death more than life (the theme of a famous passage from the *Chuang-tzŭ* which will be quoted later).[1] Perhaps we shall be reborn elsewhere. ('How do I know that when I die here I shall not be born somewhere else?' evidently refers to the Buddhist doctrine of transmigration, but only as a remote possibility.) This kind of speculation implies something less than a complete acceptance of death, and the *Lieh-tzŭ* presents it with reservations, through the mouth of Lin Lei, who had 'found it, but not found all of it'.

(5) Life is perpetual toil, and death is a well-earned rest. This point of view is confined to the dialogue between Confucius and Tzŭ-kung, a Confucian story which first appears in ch. *27* of the *Hsŭn-tzŭ* (3rd century B.C.).

All philosophical Taoists agree in admitting the inevitability of

1 *pp. 58 ff.*

death. But **there was** a cult of physical immortality in China (using, among other means, an elixir distilled by alchemy), and by the 1st century A.D. at latest its practitioners were claiming the authority of the *Tao-te-ching* and calling themselves Taoists. The relation between this cult and philosophical Taoism remains something of a mystery. Alchemists, in China as in Europe, made genuine discoveries in the course of their search for the elixir; and Joseph Needham, in the second volume of his *Science and Civilization in China,* combining the experiments of the alchemists with certain theses of the philosophers which connect with Western scientific theories and principles of research,[1] presents even the philosophical Taoists as scientists not quite emancipated from the mystical ideas common in the primitive stage of a scientific tradition. His argument, ingenious as it is, prevents him from recognising just how far the philosophical Taoists go in their rejection of knowledge, of analytic thinking, of the whole basis of scientific method. However, for present purposes it is enough to say that in the 3rd and 4th centuries A.D. philosophers still kept aloof from the alchemists who had usurped the name of 'Taoist'.[2] With one dubious exception,[3] references in the *Lieh-tzŭ* to the cult of immortality are hostile.*

It may be noticed **that** the mythology of the *Lieh-tzŭ,* if taken literally, often seems to contradict its philosophy. Its stories mention immortals living in remote regions,[5] **a** supreme God (Ti),[6] even a personal Creator[7]—the last a pure metaphor for the process of transformation, without basis even in popular religion. The Yellow Emperor at death 'rose into the sky'[8]—a ritual phrase for the death of Emperors, but apparently meant literally,

[1] Cf. p. 13. [2] Creel, op. cit., **pp.** 150-2.

[3] pp. r77 ff. This story, in order to make the point that some men can teach what they cannot practise, leaves open the possibility that there may be something in the arts for prolonging life.

[4] pp. 23, 129, 147. [5] pp. 35, 97. [6] pp. 97, 100, etc. [7] pp. 65, 111.

[8] p. 35.

since elsewhere it is implied that King Mu of Chou did not rise into the sky.[1] It is not easy to decide how far the author believed in the historical truth of some of his stories; certainly many of them are *yŭ-yen,* 'parables', an acknowledged literary form among Taoists from the 3rd century B.C. Very likely he did not ask the question himself. A delight in the marvellous, a confidence that there are astonishing things beyond the reach of our knowledge, is an important part of the Taoist sensibility. One has the impression that stories of immortals, not here and now, but in remote times and places, are in a twilight between dream and reality, true enough to remind us of the limitations of ordinary knowledge, not quite true enough to suggest the possibility of becoming immortal ourselves.

Lieh-tzŭ was living in Pu-t'ien, the game preserve of the state of Cheng. For forty years no one noticed him, and the prince, the nobles and the high officials of the state regarded him as one of the common people. There was famine in Cheng, and he decided to move to Wei. His disciples said to him:

'Master, you are going away, and have set no time for your return. Your disciples presume to make a request. What are you going to teach us before you go? Did not your master Hu-tzŭ tell you anything?'

'What did Hu-tzŭ ever say?' Lieh-tzŭ answered smiling. 'However, I did once overhear him talking to Po-hun Wu-jen; I will try to tell you what he said. These were his words:

'"There are the born and the Unborn, the changing and the Unchanging. The Unborn can give birth to the born, the Unchanging can change the changing. The born cannot escape birth, the changing cannot escape change; therefore birth and change are the norm. Things for which birth and change are the norm are

[1] p. 64, cf. p. 104.

at all times being born and changing. They simply follow the alternations of the Yin and Yang and the four seasons.

The Unborn is by our side yet alone,
The Unchanging goes forth and returns.
Going forth and returning, its successions are endless;
By our side and alone, its Way is boundless.

"The *Book of the Yellow Emperor* says:

The Valley Spirit never dies:
It is called the dark doe.
The gate of the dark doe
Is called the root of heaven and earth.
It goes on and on, something which almost exists;
Use it, it never runs out. (1)

"Therefore that which gives birth to things is unborn, that which changes things is unchanging."

(Birth and change, shape and colour, wisdom and strength, decrease and growth, come about of themselves. It is wrong to say that it brings about birth and change, shape and colour, wisdom and strength, decrease and growth.) (2)

Notes. (1) This passage is also found in the *Tao-te-thing,* ch. 6.
(2) If these obscure sentences are rightly translated, they must be a critical note by another hand.

Lieh-tzŭ said:

Formerly the sages reduced heaven and earth to a system by means of the Yin and Yang. But if all that has shape was born from the Shapeless, from what were heaven and earth born? I answer: There was a Primal Simplicity, there was a Primal Commencement, there were Primal Beginnings, there was a Primal Material. The Primal Simplicity preceded the appearance of the

breath. The Primal Commencement was the beginning of the breath. The Primal Beginnings were the breath beginning to assume shape. The Primal Material was the breath when it began to assume substance. Breath, shape and substance were complete, but things were not yet separated from each other; hence the name "Confusion". "Confusion" means that the myriad things were confounded and not yet separated from each other.

'Looking you do not see it, listening you do not hear it, groping you do not touch it; hence the name "Simple". The Simple **had no** shape nor bounds, the Simple altered and became one, and from one altered to sevenfold, from sevenfold to ninefold. Becoming ninefold is the last of the alterations of the breath. Then it reverted to unity; unity is the beginning of the alterations of shape. The pure and light rose to become heaven, the muddy and heavy fell to become earth, the breath which harmoniously blended both became man. Hence the essences contained by heaven and earth, and the birth and changing of the **myriad** things.'

Lieh-tzŭ said:

> 'Heaven and earth cannot achieve everything;
> The sage is not capable of everything;
> None of the myriad things can be used for everything.

For this reason

> It is the office of heaven to beget and to shelter,
> The office of earth to shape and to support,
> The office of the sage to teach and reform,
> The office of each thing to perform its function.

Consequently, there are ways in which earth excels heaven, and ways in which each thing is more intelligent than the sage. Why is this? Heaven which begets and shelters cannot shape and support, earth which shapes and supports cannot teach and reform,

the sage who teaches and reforms cannot make things act counter to their functions, things with set functions cannot leave their places. Hence the Way of heaven and earth must be either Yin or Yang, the teaching of the sage must be either kindness or justice, and the myriad things, whatever their functions, must be either **hard** or soft. All these observe their functions and cannot leave their places.

Hence there are the begotten and the Begetter of the begotten, shapes and the Shaper of shapes, sounds and the Sounder of sounds, colours and the Colourer of colours, flavours and the Flavourer of flavours. What begetting begets dies, but the Begetter of the begotten never ends. What shaping shapes is real, but the Shaper of shapes has never existed. What sounding sounds is heard, but the Sounder of sounds has never issued forth. What colouring colours is visible, but the Colourer of colours never appears. What flavouring flavours is tasted, but the Flavourer of flavours is never disclosed. All are the offices of That Which Does Nothing. It is able to

Make Yin, make Yang, soften or harden,
Shorten or lengthen, round off or square,
Kill or beget, warm or cool,
Float or sink, sound the *kung* note or the *shang,*
Bring forth or submerge, blacken or yellow,
Make sweet or bitter, make foul or fragrant.

It knows nothing and is capable of nothing; yet there is nothing which it does not know, nothing of which it is incapable.'

When Lieh-tzŭ was eating at the roadside on a journey to Wei, he saw a skull a hundred years old. He picked a stalk, pointed at it, and said, turning to his disciple Pai-feng:

Only he and I know that you were never born and will never die. Is it he who is truly miserable, is it we who are truly happy?

Within the seeds of things there are germs. When they find water they develop in successive stages. Reaching water on the edge of land, they become a scum. Breeding on the bank, they become the plantain. When the plantain reaches dung, it becomes the crowfoot. The root of the crowfoot becomes woodlice, the leaves become butterflies. The butterfly suddenly changes into an insect which breeds under the stove and looks as though it has shed its skin, named the *ch'ŭ-to.* After a thousand days the *ch'ti-to* changes into a bird named *the kan-yŭ-ku.* The saliva of the *kart-yis-ku* becomes the *ssŭ-mi,* which becomes the vinegar animalcula *yi-lu,* which begets the animalcula *huang-k'uang,* which begets the *chiu-yu,* which begets the gnat, which begets the firefly.

(Sheep's liver changes into the goblin sheep underground. The ***blood*** *of horses and men becoming the will-o'-the-wisp; kites becoming sparrow-hawks, sparrow-hawks becoming cuckoos, cuckoos in due course again becoming kites; swallows becoming oysters, moles becoming quails, rotten melons becoming fish, old leaks becoming sedge, old ewes becoming monkeys, fish roe becoming insects—these are all examples of things altering. There is a beast of Shan-yuan which gives birth after conceiving by itself, the* lei. *There are birds of the rivers and marshes which give birth after looking at each other, the fish-hawks. There is a creature which is solely female, the giant tortoise; and another which is solely male, the little bee. The men and women of Ssŭ impregnate and conceive without intercourse. Hou Chi was born from a great footprint, Yi Yin from a hollow mulberry tree. Dragonflies breed from moisture, animalculae from vinegar.)*

The *yang-hsi,* combining with an old bamboo which has not put forth shoots, begets the *ch'ing-ning.* This begets the leopard, which begets the horse, which begets man. Man in due course

returns to the germs. All the myriad things come out of germs and go back to germs.' (I)

Note. (r) Except for the italicised passage, and an interpolation from the *Mohist Canons* (3rd century B.C.) after the first sentence (`Like frogs becoming *quails',* unintelligible in this context and omitted in the translation), this whole section on metamorphoses is taken from the *Chuang-tzŭ* (3rd century B.c.). It presents a continuous chain *of* development from the original germs up to man, with one break (between the firefly and the *yang-hsi)* which *is* no doubt due to textual corruption. Into this break the editor *of* the *Lieh-tzŭ* has inserted a miscellaneous collection of metamorphoses and strange births which obscures the sequence.

The transformations of some animals and plants, together with legends of abnormal births (for example, horses giving birth to man), inspired the original author with the idea, immensely fruitful when it appeared independently in the very different soil *of* Europe, that even men might develop from the simplest germs by a continuous process *of* generation and transformation. It is not quite clear whether he was proposing evolution as a historical process by which species originated, or as a possibility realised whenever there happens to be the right sequence *of* normal and abnormal changes. (In each sentence, the present tense *of* the translation is arbitrary; there is no indication *of* time. The translation implies that there is animal dung *(yii-hsi)* on land at the very beginning *of* the process; but the meaning *of yŭ-hsi is* not certain.) The difference may not have seemed important to him, for in a Taoist context the significance *of* the idea is not that it explains the origin *of* man, but that it shows that there *is* no absolute difference between one thing and another, and encourages us to see death, not as the end of an individual, but as part of a universal process of transformation. In the *Chuang-tzfi* as in the *Lieh-tzŭ* the passage follows, and is apparently the continuation, *of* Lieh-tzŭ's speech about the skull.

The identification *of* the plants and animals mentioned is in many cases disputable.

The *Book of the Yellow Emperor* says:

`When a shape stirs, it begets not a shape but a shadow. When a sound stirs, it begets not a sound but an echo. When Nothing stirs, it begets not nothing but something.'

That which has shape is that which must come to an end. Will heaven and earth end? They will end together with me. Will there ever be no more ending? I do not know. Will the Way

end? At bottom it has had no beginning. Will there ever be no more of it? At bottom it does not exist.

Whatever is born reverts to being unborn, whatever **has shape** reverts to being shapeless. But unborn it is not the basically Unborn, shapeless it is not the basically Shapeless. That which is born is that which in principle must come to an end. Whatever ends cannot escape its end, just as whatever is born cannot escape birth; and to wish to live forever, and have no more of ending, is to be deluded about our lot.

The spirit is the possession of heaven, the bones are the possession of earth. What belongs to heaven is pure and disperses, what belongs to earth is dense and sticks together. When spirit parts from body, each returns to its true state. That is why ghosts are called *kuei; kuei* means `one who has gone home', they have gone back to their true home. The Yellow Emperor said:

> `When my spirit goes through its door,
> And my bones return to the root from which they grew,
> What will remain of me?'

From his birth to his end, man passes through four great changes: infancy, youth, old age, death. In infancy his energies are concentrated and his inclinations at one—the ultimate of harmony. Other things do not harm him, nothing can add to the virtue in him. In youth, the energies in his blood are in turmoil and overwhelm him, desires and cares rise up and fill him. Others attack him, therefore the virtue wanes in him. When he is old, desires and cares weaken, his body is about to rest. Nothing contends to get ahead of him, and although he has not reached the perfection of infancy, compared with his youth there is a great difference for the better. When he dies, he goes to his rest, rises again to his zenith.

When Confucius was roaming on Mount T'ai, he saw **Jung** Ch'i-ch'i walking in the moors of Ch'eng, in a rough fur coat with a rope round his waist, singing as he strummed a lute.

'Master, what is the reason for your joy?' asked Confucius.

'I have very many joys. Of the myriad things which **heaven** begot mankind is the most noble, and I have the luck to be human; this is my first joy. Of the two sexes, men are Tanked higher than women, therefore it is noble to be a man. I have the luck to be a man; this is my second joy. People are born who do not live a day or a month, who never get out of their swaddling clothes. But I have already lived to ninety; this is my third joy. For all men poverty is the norm and death is the end. Abiding by the norm, awaiting my end, what is there to be concerned about?'

'Good!' said Confucius. 'He is a man who knows how to console himself.'

When Lin Lei was nearly a hundred, he put on his fur coat in the middle of spring, and went to pick **up the grains dropped by the** reapers, singing as he made his way through the fields. Confucius, who was on a journey to Wei, saw him in the distance from the moors, and turned to his disciples:

'That old man should be worth talking to. Someone should go and find out what he has to say.'

Tzŭ-kung asked to be the one to go. He met Lin Lei at the end of the embankment, looked him in the face and sighed.

'Don't you even feel any regret? Yet you pick up the grains singing as you go.'

Lin Lei neither halted his steps nor paused in his song. Tzŭ-kung went on pressing him, until he looked up and answered:

'What have I to regret?'

—'A child, you never learned how to behave;
A man, you never strove to make your mark.
No wife nor son in your old age,
And the time of your death is near.

Master, what happiness have you had, that you should sing as you walk picking up the grains?'

'The reasons for my happiness all men share,' said Lin Lei smiling. 'But instead they worry over them. It is because I took no pains learning to behave when I was young, and never strove to make my mark when I grew up, that I have been able to live so long. It is because I have no wife and sons in my old age, and the time of my death is near, that I can be so happy.'

'It is human to want long life and hate death. Why should you be happy to die?'

'Death is a return to where we set out from when we were born. So how do I know that when I die here I shall not be born somewhere else? How do I know that life and death are not as good as each other? How do I know that it is not a delusion to crave anxiously for life? How do I know that present death would not be better than my past life?'

Tzŭ-kung listened but did not understand his meaning. He returned and told Confucius.

'I knew he would be worth talking to,' said Confucius. 'And so he is. But he is a man who has found it, yet not found all of it.'

Note. Lin Lei has not learned the unreality of the difference between life and death, joy and sorrow; he has to reconcile himself to death by persuading himself that he may be happier dead. The commentator Chang Chan finds the same qualification in the praise of Jung Ch'i-ch'i as 'a man who knows how to console himself' in the previous story. 'He is unable to forget joy and misery altogether; Confucius merely praises his ability to console himself with reasons.'

Tzŭ-kung grew weary of study, and told Confucius:

'I want to find rest.'

'There is no rest for the living.'

'Then shall I never find it?'

'You shall. Look forward to the lofty and domed mound of your tomb, and know where you shall find rest.'

'Great is death! The gentleman finds rest in it, the mean man submits to it!'

'Tzŭ-kung, you have understood. All men understand the joy of being alive but not its misery, the weariness of growing old but not its ease, the ugliness of death but not its repose.'

Yen-tzŭ said:

'How well the men of old understood death! The good find rest in it, the wicked submit to it.'

Dying is the virtue in us going to its destination. The men of old called a dead man 'a man who has gone back'. Saying that the dead have gone back they implied that the living are travellers. The traveller who forgets to go back is a man who mistakes his home. If one man mistakes his home, the whole world disapproves; but when everyone under the sky mistakes his home, no one is wise enough to disapprove. Suppose that a man leaves his native soil, parts from all his kin, and abandons his family responsibilities to wander over the four quarters without going back—what sort of man is he? The world is sure to call him a crazy and reckless man. Suppose again there is a man who values his body and his life, presumes on his skill and ability, cultivates fame and reputation, and cannot stop boasting to the world—what sort of man is he? The world is sure to reckon him a clever and practical man. Both of these are men who have gone wrong, yet the world sides with one and against the other. Only the sage knows whom to side with, whom to reject.

Someone asked Lieh-tzŭ:
'Why do you value emptiness?'
'In emptiness there is no valuing.'
Lieh-tzŭ said:
'"Value" is not the name for it.

Best be still, best be empty.
In stillness and emptiness, we find where to abide;
Taking and giving, we lose the place.

The man who, when his actions go wrong, begins to play about with moral distinctions in order to put them right, cannot find the way back.'

Yii Hsiung said:

'Turning without end
Heaven and earth shift secretly.
Who is aware of it?'

So the thing which is shrinking there is swelling here, the thing which is maturing here is decaying there. Shrinking and swelling, maturing and decaying, it is being born at the same time that it is dying. The interval between the coming and the going is imperceptible; who is aware of it? Whatever a thing may be, its energy is not suddenly spent, its form does not suddenly decay; we are aware neither of when it reaches maturity nor of when it begins to decay. It is the same with a man's progress from birth to old age; his looks, knowledge and bearing differ from one day to the next, his skin and nails and hair are growing at the same time as they are falling away. They do not stop as they were in childhood without changing. But we cannot be aware of the intervals; we must wait for their fruition before we know.

There was a man of Ch'i country who was so worried that heaven and earth might fall down, and his body would have

nowhere to lodge, that he forgot to eat and sleep. There was another man who was worried that he should be so worried about it, and therefore went to enlighten him.

'Heaven is nothing but the accumulated air; there is no place where there is not air. You walk and stand all day inside heaven, stretching and bending, breathing in and breathing out; why should you worry about it falling down?'

'if heaven really is accumulated air, shouldn't the sun and moon and stars fall down?'

'The sun and moon and stars are air which shines inside the accumulated air. Even *if they* did fall down, they couldn't hit or harm anyone.'

'What about the earth giving way?'

'The earth is nothing but accumulated soil, filling the void in all four directions; there is no place where there is not soil. You walk and stand all day on the earth, stamping about with abrupt spurts and halts; why should you worry about it giving way?'

The man was satisfied and greatly cheered; and so was the man who enlightened him.

When Ch'ang-lu-tzŭ heard of it, he said smiling:

'The rainbow, clouds and mist, wind and rain, the four seasons; these are formations in the accumulated air of heaven. Mountains and hills, rivers and seas, metal and stone, fire and wood; these are formations in the accumulated matter of earth. Knowing that they are accumulations of air and soil, how can we say that they will not perish? Heaven and earth are one tiny thing within the void, the largest among things that exist. It is no doubt true that it will be long before they reach their term and come to an end, and that it is no easy matter to estimate and predict when this will happen. To worry about them perishing is indeed wide of the mark; but to say they will never perish is also open to objection. Since heaven and earth are bound to perish, a

time will come when they will perish. If we happen to be here when they do, why shouldn't we worry?'

When Lieh-tzii heard of it, he too smiled and said:

'It is nonsense to say either that heaven and earth will perish or that they will not. Whether they perish or not we can never know. However, from that side there is one point of view, from this side there is another. Hence the living do not know what it is like to be dead, the dead do not know what it is like to be alive. Coming, we do not know those who went before, going we shall not know those who come after. Why should we care whether they perish or not?'

Note. This story, beginning with the humorous anecdote *of* the neurotic afraid that heaven and earth will **fall** down, **gradually** becomes serious and *is* given a double twist: (1) Everything *is* transient, even heaven and earth. (2) We can be reconciled even to the transience *of* heaven and earth. It is unnecessary to be appalled by the possibility of a universe in which heaven and earth have ceased to exist, because we cannot conceive *such* a universe, and anything which existed in it could not conceive ours. The neurotic imagined himself surviving the destruction of heaven and earth with 'nowhere for his body to lodge'; but as Chang Chan notes, 'As long as they do not perish, they are intact together with man; when they do perish, they will be destroyed together with man.

Shun asked a minister:

'Can one succeed in possessing the Way?'

'Your own body is not your possession. How can you possess the Way?'

'If my own body is not mine, whose is it?'

'It is the shape lent to you by heaven and earth. Your life is not your possession; it is harmony between your forces, granted for a time by heaven and earth. Your nature and destiny are not your possessions; they are the course laid down for you by heaven and earth. Your children and grandchildren are not your possessions; heaven and earth lend them to you to cast off from

your body as an insect sheds its skin. Therefore you travel without knowing where you go, stay without knowing what you cling to, are fed without knowing how. You are the breath of heaven and earth which goes to and fro; how can you ever possess it?'

Mr Kuo of Ch'i was very rich. Mr Hsiang of Sung, who was very poor, travelled from Sung to Ch'i to inquire about his methods.

'I am good at stealing,' Mr Kuo told him. 'After I first became a thief, within a year I could keep myself, within two I was comfortable, within three I was flourishing, and ever since then I have been the benefactor of the whole neighbourhood.'

Hsiang was delighted; he understood from what Kuo said that he was a thief, but misunderstood his Way of being a thief. So he climbed over walls and broke into houses, and grabbed anything in reach of his eye and hand. Before long, he was found guilty of possessing stolen goods, and lost his whole inheritance. Thinking that Kuo had deceived him, he went to him to complain.

'In what way have you been stealing?' Kuo asked him.

Hsiang described what had happened.

'Alas!' Kuo said. 'Have you erred so far from the true Way of stealing? Let me explain. I have heard it said: "Heaven has its seasons, earth has its benefits." I rob heaven and earth of their seasonal benefits, the clouds and rain of their irrigating floods, the mountains and marshes of their products, in order to grow my crops, plant my seed, raise my walls, build my house. I steal birds and animals from the land, fish and turtles from the water. All this is stealing; for crops and seed, clay and wood, birds and animals, fish and turtles, are all begotten by heaven, and how *can* they become my possessions? Yet I suffer no retribution for rob-

bing heaven. On the other hand precious things such as gold and jade, and commodities such as grain and silk, are collected by men, and how can we claim that it is heaven which provides them? When you steal them, why should you resent being found guilty?'

Hsiang was highly perplexed, and thought that Kuo was trapping him again. Happening to meet Master Tung-kuo, he questioned him and got this answer:

'Is not your very body stolen? When you must steal the Yin and Yang energies in harmonious proportions even to achieve your life and sustain your body, how can you take the things outside you without stealing them? In reality the myriad things of heaven and earth are not separate from each other; and to claim anything as one's own is always wrong-headed. Kuo's way of stealing is common to all, and so he escapes retribution; your motive for stealing is private, and so you were found guilty. Whether or not you distinguish between common and private, you are still stealing. It is the power of heaven and earth which makes the common common and the private private. For the man who understands the power of heaven and earth, what is stealing and what is not stealing?'

2

The Yellow Emperor

This chapter is concerned with the Taoist principle of action. Faced with an obstacle, the unenlightened man begins to think about possible benefit and injury, and ponder alternative courses of action. But this thinking does him harm instead of good. A gambler plays better for tiles than for money, because he does not bother to think; a good swimmer learns to handle a boat quickly, because he does not care if it turns over; a drunken man falling from a cart escapes with his life because, being unconscious, he does not stiffen himself before collision. It is especially dangerous to be conscious of oneself. A woman aware that she is beautiful ceases to be beautiful; teachers aware of their own merit soon degenerate.

Boatmen, swimmers and insect-catchers do not think what to do next and are not conscious of themselves; their minds are totally concentrated on the object, to which they react without intermediate thought. One whose mind is a pure mirror of his situation, unaware of himself and therefore making no distinction between advantage and danger, will act with absolute assurance, and nothing will stand in his way. 'The man who is in harmony is absolutely the same as other things, and no thing succeeds in wounding or obstructing him. To pass through metal and stone, and tread through water and fire, are all possible.' Not that such powers are his goal; even when he gets them, he may not want to put on such a vulgar performance. Confucius himself 'is one who, though able to do it, is able not to do it'.

Outside things can obstruct and injure us only if we are

assertive instead of adaptable. To take a simile from the *Tao-te-ching,* we must be like water making its way through cracks. If we do not try to impose our will, but adjust ourselves to the object, we shall find the Way round or though it. The softer a substance is, the narrower the crack through which it can pass; the absolutely soft comes out of nothingness and finds its way where there is no crack'.' Wang Pi (226-249), commenting on this passage, writes:

'The air *(ch'i)* fords its way in everywhere, water passes through everything.'

'The tenuous, non-existent, soft and weak goes through everything; nothingness cannot be confined, the softest thing cannot be snapped.'

Possession of theWay is thus a capacity for dealing effortlessly with external things. Its theoretical limit is absolute power, or rather absolute liberty; for the whole point is that, instead of controlling things, the sage ceases to be obstructed by them. Lieh-tzŭ riding the winds is an image, not of mastery, but of free, unimpeded movement.

For fifteen years after the Yellow Emperor came to the throne, it pleased him to be borne on the heads of the Empire. He 'tended life',[2] amused his eyes and ears, pampered his nostrils and mouth, till his ravaged flesh darkened and his dulled senses were stupefied. During the next fifteen years he worried about the misgovernment of the Empire, and devoted all his eyesight and hearing, knowledge and strength, to ruling the people. But still his ravaged flesh grew darker and his dulled senses more stupefied. Then the Yellow Emperor breathed a sigh and said:

'Deep is my error! It is an affliction to care for oneself alone, and as great an affliction to govern the myriad things!'

Tao-te-ching, ch. 43.

[2] Lived for pleasure; cf. **p. 143 below.**

After this he refused to concern himself with decisions of policy, left the Imperial chambers, dismissed his attendants, discarded his orchestra of bells and drums, reduced the delicacies of his kitchen. He retired to live undisturbed in a hut in his main courtyard, where he fasted to discipline mind and body, and for three months had nothing to do with affairs of state.

Falling asleep in the daytime, he dreamed that he was wandering in the country of Hua-hsii. (r) This country is to the West of Yen province in the far West, to the North of T'ai province in the far North West, who knows how many thousands and myriads of miles from the Middle Kingdom. It is a place which you cannot reach by boat or carriage or on foot, only by a journey of the spirit. In this country there are no teachers and leaders; all things follow their natural course. The people have no cravings and lusts; all men follow their natural course. They are incapable of delighting in life or hating death, and therefore none of them dies before his time. They do not know how to prefer themselves to others, and so they neither love nor hate. They do not know how to turn their faces to things or turn their backs, go with the stream or push against it, so nothing benefits or harms them. There is nothing at all which they grudge or regret, nothing which they dread or envy. They go into water without drowning, into fire without burning; hack them, flog them, there is no wound nor pain; poke them, scratch them, there is no ache nor itch. They ride space as though walking the solid earth, sleep on the void as though on their beds; clouds and mist do not hinder their sight, thunder does not confuse their hearing, beauty and ugliness do not disturb their hearts, mountains and valleys do not trip their feet—for they make only journeys of the spirit.

When the Yellow Emperor woke, he was delighted to have found himself. He summoned his ministers T'ien-lao, Li-mu and T'ai-shan Chi, and told them:

I have lived undisturbed for three months, fasting to discipline mind and body, and meditating a way to care for myself and govern others, but I did not find a method. Worn out, I fell asleep, and this is what I dreamed. Now I know that the utmost Way cannot be sought through the passions. I know it, I **have** found it, but I cannot tell it to you.

After another twenty-eight years, when the Empire was almost as well governed as the country of Hua-hsii, the Emperor rose into the sky. (2) The people did not stop wailing for him for more than two hundred years.

Notes. (r) Hua-hsii was the mother of Fu-hsi, the first Emperor.
(2) Became an immortal.

The Ku-ye mountains stand on a chain of islands where the Yellow River enters the sea. Upon the mountains there lives a Divine Man, who inhales the wind and drinks the dew, and does not eat the five grains. His mind is like a bottomless spring, his body is like a virgin's. He knows neither intimacy nor love, yet immortals and sages serve him as ministers. He inspires no awe, he is never angry, yet the eager and diligent act as his messengers. He is without kindness and bounty, but others have enough by themselves; he does not store and save, but he himself never lacks. The Yin and Yang are always in tune, the sun and moon always shine, the four seasons are always regular, wind and rain are always temperate, breeding is always timely, the harvest is always rich, and there are no plagues to ravage the land, no early deaths to afflict men, animals have no diseases, and ghosts have no uncanny echoes.

Lieh-tzŭ had Old Shang as teacher, and Po-kao-tzŭ as his friend. When he had nothing more to learn from either of them,

he came home riding the wind. Yin Sheng heard of him, joined his disciples, and for several months did not look for lodgings. (i) Ten times, when Lieh-tzŭ was not busy, he took the opportunity to beg for his secrets; and each time Lieh-tzŭ turned him away and would not tell him. Yin Sheng was indignant and took his leave; Lieh-tzŭ made no objection.

A few months after Yin Sheng withdrew he had not renounced his aim, and went to join Lieh-tzŭ again.

'Why do you keep coming and going?' Lieh-tzŭ asked him.

'Not long ago I made a request to you, but you would not tell me. It is true that I felt some rancour against you, but now it is all gone. So I have come again.'

'I used to think you intelligent; are you really as vulgar as all that? Here, I will tell you what I learned from my own Master. Three years after I began to serve the Master and befriend a certain man, my mind no longer dared to think of right and wrong, my mouth no longer dared to speak of benefit and harm; and it was only then that I got as much as a glance from the Master. After five years, my mind was again thinking of right and wrong, my mouth was again speaking of benefit and harm; and for the first time the Master's face relaxed in a smile. After seven years, I thought of whatever came into my mind without any longer distinguishing between right and wrong, said whatever came into my mouth without any longer distinguishing between benefit and harm; and for the first time the Master pulled me over to sit with him on the same mat. After nine years, I thought without restraint of whatever came into my mind and said without restraint whatever came into my mouth without knowing whether the right and wrong, benefit and harm, were mine or another's, without knowing that the Master was my teacher and the man I have mentioned was my friend. Only then, when I had come to the end of everything inside me and outside me, my eyes became like my ears, my ears like my

nose, my nose like my mouth; everything was the same. My mind concentrated and my body relaxed, bones and flesh fused completely, I did not notice what my body leaned against and my feet trod, I drifted with the wind East or West, like a leaf from a tree or a dry husk, and never knew whether it was the wind that rode me or I that rode the wind.

'Now you come to be my disciple, and before even a year has gone round, you are indignant and resentful time and again. The air will refuse your slip of a body, the earth will refuse to carry one joint of your finger; can you hope to tread the void and ride the wind?'

Yin Sheng was deeply ashamed, held his breath for a long time, and did not dare to speak again.

Note. (i) A disciple was expected to introduce himself to his teacher before looking for lodgings.

Lieh-tzŭ asked Kuan-yin:

'The highest man walks under-water and does not suffocate,
Treads fire and does not burn,
Walks above the myriad things and does not tremble.

May I ask how he achieves this?'

'It is by holding fast to his purest energies; it has nothing to do with skill and daring. Come, let me tell you. Whatever has features, likeness, sound, colour, is a thing. How can one thing put a distance between itself and other things? How can it deserve to get ahead of them? It is mere form and colour. But one who can grasp and fathom the Unshaped from which things are created, the Changeless by which they are brought to a stop—how can other things succeed in stopping him? He will cling to

his degree and not exceed it, hide far back along the skein without beginnings, and roam where the myriad things end and begin; he will unify his nature, tend his energies, maintain the virtue inside him, until he penetrates to the place where things are created. If you can be like this, the Heaven inside you will keep its integrity, the spirit inside you will have no flaws; where can other things find a way in?

'When a drunken man is thrown from a cart, swiftly though he falls it does not kill him. His bones and joints are the same as another man's, yet he is not harmed as another man would be, because of the integrity of his spirit. He rides without knowing it, falls without knowing it; life and death, astonishment and fear, find no entry into his breast, and so he does not shrink from hitting things. If this is true even of a man who gets his integrity from wine, how much more is it true of those who get it from Heaven! The sage hides himself in Heaven, therefore no thing can harm him.'

Lieh-tzŭ was demonstrating his archery to Po-hun Wu-jen. He drew the bow to the full and placed a bowl of water on his left forearm. After he released the arrow, he fitted a second arrow to the string, released it, and fitted a third, while the first was still in flight. The whole time he was like a statue.

'This is the shooting in which you shoot,' said Po-hun Wu-jen. 'It is not the shooting in which you do not shoot. If I climb a high mountain with you, and tread a perilous cliff overlooking an abyss a thousand feet deep, will you be able to shoot?'

Then Po-hun Wu-jen did climb a high mountain and tread a perilous cliff overlooking an abyss a thousand feet deep. He walked backwards until half his foot hung over the edge, and bowed to Lieh-tzŭ to come forward. Lieh-tzŭ lay on his face

with the sweat streaming down to his heels. Po-hun Wu-jen said:

'The highest man

Peers at the blue sky above him,
Measures the Yellow Spring[1] below him.
Tossed and hurled to the Eight Corners,
His spirit and his breathing do not change.

Now you tremble and would like to shut your eyes. Isn't there danger within you?'

There was a man of the Fan family called Tzŭ-hua, who knew how to attract soldiers of fortune to his service, and was feared by the whole country. He was a favourite of the prince of Chin and, although without office, sat on the right of the Three Ministers. Anyone whom he eyed indulgently the state ennobled, anyone whom he slandered out of prejudice the state degraded. There were as many visitors in his audience chamber as there were at court. Tzŭ-hua allowed the stronger and cleverer of his men-at-arms to bully the weaker and sillier; he took no notice even if someone was wounded in his presence. His men amused themselves in this way all day and all night, until the country was almost used to it.

Ho-sheng and Tzŭ-po, the chief clients of the Fan family, went travelling outside the city, and lodged in the hut of the old peasant Shang-ch'iu K'ai. In the middle of the night the two men were talking together of the fame and power of Tzŭ-hua, who could save or ruin, enrich or impoverish, anyone he pleased. Shang-ch'iu K'ai was a poor man, always cold and hungry; he hid on the North side of the window and listened to them. Encouraged

[1] Hades.

by what he heard, he borrowed provisions, packed them in a basket on his back, and travelled to Tzŭ-hua's gate.

Tzŭ-hua's retainers, who were all of noble blood, were riding dressed in white silk in carriages with high fronts, or strolling at their ease staring at the passers-by. When they noticed that Shang-ch'iu K'ai was old and feeble, with a weather-beaten face and unstylish clothes and cap, they all scorned him. They shoved him, pawed him, jostled him, slapped him on the back, and stopped at nothing to insult and make a fool of him. Shang-ch'iu K'ai never showed the least anger, and when the retainers could think of no more tricks they tired of the sport.

Then they took Shang-ch'iu K'ai up a high terrace. Someone in the crowd said as a joke:

'A hundred pieces of gold for anyone who can jump down!'

Everyone pretended to take him at his word. But Shang-ch'iu K'ai thought he was serious and hastened to jump ahead of the others. His body drifted to the ground like a flying bird, without breaking flesh or bone.

Tzŭ-hua's band thought it was mere luck, and did not greatly wonder at it. But to test him someone pointed out a deep corner in a bend in the river, and told him:

'There is a precious pearl down there, a diver could get it.'

Shang-ch'iu K'ai proceeded to dive for it; and when he came up, he really had found a pearl. For the first time everyone was doubtful, and Tzŭ-hua granted him an allowance of meat and silk with the others.

Soon afterwards the Fan storehouse caught fire. 'If you can go into the fire and save my brocades,' said Tzŭ-hua, 'I'll reward you according to the amount you recover.'

Shang-ch'iu K'ai set off without showing the least reluctance, went into the fire and returned; the soot did not smear him, his

body was not scorched. Tzŭ-hu9's band were convinced that he possessed the Way, and they all apologised to him together.

'We played tricks on you, not knowing that you possessed the Way; we humiliated you, not knowing that you were a Divine Man. How stupid, how deaf, how blind you must think us! Permit us to ask you about this Way.'

'I do not possess the Way,' said Shang-ch'iu K'ai. 'Even in my own heart I don't know how I did it. However, there is one thing I can try to tell you about. Not long ago I heard two of you, who were spending the night in my hut, praising the fame and power of Tzŭ-hua, who can save or ruin, enrich or impoverish, anyone he pleases. I believed you with all my heart, and that is why I came here, and the long journey seemed short to me. When I arrived, I thought that everything you people said was true; I feared only that I might fall short in believing and acting on it. I forgot where my body was going, I forgot which things benefit and which things harm me. It is simply that I was single-minded; that is the only reason why no thing stood in my way. But now that I know for the first time that you were all making fun of me, I have worries and suspicions hidden inside me, while I put on a brave outward show; looking back, I count myself lucky not to have been drowned or burned. Shall I ever dare to go near water and fire again?'

From this time, when Tzŭ-hua's retainers met a beggar or a horse-doctor on the road, they never dared to humiliate him, and always descended from their carriages and bowed to him. Tsai Wo heard of it and told Confucius.

'Didn't you know?' said Confucius. 'The man with perfect faith can make other things react to him. He moves heaven and earth, makes the spirits react to him, fills the universe in every direction and nothing stands in his way. Do you suppose that all he can do is tread in perilous places and walk through fire

and water? Things do not stand in the way even when Shang-ch'iu K'ai trusts a lie, and how much less when others are as sincere as oneself! Keep it in mind, my disciples.'

The groom of King Hsiian of Chou had a slave called Liang Yang, who was skilful in rearing wild beasts and birds. He collected them and fed them in his garden and yard, and never failed to tame even creatures as savage as tigers and wolves, eagles and ospreys. Male and female herded together without fearing to couple and breed in his presence; different species lived side by side and never pounced and bit each other. The King was concerned that the secrets of his art should not die with him, and ordered Mao Ch'iu-yiian to become his apprentice.

Liang Yang told Mao Ch'iu-yiian:

'I am a vile slave, what arts have I to teach you? But I am afraid His Majesty will say that I am keeping secrets from you, so let me say a few words about my method of rearing tigers. Generally speaking, it is the nature of everything with vigour in its blood to be pleased when you let it have its way, and angry when you thwart it. But you must not suppose that joy and anger come at random. When they are offended, it is always because we thwart them.

'The man who feeds tigers does not dare to give them a live animal, because they will get into a rage killing it. He does not dare to give them a whole animal, because they will get into a rage tearing it apart. He keeps watch for the times when they are full or hungry, and penetrates to the motives of their anger. Although tigers are a different species from man, when they fawn on the man who rears them it is because he lets them get their way; and likewise when they kill him it is because he thwarts them.

'That being so, how would I dare to make them angry by

thwarting them? But I do not please them by giving them their way either. For when joy passes its climax we are bound to revert to anger, and when anger passes its climax we always revert to joy, because in both cases we are off balance. Now since in my heart I neither give them their way nor thwart them, the birds and animals regard me as one of themselves. So it is only reasonable that when they roam in my garden, they do not remember their tall forests and wild marshes, and when they sleep in my yard, they never wish to be deep in the mountains and hidden away in the valleys.

Yen Hui asked Confucius a question:

Once I crossed the deep lake of Shang-shen; the ferryman handled the boat like a god. I asked him whether one can be taught to handle a boat. "Yes," he told me, "anyone who can swim may be taught it; a good swimmer picks it up quickly; as for a diver, he could handle a boat even if he had never seen one before." I questioned him further, but that was all he had to say. May I ask what he meant?

Hmm. I have been playing with you on the surface for a long time, but we have never penetrated to the substance; have you really found the Way? Anyone who can swim may be taught it, because he takes water lightly. A good swimmer picks it up quickly, because he forgets the water altogether. As for a diver, he could handle a boat without ever having seen one before, because to him the depths seem like dry land, and a boat turning over seems no worse than a cart slipping backwards. Though ten thousand ways of slipping and overturning spread out before him, they cannot enter the doors of his mind; he is relaxed wherever he goes. Gamble for tiles, and you play skilfully; for the clasp of your belt, and you lose confidence; for gold, and you get flustered. You have not lost your skill; but if you hold yourself

back, you give weight to something outside you; and whoever does that is inwardly clumsy.'

Confucius was looking at Lii-liang waterfall. The water dropped two hundred feet, streaming foam for thirty miles; it was a place where fish and turtles and crocodiles could not swim, but he saw a man swimming there. Taking him for someone in trouble who wanted to die, he sent a disciple along the bank to pull him up. But after swimming a few hundred yards the man came out, and strolled along singing under the bank with his hair hanging down his back. Confucius proceeded to question him:

'I thought you were a ghost, but now I can look you over I see you are human. May I ask whether you have a Way to tread in water?'

'No, I have no Way. I began in what is native to me, grew up in what is natural to me, matured by trusting destiny. I enter the vortex with the inflow and leave with the outflow, follow the Way of the water instead of imposing a course of my own; this is how I tread it.'

'What do you mean by "beginning in what is native to you, growing up in what is natural to you, maturing by trusting destiny"?'

'Having been born on land I am safe on land—this is native to me. Having grown up in the water I am safe in the water—this is natural to me. I do it without knowing how I do it—this is trusting destiny.'

Confucius went on a journey to Ch'u. Coming out of a forest, he saw a man with a crooked back catching cicadas with a rod and line, as easily as though he were picking them up off the ground.

'What skill!' Confucius said. 'Is it because you have the Way?'

'I have the Way. When the season comes round in the fifth and sixth months, I balance balls on top of each other. If I can balance two without dropping them, I shall not miss many cicadas; if I can balance three, I shall miss one in ten; if I can balance five, it will be like picking them off the ground. I hold my body like a wood-chopper hacking at a root, I hold my arm as steady as a branch on a withered tree; out of all the myriad things in the vastness of heaven and earth, I am conscious only of the wings of a cicada. I never turn about or fidget; I would not take the whole world in exchange for the wings of a cicada. How can I fail to catch it?'

Confucius turned round and said to his disciples:

'"Set your will on one aim,
And be equal to the gods.'

Doesn't the saying fit this fellow with a crooked back?'

'You are one of those people with big sleeves,' (1) said the man. 'What do you think you know about it? Sweep away those principles of yours before you talk about it again.'

Note. (r) Confucian dress.

There was a man living by the sea-shore who loved seagulls. Every morning he went down to the sea to roam with the seagulls, and more birds came to him than you could count in hundreds. His father said to him:

'I hear the seagulls all come roaming with you. Bring me some to play with.'

Next day, when he went down to the sea, the seagulls danced above him and would not come down.

Therefore it is said: 'The utmost in speech is to be rid of speech, the utmost doing is Doing Nothing.' What common knowledge knows is shallow.

Chao Hsiang-tzŭ went hunting in the Central Mountains with a party of a hundred thousand. He set fire to the forests by lighting the tall grass, and fanned the flames for a hundred miles. A man came out from within a stone cliff, rising and falling with the smoke and ashes; the crowd thought he was a demon. When the fire passed, he came out walking casually, as though the fire he had passed through did not exist. Chao Hsiang-tzŭ marvelled and detained the man. He scrutinised him at leisure; in his shape, his colour, and the seven holes in his head, he was human; in his breathing, in his voice, he was human. He asked the man by what Way he lived in stone and went through fire.

'What are these things you call stone and fire?' said the man.

'The thing you have just come out from was stone. The thing you have just been walking through was fire.'

'I didn't know.'

Marquis Wen of Wei heard of it, and questioned Tzŭ-hsia, the disciple of Confucius.

'What sort of man was that?'

'According to what I have heard the Master say, the man who is in harmony is absolutely the same as other things, and no thing succeeds in. wounding or obstructing him. To pass through metal and stone and tread through water and fire are all possible.'

'Why don't you do it yourself?'

'I am not yet capable of cutting open my heart and throwing away the knowledge in it. However, I can tell you all you want to know about it.'

'Why doesn't your Master do it?'

'My Master is one who, though able to do it, is able not to do it.' Marquis Wen was delighted with the answer.

A shaman with the insight of a god came from Ch'i to settle in Cheng; his name was Chi Hsien. He knew whether a man would live or die, survive or perish, be lucky or unlucky, die young or live out his span. He would predict the date to the year, the month, the week, the day, as though he were a god. Whenever the people of Cheng saw him, they all ran to escape him. But when Lieh-tzŭ saw him his heart was drunk, and he returned to tell his teacher Hu-tzŭ:

'Master, once I thought your Way was the utmost, but there is another which goes still farther.'

'I **have** taught you all that shows on the surface,' said Hu-tzŭ, 'but you have not exhausted the substance: have you really found the Way? With a crowd of hens and no cock, can you expect any eggs? Trusting in your Way and matching yourself against the world, you are bound to reach too far. That is how you let the man succeed in reading your face. Try bringing him here, and make him take a look at me.'

Next day, Lieh-tzŭ brought him to see Hu-tzŭ. Corning out, the shaman told Lieh-tzŭ:

'Alas! Your master is a dead man. There is no more vitality in him. He cannot last ten days. I saw a strange thing; I saw damp ash in him.'

Lieh-tzŭ went in, with the tears soaking the lapels of his coat, and told Hu-tzŭ. Hu-tzŭ answered:

'I have just shown him the configuration of my earth. My breathing, like the life in a growing shoot, did not vibrate yet did not cease. He must have seen me as I am when I check the incipient motions of the virtue within me. Try bringing him again.'

Next day, Lieh-tzŭ brought him again to see Hu-tzŭ. Coming out, the shaman told Lieh-tzŭ:

'It is lucky that your Master happened to meet me. He will recover. There are pale signs of life in him. I can see him checking the power in him.'

When Lieh-tzŭ entered and told him, Hu-tzŭ said:

'I have just shown him my soil fertilised by heaven. Nothing had entered my mind, either as name or as reality; but the incipient breath was coming up from my heels. (1) This is what made him think I was checking the powers in me. He must have seen me as I am when the goodness in me is incipient. Bring him again.'

Next day he brought him again to see Hu-tzŭ. Coming out, the shaman told Lieh-tzŭ:

'Your Master has not fasted, so I have nothing to go by. I cannot succeed in reading his face. Try when he has fasted. I will read his face again.'

When Lieh-tzŭ entered and told him, Hu-tzŭ said:

'I have just shown him the absolute emptiness in which there is no foreboding of anything. He must have seen me as I am when I even out the incipient motions of my breath. Whirlpools, still waters, currents, all hollow out deep pools; of the nine kinds of deep pool I have shown him three. (2) Bring him again.'

Next day he brought him again to see Hu-tzŭ. Before coming to a standstill the shaman fled in a panic. 'Run after him!' said Hu-tzŭ. Lieh-tzŭ ran after him but could not catch up with him, and returned to inform Hu-tzŭ:

'He has vanished. We have lost him. I could not catch up with him.'

'I have just shown him,' said Hu-tzŭ, 'myself before we first came out of our Ancestor.

With him I dissolved, and drifted winding in and out of things,
Unknowing who and what we were.
To him, it seemed we had floundered,
It seemed that the waves had swept us away.

That is why he fled.'

Only then did Lieh-tzŭ understand that he had never learned anything; he went home, and for three years did not leave his house.

He cooked meals for his wife,
Served food to his pigs as though they were human,
Treated all things as equally his kin.
From the carved jade he returned to the unhewn block,
Till his single shape stood forth, detached from all things.
He was free of all tangles
Once and for all, to the end of his life.

Lieh-tzŭ was going to Ch'i, but turned back half way. On the road he met Po-hun Wu-jen, who asked him why he had turned back.

'I was alarmed by something.'

'What was it?'

'I ate at ten inns, and at five they served me first.'

'If that is all, why should you be alarmed?'

'When a man's inner integrity is not firm, something oozes from his body and becomes an aura, which outside him presses on the hearts of others; it makes other men honour him more than his elders and betters, and gets him into difficulties.

'The only motive of an innkeeper is to sell his rice and soup, and increase his earnings; his profits are meagre, the considerations which sway him have little weight. If men with so little to gain from me value me so highly as a customer, will it not be even worse with the lord of ten thousand chariots, who has worn out

his body and drained his knowledge in state affairs? The prince of Ch'i will appoint me to some office, and insist that I fill it efficiently. This is what alarmed me.'

'An excellent way to look at it! But even if you stay, other men will lay responsibilities on you.'

Not long afterwards, when Po-hun Wu jen went to call on him, Lieh-tzŭ's porch was full of the shoes of visitors. Po-hun Wu-jen stood facing North (3); he leaned on his upright staff and wrinkled his cheek against it. After standing there for a while, he left without speaking. The doorkeeper told Lieh-tzŭ. Lieh-tzŭ ran out barefoot holding his shoes in his hand, and caught up with him at the gate.

'Now that you have come, Master,' he said, 'aren't you even going to give me my medicine?'

'Enough! I told you confidently that others would lay responsibilities on you, and it turns out that so they have. It is not that you are capable of allowing them to do so; you are incapable of preventing them. What use is it to you to have this effect on people, which is incompatible with your own peace? If you insist on making an effect, it will unsteady your basic self, and to no purpose.

None of your companions will tell you.
All their small talk is poison.
Unless we wake each other, how shall we mature?

Notes. *(1) Cf. Chuang-tzŭ,* 'The True Men of old did not dream when they slept and had no cares when they woke, ate without tasting and breathed deeply. The True Man breathes from his heels, the common man breathes from his throat.' In Chinese cosmology breath *(ch'i)* is the basic substance of the universe; the purer breath rises and becomes heaven, the impure breath falls, condenses and becomes earth *(cf.* 14 above). A man's breath is the energy which keeps him in motion and out of which his body has condensed; and control of his breathing (as in Indian Yoga) is an essential means of returning to the cosmic ground out of which he has emerged.

(z) I here follow the text of the *Chuang-tzŭ,* from which the story of the shaman Chi Hsien is taken. (It is, by the way, full of rare words and textual corruption, so that the translation is often speculative.) The editor of the *Lieh-tzŭ* has obscured the point by introducing the full list of the nine pools:

'Whirlpools, still waters, currents, water bubbling up from the ground, water dripping from above, water slanting from a cave in the side, water dammed and turned back to its source, water which drains away in a marsh, several streams from one source, all hollow out deep pools. These are the nine kinds of deep pool.'

(3) Lieh-tzŭ is in the teacher's seat, facing South.

Yang Chu travelled South to P'ei. When Lao-tzŭ was wandering Westward towards Ch'in, Yang Chu went outside the town to intercept him, and came on him as he reached Liang. Lao-tzŭ stood in the middle of the road with his eyes raised to heaven and sighed:

'Once I thought you were teachable, but I see you are not.'

Yang Chu did not answer. When they came to his inn, he presented Lao-tzŭ with towel and comb, and water to wash his hands and rinse his mouth. Leaving his shoes outside the door, he crawled on his knees into Lao-tzŭ's presence and said:

'Master, just now you looked up at heaven and sighed "Once I thought you were teachable, but I see you are not." Your disciple wished to ask you for an explanation, but you walked on without giving me an opportunity, so I did not dare. Now that you have the time, I should like to ask what I have done wrong.'

Lao-tzŭ answered:

'How haughtily you glare!
Who can live with you?
The purest white is as though smirched.
The fullest virtue seems less than enough.'

Yang Chu's face furrowed as he said:

'With reverence I hear your command.'

At the time when Yang Chu went on his journey, the innkeepers would welcome him and see him off; the landlord himself would bring his mat, the landlord's wife would bring his towel and comb; the lodgers would resign him a mat or a place by the stove. At the time when he returned, other lodgers would jostle with him for a mat.

When Yang Chu was passing through Sung, he spent the night at an inn. The innkeeper had two concubines, one beautiful and the other ugly. The ugly one he valued, the beautiful one he neglected. When Yang Chu asked the reason, the fellow answered:

'The beautiful one thinks herself beautiful, and I do not notice her beauty. The ugly one thinks herself ugly, and I do not notice her ugliness.'

'Remember this, my disciples,' said Yang Chu. 'If you act nobly and banish from your mind the thought that you are noble, where can you go and not be loved?'

In the world there is a Way by which one will always conquer and there is a way by which one will never conquer. The former is called Weakness, the latter is called Strength. The two are easy to recognise, but still men do not recognise them. Hence the saying of the men of the most ancient times: 'The strong surpass those weaker than themselves, the weak surpass those stronger than themselves.' The man who surpasses men weaker than himself is in danger when he meets someone as strong as himself; but the man who surpasses men stronger than himself is never in danger. The saying 'By this you conquer your own body and make it your servant, by this you employ the whole world as your servant' means that you conquer not others but yourself; employ not others but yourself.

Yŭ Hsiung said:

'If your aim is to be hard, you must guard it by being soft.
If your aim is to be strong, you must maintain it by being weak.
What begins soft and accumulates must become hard.
What begins weak and accumulates must become strong.
Watch them accumulate, and you will know where blessing and disaster come from.
The strong conquer those weaker than themselves, and when they meet an equal have no advantage.
The weak conquer those stronger than themselves, their force is immeasurable.'

Lao-tzŭ said:

'If a weapon is strong it will perish,
If a tree is strong it will snap.
Softness and weakness belong to life,
Hardness and strength belong to death.' *(i)*

Note. (i) Cf. Tao-te-ching, ch. 76. That the sage wins by being softer, weaker, more yielding, is one of the main themes of the *Tao-te-ching,* but it is not prominent in the *Lieh-tzŭ.*

A thing may be as wise as a man without necessarily looking like a man, or look like a man without necessarily being as wise as a man. The sage prefers those who share his wisdom, but the ordinary man feels closer to those who look like himself, loving as his kin things which look as he does, and shunning as alien things which look different. Anything with a skeleton six feet high, hands different from its feet, hair on its head and front teeth hidden inside its mouth, which leans forward as it runs, is called a 'man'; yet a man may well have the mind of a beast. But even if he does, he will be accepted as one of us because he looks like us. Anything with wings at its sides or horns on its head,

with teeth and nails wide apart, which flies up into the air or walks on all fours, is called a 'beast' or a 'bird'; yet a beast or bird may well have the mind of a man. But even if it does, it will be treated as alien because it looks different.

Fu-hsi, Nŭ-kua, Shen-nung, and the Emperors of the Hsia dynasty, had snakes' bodies, human faces, heads of oxen and tigers' snouts. They did not look like men, but they had the virtue of great sages. The Emperors Chieh of the Hsia and Chou of the Yin dynasties, Duke Huan of Lu and King Mu of Ch'u, all shared with other men the same looks and the same seven holes in their heads, but they had the minds of beasts. The ordinary man who insists on seeking the utmost wisdom only among those with one kind of looks is not likely to find it.

When the Yellow Emperor made war against Yen-ti in the wilds of Fan-ch'iian, he commanded bears, wolves, leopards and tigers as his vanguard, and eagles, pheasants, falcons and kites as his standard-bearers. This is an example of mastering the beasts and birds by force. When Yao made K'uei his director of music, he beat the stone chimes and all the beasts joined in the dance; he performed the nine parts of the Hsiao-shao music, and the phoenix came to dance to its rhythm. This is an example of attracting the beasts and birds by music. In what way, then, are the minds of beasts and birds different from man's? Since they differ from men in shape and voice, we do not know the Way to make contact with them, but the sage knows everything and understands everything, and that is why he succeeds in drawing them to him and making them his servants.

There are ways in which the intelligence of beasts and birds is by nature similar to man's. They wish as much as we do to preserve their lives, and do not have to borrow from man's wisdom to do so. Buck and doe mate together, mother and child keep close together; they shun the plains and choose inaccessible places, avoid cold and seek out warmth; they live in herds and

travel in formations with the young ones on the inside and the fully grown on the outside; they lead each other to water and call to each other when they find food. In the most ancient times men and animals lived together and walked side by side. In the time of the Five Emperors and the Three Kings, the animals were frightened away and scattered for the first time. In our own degenerate times, they crouch in hiding and flee to their lairs to avoid harm.

Even now, in the country of Chieh in the East, there are many people who understand the speech of domestic animals; this is a discovery possible even to our own limited knowledge. The divine sages of the most ancient times knew the habits of all the myriad things, and interpreted the cries of all the different species; they called them together for meetings and gave them instructions, as though they were human beings. So the fact that the sages would meet the spirits and goblins first, next summon the human beings of the eight quarters, and finally assemble the birds and beasts and insects, implies that there are no great differences in mind and intelligence between living species. The divine sages knew that this was the case, and therefore in teaching they left out none of them.

There was a keeper of monkeys in Sung who loved monkeys so much that he reared flocks of them. He could interpret the monkey's thoughts, and the monkeys too caught what was in his mind. He made his own family go short in order to give the monkeys whatever they wanted. Before long he found himself in need, and decided to give them less to eat. Fearing that the monkeys would not submit to it tamely, he played a trick on them beforehand:

'If I give you three chestnuts in the morning and four in the evening, will that be enough?'

The monkeys all got up in a rage.

'Will it be enough if I give you four in the morning and three in the evening?'

The monkeys were all pleased and lay down again.

It is always the same when the cleverer of two things traps the sillier. The sage by his wisdom gets all the fools into his cage, just as the keeper did to the monkeys. Without taking anything away, in name or reality, he can either please them or enrage them!

Chi Hsing trained fighting cocks for King Hsiian of Chou. After ten days the King asked whether the cocks were ready to fight.

'Not yet. At present they strut vaingloriously and show their mettle.'

After another ten days he asked again.

'Not yet. They still start at shadows and echoes.'

After another ten days he asked again.

'Almost. Even when a cock crows at them, it no longer affects them. From a distance they look like cocks carved in wood. Their virtue is complete. Another cock never dares to answer them; it simply turns and runs.'

Hui Ang visited King K'ang of Sung. The King stamped his foot, coughed, and said fiercely:

'What pleases me is courage and strength; I take no pleasure in men who preach morality. What have you to teach me?'

'Suppose that I have a Way to make anyone, however brave and strong, miss when he stabs or strikes at you; wouldn't Your Majesty be interested?'

'Excellent. This is the sort of thing I like to hear.'

'But even if his stab or blow misses, it is still humiliating for you. Suppose that I have a Way to prevent anyone, however brave and strong, from daring to stab or strike you. But a man who does not dare to harm you may still have the will to harm you. Suppose that I have a Way to ensure that men have absolutely no will to harm you. But a man who has no will to harm you may still have no thought of loving or benefiting you. Suppose that I have a Way to make every single man and woman in the world joyfully desire to love and benefit you. This is three degrees better than courage and strength. Isn't Your Majesty interested?'

'This is the sort of Way I should like to fmd.'

'The teaching of Confucius and Mo-tzŭ is what I have in mind. (1) Confucius and Mo-tzŭ became princes without owning territory, became leaders without holding office. Every man and woman in the world craned his neck and stood on tiptoe in his eagerness for their safety and benefit. Now Your Majesty is the lord of ten thousand chariots. If you were indeed to share the aims of these two men, everyone within your four borders would enjoy the benefit. You would be far greater than Confucius and Mo-tzŭ.'

The King was at a loss for an answer. Hui Ang hurried out; and the King said to his courtiers:

'Clever, the way he talked me round with his argument!'

Note. (1) The schools of Confucius (551-479 B.c.) and of Mo-tzŭ (*c.* 400 B.c.), the teacher of universal love, were bitter enemies, but since both were moralistic they were often classed together in contrast to other schools.

3

King Mu of Chou

The doctrine that the world perceived by the senses is an illusion is familiar in mystical philosophies everywhere; we expect it to have the corollary that illumination is an awakening from illusion to the Reality behind it. It is impossible to draw this conclusion within the metaphysical framework of Taoism, which assumes, as we saw in the Introduction, that the visible world is more real than the Tao, the Nothing out of which it emerges. Nevertheless, the idea that life is a dream appears occasionally in early Taoism, not as a metaphysical thesis, but as a fancy exciting the imagination. In the first of these two passages from the *Chuang-tzŭ* it is connected with a Taoist argument for accepting death: we cannot know what it is like to be dead, and when the time comes we may find we prefer it to life:

> How do I know that the love of life is not a delusion? How do I know that we who hate death arc not lost children who have forgotten their way home? The lady of Li was the daughter of the frontier commander of Ai. When the army of Chin first took her, the tears soaked her dress; only when she came to the royal palace, and shared the King's square couch, and ate the flesh of grain-fed beasts, did she begin to regret her tears. How do I know that the dead do not regret that they ever prayed for life? We drink wine in our dreams, and at dawn shed tears; we shed tears in our dreams, and at dawn go hunting. While we dream we do not know we are dreaming, and in the middle of a dream interpret a dream within it; not until we wake do we know we were dreaming. Only at the ultimate awakening shall we know that this is the ultimate dream. Yet fools think they are awake; they

know just what they are, princes, herdsmen, so obstinately sure of themselves! Confucius and you are both dreams; and I who call you a dream am also a dream.'

'Once Chuang-tzii dreamed that he was a butterfly. He was a butterfly gaily flapping its wings (Was it because he saw that this was just what he wanted to be?), and did not know he was Chuang-tzii. Suddenly he awoke, and all at once he was Chuang-tzŭ.

He does not know whether he is Chuang-tzŭ who dreamed he was a butterfly, or a butterfly dreaming he is Chuang-tzŭ.'

There is no suggestion here that meditation can penetrate illusion; life is a dream which lasts until death, the 'ultimate awakening'. Chuang-tzŭ's dream that he is a butterfly suggests to him, not that there is some deeper Reality, but simply that he may be a butterfly dreaming that he is a man.

In the *Lieh-tzŭ* this theme occupies a whole chapter. Although its new prominence may well be the result of Buddhist influence, the treatment of the theme remains purely Taoist; there is no implication that it is either possible or desirable for the living to awake from their dream. Indeed, except in the second episode (where Yin Wen says that 'the breath of all that lives, the appearance of all that has shape, is illusion'), perception and dreaming are given equal weight. If waking experience is no more real than dreams, then dreams are as real as waking experience. We perceive when a thing makes contact with the body, dream when it makes contact with the mind, and there is nothing to choose between one experience and another—a claim supported by a series of parables designed to abolish the division between illusion and reality. If a magician transformed your house into a fairy palace in the clouds, and turned it back again in a few minutes, you would think the cloud palace a hallucination—although all things are in constant transformation, and in this case the difference is only that the change is relatively short and abrupt. (In China the

magician is conceived to transform rather than conjure out of nothing, just as the generation of things is conceived as a process of transformation, not an act of creation.) A people awake for only one day in fifty would trust in dreams and doubt its waking consciousness. A slave who dreamed every night that he was a rich man would lead the same life as a rich man who dreamed every night that he was a slave.

We generally assume that the comparison of life to a dream is inherently pessimistic, implying that no joy is real and no achievement lasting. This is indeed the aspect on which Buddhism and other Indian systems lay most stress. But it is only one implication of a simile which in poetry, Eastern and Western, is very complex; and it would certainly be more useful to explore the significance of the comparison in the *Liek-tzŭ* by the techniques with which literary critics sort out the implications of 'We are such stuff as dreams are made on' in the *Tempest* than by philosophical analysis. Unlike the Indian philosophies, neither of the great Chinese philosophies, Confucianism and Taoism, can be called pessimistic; both assume, not that life is misery, but that joy and misery alternate like day and night, each having its proper place in the world order. If 'Life is a dream' implies that no achievement is lasting, it also implies that life can be charged with the wonder of dreams, that we drift spontaneously through events which follow a logic different from that of everyday intelligence, that fears and regrets are as unreal as hopes and desires. The first and longest story in this chapter compares the visible world to a magician's illusion; and the dominant feeling throughout is not that life is futile, but that it can assume the marvellous quality of magic and dreams.

The story of the Chou Emperor Mu (?1001-947 B.C.) at the head of this chapter seems designed to contrast with the story of the Yellow Emperor at the head of the preceding chapter. The Yellow Emperor, after trying and rejecting both hedonism and

Confucian moralism, travels **in a** dream to the ideal country of Hua-hsŭ; on waking he applies what he has learned, almost achieves perfect government, and at death 'rises into the sky'. King Mu on the other hand is a lifelong hedonist; he travels to the magician's palace in the clouds, enjoys its pleasures, but is terrified when the magician tries to lead him to still higher regions. On waking he has learned nothing but a taste for travel. He sets out on a journey to the West, is disillusioned with pleasure, and dies without 'rising into the sky'. Is it a coincidence that Hua-hsii's country is West of Yen (the place where the sun goes down), while King Mu's journey ends at Yen after passing a palace of the Yellow Emperor? King Mu on his earthly journey unwittingly follows the tracks of the Yellow Emperor.

* * * *

In the time of King Mu of Chou, there came from a country in the far West a magician who could enter fire and water, and pierce metal and stone, who overturned mountains, turned back rivers, shifted walled cities, who rode the empty air without falling and passed unhindered through solid objects; there was no end to the thousands and myriads of ways in which he altered things and transformed them. He not only altered the shapes of things, he also changed the thoughts of men. King Mu reverenced him as though he were a god, served him as though he were his prince; he lodged him in the royal chambers, presented him with the flesh of animals bred for sacrifice, picked singing girls to entertain him. But the magician found the rooms of the royal palace too mean and humble to live in, the delicacies of the royal kitchen too tough and rank to eat, the ladies of the royal harem too ugly and smelly for intimacy. Then King Mu built him a new mansion, devoting to it all the skill of his craftsmen in clay and wood and decorators in red ochre and whitewash; his treasuries were empty by the time the tower was

finished. It was seven thousand feet high, overlooked the tops of the Chuang-nan mountains, and was called 'The Tower in the Middle Sky'. The King chose the loveliest and daintiest virgins of Cheng and Wei to fill it, put fragrant oils on their hair, straightened their moth eyebrows, adorned them with hairpins and earrings, dressed them in fine cotton and gauze bordered with the white silk of Ch'i, powdered their faces and blackened their eyebrows, hung their girdles with jade rings, sprinkled them with sweet herbs. He performed *Receiving the Clouds,* the *Six Jewels,* the *Nine Succession Dances* and the *Morning Dew* to please the magician, and every month offered him costly garments, every morning served him with costly foods. The magician was still dissatisfied, but deigned to accept the mansion in the absence of anything better.

Not long afterwards, he invited the King to come with him on an excursion. He soared upwards, with King Mu clinging to his sleeve, and did not stop until they were in the middle sky. There they came to the magician's palace. It was built of gold and silver, and strung with pearls and jades; it stood out above the clouds and the rain, and one could not tell what supported it underneath. In the distance it looked like a congealed cloud. All that the eye observed and the ear listened to, the nose inhaled and the tongue tasted, were things unknown in the world of men. The King really believed that he was enjoying 'the mighty music of the innermost heaven', (i) in the Pure City or the Purple Star, the palaces where God dwells. When he looked down, his own palaces and arbours were like rows of clods and heaps of brushwood.

When it seemed to the King that he had lived there twenty or thirty years without thinking of his own country, the magician again invited him to accompany him on an excursion. They came to a place where they could not see the sun and moon above them, nor the rivers and seas below them. Lights and shadows

glared, till the King's eyes were dazzled and he could not **look;** noises echoed towards them, till the King's ears hummed and he could not listen. Every member and organ loosened in terror, his thoughts ran riot and his spirits waned; and he asked the magician to let him go back. The magician gave him a push, and the King seemed to meteor through space.

When he awoke, he was sitting as before in his own palace, and his own attendants waited at his side. He looked in front of him; the wine had not yet cooled, the meats had not yet gone dry. When the King asked where he had been, his courtiers answered:

'Your Majesty has only been sitting here absorbed in something.'

From this time King Mu was not himself, and it was three months before he recovered. He again questioned the magician, who answered:

'Your Majesty has been with me on a journey of the spirit. **Why** should your body have moved? Why should the place where you lived be different from your own palace, or the place of our excursion different from your own park? Your Majesty feels at home with the permanent, is suspicious of the sudden and temporary. But can one always measure how far and how fast a scene may alter and turn into something else?'

The King was delighted, ceased to care for state affairs, took no pleasure in his ministers and concubines, and gave up his thoughts to far journeys. He gave orders to yoke his eight noble horses in two teams. In the team of the royal car, the inside horses were Blossom Red on the right and Green Ears on the left; the outside horses were Red Thoroughbred on the right and White Offering on the left. The charioteer was Tsao-fu, with T'ai-ping to second him. In the team of the next car, the inside horses were Tall Yellow on the right and Outstripper on the left; the outside horses were Dull Sable on the right and Son of the Hills on the

left. Po Yao was in charge, with Shen Pei as charioteer and Pen Jung to second him.

They galloped a thousand miles, and came to the country of the Chŭ-sou tribe. The tribesmen offered the King the blood of white snowgeese to drink, and provided cow and mare milk to wash his feet; and they did the same for the men of the two teams. After drinking he went on, and lodged for the night on the range of K'un-lun, to the North of the Red River. On another day he climbed the summit of K'un-lun to look at the Yellow Emperor's palace, and raised a mound there as a memorial for future generations.

Then he was the guest of the Western Queen Mother (2) who gave a banquet for him on Jasper Lake. The Western Queen Mother sang for the King, who sang in answer; but the words of his song were melancholy. He looked Westward at Mount Yen, where the sun goes down after its daily journey of ten thousand miles. Then he sighed and said: 'Alas! I, who am King, have neglected virtue for pleasure. Will not future generations look back and blame me for my errors?'

How can we call King Mu a Divine Man! He was able to enjoy his lifetime to the full, but still he died when his hundred years was up. The world supposed that he had 'risen into the sky'. (3)

Notes. (1) A reference to the dream of Chao Chien-tail (6th century B.C.). 'I went to the home of God, and in extreme delight wandered with all the spirits in the Level Heaven (the innermost of the nine divisions of heaven). The mighty music, the Nine Performances, the myriad dances, were altogether different from the music of the Three Dynasties; their notes moved my heart.'

(z) The Western Queen Mother (Hsi-wang-mu) was not yet, as she became in later Chinese legend, a beautiful fairy queen. The fourth-century commentator Chang Chan still accepts the description of the old *Classic of the* Mountains *and Seas:* 'The Western Queen Mother has human shape, with a leopard's tail; she has tigers' teeth and a formidable snarl, and wears a headdress over her tangled hair.'

(3) Flown into the sky as an immortal. Unlike the Yellow Emperor, who did become an immortal (p. 35 above), the pleasure-loving King Mu never profited by his dream.

Leo-ch'eng-tzŭ studied magic under Master Yin Wen, who told him nothing for three years. Lao-ch'eng-tzŭ asked what he had done wrong and offered to leave. Master Yin Wen bowed him into the house, shut the door on his attendants, and talked with him.

'Formerly, as Lao-tzŭ was setting out for the West, he looked back and told me: The breath of all that lives, the appearance of all that has shape, is illusion. What is begun by the creative process, and changed by the Yin and Yang, is said to be born and to die; things which, already shaped, are displaced and replaced by a comprehension of numbers and understanding of change, are said to be transformed, to be illusions of magic. The skill of the Creator is inscrutable, his achievement profound, so that it is long before his work completes its term and comes to an end. The skill of the magician working on the shapes of things is obvious but his achievement shallow, so that his work is extinguished as soon as it is conjured up. It is when you realise that the illusions and transformations of magic are no different from birth and death that it becomes worthwhile to study magic with you. You and I are also illusion; what is there to study?'

Lao-ch'eng-tzŭ went home to practise Master Yin Wen's teaching, and after pondering deeply for three months, was able to appear and disappear at will and turn round and exchange the four seasons, call up thunder in winter, create ice in summer, make flying things run and running things fly. He never disclosed his arts all his life, so that no one handed them down to later generations.

Lieh-tzŭ said:

'As for those sages who had the art of transforming the Empire,

their Way was employed in secret, their outward **achievements** were no different from other men's. The power of the Five Emperors, the achievements of the Three Kings, were not necessarily all due to the force of their wisdom and courage. Some they accomplished through their transforming influence; who has fathomed them?'

There are eight proofs of being awake, six tests of dreaming. What is meant by the eight proofs? They are events and actions, gain and loss, sorrow and joy, birth and death. These eight happen when the body encounters something. What is meant by the six tests? There are normal dreams, and dreams due to alarm, thinking, memory, rejoicing, fear. These six happen when the spirit connects with something. Those who do not recognise where the changes excited in them come from are perplexed about the reason when an event arrives. Those who do recognise where they come from do know the reason; and if you know the reason, nothing will startle you.

When a body's energies fill and empty, diminish and grow, they always communicate with heaven and earth, responding to the different classes of things. Therefore when the Yin energy is strong, you are frightened by dreams of walking through great waters. When the Yang energy is strong, you are roasted by dreams of walking through great fires. When the Yin and Yang are both strong, you dream of killing or sparing. When you overeat, you dream of giving presents; when you starve, of receiving them. For the same reason, when you suffer from giddiness, you dream of floating in the air; from a sinking, congested feeling, of drowning. When you go to sleep lying on your belt, you dream of snakes; when a flying bird pecks your hair, of flying. As it turns dark you dream of fire, falling ill you dream

of eating; after drinking wine you are anxious, after singing and dancing you weep.

Lieh-tzŭ said:

The spirit chances on it, and we dream; the body encounters it, and it happens. Hence by day we imagine and by night dream what spirit and body chance upon. That is why, when someone's spirit is concentrated, imagination and dreaming diminish of themselves. What those who trust the time when they are **awake** do not explain, and those who trust in dreams do not fathom, is the arrival and passing of the transformations of things. It is no empty saying that the True Men of old forgot themselves when awake and did not dream when they slept!'

At the South corner of the far West there is a country, I do not know where its frontiers lie: it is named the country of Ku-mang. The Yin and Yang breaths do not meet there, so there is no distinction between cold and heat. The light of the sun and moon does not shine there, so there is no distinction between day and night. Its people do not eat or wear clothes and sleep most of the time, waking once in fifty days. They think that what they do in dreams is real, and what they see waking is unreal.

The place equidistant from the four seas is called the Central Kingdom[1] It goes North and South across the Yellow River, East and West over Mount T'ai, for more than ten thousand miles. The Yin and Yang are truly proportioned there, so there is alternation of cold and heat. Darkness and light are rightly divided there, so there is alternation of day and night. Of its people some are wise and some are foolish. The myriad things thrive and multiply, there are many kinds of skill and talent, there are rulers and ministers to oversee them, manners and laws to support them; what they say and do is past telling and

[1] China.

counting. They wake and sleep in alternation; and they think that what they do waking is real, and what they see in dreams is unreal.

In the North corner of the far East there is a country called the country of Fu-lo. Its climate is always hot, for the excess of the light of sun and moon shines there. Its soil will not grow fine crops; its people eat herbs and roots and fruit from the trees, and do not know how to cook with fire. By nature they arc hard and fierce, the strong oppress the weak, they honour the victor and do not respect right. They travel at a gallop most of the time and seldom rest; they are always awake and never sleep.

Mr Yin of Chou ran a huge estate. The underlings who hurried to serve him never rested from dawn to dusk. There was an old servant with no more strength in his muscles, whom he drove all the harder. By day the servant went to work groaning, at night he slept soundly dulled by fatigue. Losing consciousness, every evening he dreamed that he was lord of the state, enthroned above the people, with all affairs of state under his control. He gave himself up to whatever pleased him, excursions and banquets, palaces and spectacles; his joy was incomparable. Waking, he was a servant again.

When someone condoled with him for having to work so hard, the servant said:

'Man's term of life is a hundred years, divided between day and night. By day I am a bondman, and my life is bitter indeed; but at night I become a prince, and my joy is incomparable. Why should I complain?'

Mr Yin's mind was vexed by worldly affairs, his thoughts occupied with the family inheritance, which exhausted him body and mind; and at night he too fell fast asleep dulled by fatigue. And every evening he dreamed that he was a slave,

harried by every conceivable task, scolded and beaten for every imaginable fault. He muttered and groaned in his sleep, and there was no relief until dawn. Distressed by this, Mr Yin consulted a friend, who told him:

'With rank high enough to distinguish you, and more property than you need, you are too far above other men. Dreaming at night that you are a slave, reverting from ease to toil, is fortune righting itself. Can you reasonably expect to have it both ways, dreaming as well as awake?'

After hearing his friend's advice, Mr Yin eased his demands on the servants and reduced the responsibilities which worried him. His ailment took a turn for the better.

There was a man of Cheng who went to gather firewood in the moors, and came on a frightened deer. He stood in its way, struck it and killed it. Fearing that someone would see the deer, he quickly hid it in a ditch and covered it with brushwood. His joy overwhelmed him. But soon afterwards he could not find the place where he had hidden it, and decided that he must have been dreaming.

He came down the road humming to himself about the affair. A passer-by heard him, acted on his words and took the deer. When this man got home he told his wife:

'Just now a woodcutter dreamed he had caught a deer, but did not know where it was. Now I have found it. His dream was a true one.'

'Isn't it rather that you dreamed you saw the woodcutter catch the deer? Why should there be any woodcutter? Since you have really got the deer, isn't it your dream which was true?'

'All I know is that I **have** got it. What do I care which of us was dreaming?'

When the woodcutter got home, **he** was not reconciled to his

loss. That night he had a true dream of the place where he hid the deer, and also of the man who found it. Next morning, guided by the dream, he sought out the man, and then went to law to contest his right to the deer.

The case was referred to the Chief justice, who said:

'If in the first place you really did catch the deer, you are wrong to say you were dreaming. Ifyou really dreamed that you caught it, you are wrong to say it actually happened. The other man really did take your deer, yet contests your right to it. His wife also says that he recognised it in his dream as another man's deer, yet denies the existence of the man who caught it. Now all I know is that here we have the deer. I suggest you divide it between you.'

It was reported to the lord of Cheng, who said:

'Alas! Is the Chief Justice going to dream that he has divided someone's deer?'

The Prime Minister was consulted. He said:

'It is beyond me to distinguish dreaming and not dreaming. If you want to distinguish dreaming from waking, you will have to call in the Yellow Emperor or Confucius. Now that we have lost the Yellow Emperor and Confucius, who is to distinguish them? For the present we may as well trust the decision of the Chief Justice.'

In middle age Hua-tzŭ of Yang-li in Sung lost his memory. He would receive a present in the morning and forget it by the evening, give a present in the evening and forget it by the morning. In the street he would forget to walk, at home he would forget to sit down. Today he would not remember yesterday, tomorrow he would not remember today. His family were troubled about it, and invited a diviner to tell his fortune, but without success. They invited **a shaman** to perform an auspicious

rite, but it made no difference. They invited a doctor to treat him, but it did no good. There was a Confucian of Lu who, acting as his own go-between, claimed that he could cure it; and Hua-tzŭ's wife and children offered half of their property in return for his skill. The Confucian told them:

'This is clearly not a disease which can be divined by hexagrams and omens, or charmed away by auspicious prayers, or treated by medicines and the needle. I shall try reforming his mind, changing his thoughts; there is a good chance that he will recover.'

Then the Confucian tried stripping Hua-tzŭ, and he looked for his clothes; tried starving him, and he looked for food; tried shutting him up in the dark, and he looked for light. The Confucian was delighted, and told the man's sons:

'The sickness is curable. But my arts have been passed down secretly through the generations, and are not disclosed to outsiders. I shall shut out his attendants, and stay alone with him in his room for seven days.'

They agreed, and no one knew what methods the Confucian used; but the sickness of many years was completely dispelled in a single morning.

When Hua-tzŭ woke up he was very angry. He dismissed his wife, punished his sons, and chased away the Confucian with a spear. The authorities of Sung arrested him and wanted to know the reason.

'Formerly, when I forgot,' said Hua-tzŭ, 'I was boundless; I did not notice whether heaven and earth existed or not. Now suddenly I remember; and all the disasters and recoveries, gains and losses, joys and sorrows, loves and hates of twenty or thirty years past rise up in a thousand tangled threads. I fear that all the disasters and recoveries, gains and losses, joys and sorrows, loves and hates still to come will confound my heart just as much. Shall I never again find a moment of forgetfulness?'

Tzŭ-kung marvelled when he heard of it and told Confucius.

'This is beyond the understanding of someone like you,' said Confucius. He turned to Yen Hui and told him to note it down.

Mr P'ang of Ch'in had a son who was clever as a child but suffered from an abnormality when he grew up. When he heard singing he thought it was weeping,when he saw white he thought it was black; fragrant smells he thought noisome, sweet tastes he thought bitter, wrong actions he thought right. Whatever came into his mind, heaven and earth, the four cardinal points, water and fire, heat and cold, he always turned upside down. A certain Mr Yang told his father:

'The gentlemen of Lu[1] have many arts and skills, perhaps they can cure him. Why not inquire among them?'

The father set out for Lu, but passing through Ch'en he came across Lao-tzŭ, and took the opportunity to tell him about his son's symptoms.

'How do you know that your son is abnormal?' said Lao-tzŭ. 'Nowadays everyone in the world is deluded about right and wrong, and confused about benefit and harm; because so many people share this sickness, no one perceives that it is a sickness. Besides, one man's abnormality is not enough to overturn **his** family, one family's to overturn the neighbourhood, one neighbourhood's to overturn the state, one state's to overturn the world. If the whole world were abnormal, how could abnormality overturn it? Supposing the minds of everyone in the world were like your son's, then on the contrary it is you who would be abnormal. Joy and sorrow, music and beauty, smells and tastes, right and wrong, who can straighten them out? I am not even sure that these words of mine are not abnormal, let alone those of the gentlemen of Lu, who are the most abnormal

[1] **The Confucians.**

of all; who are they to cure other people's abnormality? You had better go straight home instead of wasting your money.'

There was a man who was born in Yen but grew up in Ch'u, and in old age returned to his native country. While he was passing through the state of Chin his companions played a joke on him. They pointed out a city and told him: 'This is the capital of Yen.'

He composed himself and looked solemn.

Inside the city they pointed out a shrine: 'This is the shrine of your quarter.'

He breathed a deep sigh.

They pointed out a hut: 'This was your father's cottage.'

His tears welled up.

They pointed out a mound: 'This is your father's tomb.'

He could not help weeping aloud. His companions roared with laughter: 'We were teasing you. You are still only in Chin.'

The man was very embarrassed. When he reached Yen, and really saw the capital of Yen and the shrine of his quarter, really saw his father's cottage and tomb, he did not feel it so deeply.

4

Confucius

Early Taoist stories sometimes make fun of Confucius, sometimes claim him as an ally. The *Lieh-tzŭ,* written after Confucianism won official recognition, confines itself to the second course, and criticises the doctrine through the mouth of its founder. The theme of the present chapter is the futility of the Confucian faith in knowledge.

The most important Taoist critique of knowledge is the chapter *Treating Things as Equal* in the *Chuang-tzŭ.* Its target is the analytic method of the Dialecticians, the one Chinese school which studied logical problems for their own sake.[1] The earlier Dialecticians, such as Kung-sun Lung (c. 300 B.C.), were sophists who dazzled their audience with paradoxes. During the 3rd century B.C. the authors of the *Mohist Canons* advanced from this stage to the clarification of problems by exposing false analogies and establishing rules of reasoning. But the movement soon came to an end, defeated on one side by the Confucian suspicion of speculation without practical or moral relevance, on the other by Taoist irrationalism.

When interest in the paradoxes of the Dialecticians revived for a time in the 3rd century A.D., it was, curiously enough, in Taoist circles. By this period the major enemy of Taoist mysticism was not logical analysis, but the practical thinking of Confucians, who insisted on weighing benefit and harm, and distinguishing between right and wrong. Sophistries without practical application rather pleased the Taoist taste for marvels. One episode in

[1] Cf. Fung Yu-Ian (Short Reading List, p. 183), vol. I, chs. 9 and it.

the present chapter makes fun of Kung-sun Lung, and quotes a number of paradoxes ascribed to him, four of which are known to have been discussed by the original Dialecticians ('Pointing does not reach', 'The shadow of a flying bird never moves', 'A white horse is not a horse', 'An orphan colt has never had a mother'). The author of the *Lieh-tzŭ is* quite kind to him, as he is to all eccentrics, and enjoys his sophistries without taking them seriously. The same pleasure in ingenious argument, providing it is unsound, is visible at the end of the *Yellow Emperor* chapter, where he reproduces the story of Hui Ang, first found in ch. 1S of the *Lit-shih ch'un-ch'iu (c.* 240 B.C.), a philosophical encyclopaedia representing the opinions of several schools. He quotes the *Mohist Canons* three times in the course of the *Lieh-tzŭ,*[1] and at the beginning of the *Questions of T'ang* even makes serious use of the paradox of infinity.

* * * *

Confucius was out of office. Tzŭ-kung came in to wait on him; Confucius looked careworn. Tzŭ-kung did not dare to ask questions, but went out and told Yen Hui.

Yen Hui sang plucking the lute. Confucius heard him, and, as Yen Hui was hoping, called him in to inquire.

'Why do you rejoice at a time like this?'

'Why is my Master so careworn?'

'First let me hear what you have to say.'

'Master, once I heard you say: "Rejoice in heaven and know destiny, and so be free of care." That is why I rejoice.'

Confucius looked solemn for a moment.

'Did I say that? But you understand it in too narrow a way. That is merely something I said on a particular occasion; please correct it by what I say now. You know only the careless side of rejoicing in heaven and knowing destiny, and still do not know

[1] **pp. 22,** 89, ro6.

that they are also the greatest of cares. Now let me tell you the truth of the matter.

'The training of your personal character, indifferent to failure and success; awareness that the events which have happened and will happen to you do not depend on yourself, and should not disturb your thoughts; this is what you understand by the carelessness of rejoicing in heaven and knowing destiny. But not long ago, when I edited the *Songs* and the *History,* and corrected rites and music, my aim was to restore order to the Empire and bequeath this order to future generations; it was not merely to train my personal character and order my own state of Lu. Yet the ministers of Lu daily usurped more of their prince's power, morals steadily deteriorated, the good inclinations in man's nature grew weaker and weaker. If this Way does not work in one state and the present time, what can we expect of the Empire and the generations to come? I knew for the first time that the *Songs* and *History,* rites and music, are of no help in restoring order; but still I did not know any method to replace them. This is what the man who rejoices in heaven and knows destiny has to care about.

'Nevertheless, I have found it. This "rejoicing" and this "knowing" are not what the men of old meant by the two words. Rejoicing in nothing and knowing nothing are the true rejoicing and the true knowledge; and so you rejoice in everything, know everything, care about everything, do everything. Why should we discard the Songs and *History,* rites and music, and what is the point in replacing them?'

Yen Hui faced North and bowed, saying:

'I too have found it.'

He went out and told Tzŭ-kung. Tzŭ-kung lost himself in thought. He returned home and meditated deeply for seven days, neither eating nor sleeping, until his bones stood out. Yen Hui went a second time to explain to him. Then Tzŭ-kung went

back to follow Confucius again, and to the end of his life never gave up playing the lute, singing and intoning books.

A high official of Ch'en on a state visit to Lu called privately on Shu-sun.

'We have a sage in our country,' Shu-sun told him.

'You mean Confucius, I suppose?'

'I do.'

'How do you know he is a sage?'

'I once heard his disciple Yen Hui say that Confucius is able to discard his mind and use his body.'

'We have a sage in our country too. Don't you know about him?'

'What sage do you mean?'

'We have a disciple of Lao-tzŭ called Keng-sang-tzŭ. He has grasped the Way of Lao-tzŭ and is able to look with his ears and listen with his eyes.'

When the Marquis of Lu heard of this sage he was astounded, and sent a great noble to bring him to Lu with the highest honours. Keng-sang-tzŭ arrived in response to the invitation, and the Marquis asked in the humblest language to he allowed to question him.

'The rumour is false,' said Keng-sang-tzŭ. 'I can look and listen without using eyes and ears. I cannot exchange the functions of eyes and ears.'

'But this is even stranger. What sort of Way is this? I cannot wait to hear.'

'My body is in accord with my mind, my mind with my energies, my energies with my spirit, my spirit with Nothing. Whenever the minutest existing thing or the faintest sound affects me, whether it is far **away** beyond the eight borderlands, or close at hand between my eyebrows and eyelashes, I am bound

to know it. However, I do not know whether I perceived it with the seven holes in my head and my four limbs, or knew it through my heart and belly and internal organs. It is simply self-knowledge.'

The Marquis of Lu was delighted. On another day he told Confucius, who smiled without answering.

The chief minister of Sung visited Confucius and asked him:

'Are you a sage?'

'How can I claim to be a sage? I am merely a man who has studied widely and remembered much.'

'Were the Three Kings sages?'

'The Three Kings were good at employing wisdom and courage; whether they were sages I do not know.'

'Were the Five Emperors sages?'

'The Five Emperors were good at employing morality; whether they were sages I do not know.'

'Were the Three Highnesses sages?'

'The Three Highnesses were good at adapting themselves to the times; whether they were sages I do not know.'

The chief minister of Sung said in amazement:

'Then who do you think is a sage?'

Confucius' expression changed for a moment.

'Among the people of the Western regions there is a sage. He does not govern, yet there is no disorder; does not speak, yet is trusted spontaneously; does not reform, yet his influence prevails spontaneously. He is so great that none of his people can give a name to him. I suspect that he is a sage, but I do not know whether he truly is or not.'

The chief minister thought silently in his heart:

'Confucius is deceiving me!' (z)

Note. (r) There has been no true sage since the institutions of government began. Since the earliest Emperors there has been a continual degeneration, the rulers first spontaneously answering the needs of the times, then standardising a rigid morality, finally relying on cleverness and force. The sage in the West is presumably Lao-tzŭ, who disappeared into the far West where he no doubt realised the ideal society which was impossible in China. But the reference to the sage in the West is mysterious; Buddhists, and later Christians, very naturally took the opportunity to identify him with Buddha or Christ.

Tzŭ-hsia asked Confucius:

'What sort of man is Yen Hui?'

'For kindness, he is a better man than I am.'

'What about Tzŭ-kung?'

'For eloquence, he is a better man than I am.'

'Tzŭ-lu?'

'For courage, he is a better man than I am.'

'Tzŭ-chang?'

'For dignity, he is a better man than I am.'

Tzŭ-hsia rose from his mat and asked:

'Then why do these four serve you?'

'Sit down, I will tell you. Yen Hui can be kind, but cannot check the impulse when it will do no good. Tzŭ-kung can be eloquent, but cannot hold his tongue. Tzŭ-lu can be brave but cannot be cautious. Tzŭ-chang can be dignified, but cannot unbend in company. Even if I could have the virtues of the four men all together, I should be unwilling to exchange them for my own. This is why they serve me without misgivings.'

After Lieh-tzŭ had studied under Hu-tzŭ and befriended Po-hun We-jen, he returned to live in South Suburb. Many people settled down there as his followers, more than you could count in hundreds. However, Lieh-tzŭ did not find them too many, and argued with them every morning, listening to anyone who

had something to say. But he lived next door to Nan-kuo-tzŭ (I) for twenty years, without either of them inviting or calling on the other. When they chanced to meet on the road, their eyes seemed not to see each other; and the disciples thought that beyond doubt Lieh-tzŭ and Nan-kuo-tzŭ were enemies.

A man who had come from Ch'u asked Lieh-tzŭ why he and Nan-kuo-tzŭ were enemies.

'Nan-kuo-tzŭ's face is full but his mind void,' Lieh-tzŭ answered. 'His ears hear nothing, his eyes see nothing, his mouth says nothing, his mind knows nothing, his body never alters. What is the point in visiting him? However, I may as well go along with you to take a look at him.'

Forty disciples went with him. They saw Nan-kuo-tzŭ, who did indeed seem like a clay image with which it was impossible to make contact. When they looked round at Lieh-tzŭ, his spirit was out of connection with his body and no communion was possible with Lieh-tzŭ either.

Suddenly Nan-kuo-tzŭ pointed to the man at the very rear of the file of Lieh-tzŭ's disciples and began talking to him, hectoring him like a bigot who is determined always to be in the right. The disciples were startled by this, and all had doubtful expressions when they returned to the house. But Lieh-tzŭ told them:

'Whoever gets the idea says nothing, whoever knows it all also says nothing. Whether you think that saying nothing is saying or not saying, whether you think that knowing nothing is knowing or not knowing, you are still saying and still knowing. But there is nothing that he either does not say or says, nothing that he either does not know or knows. This is all there is to it; why were you needlessly startled?'

Note. (r) The name means 'Philosopher of South Suburb'.

When Lieh-tzŭ was studying under Old Shang, after three

years his mind no longer dared to think of right and wrong, his mouth no longer dared to speak of benefit and harm; and it was only then that he got as much as a glance from Old Shang. After five years, his mind was again thinking of right and wrong, his mouth was again speaking of benefit and harm; and for the first time Old Shang's face relaxed in a smile. After seven years, he thought of whatever came into his mind without any longer distinguishing between right and wrong, said whatever came into his mouth without any longer distinguishing between benefit and harm; and for the first time the Master pulled him over to sit with him on the same mat. After nine years, he thought without restrain of whatever came into his mind and said without restraint whatever came into his mouth without knowing whether the right and wrong, benefit and harm, were his own or another's. Only then, when he had come to the end of everything inside him and outside him, his eyes became like his ears, his ears like his nose, his nose like his mouth; everything was the same. His mind concentrated and his body relaxed, bones and flesh fused completely, he did not notice what his body leaned against and his feet trod, what his mind thought and his words contained. If you can only be like this, none of the principles of things will be hidden from you. (I)

Note. (I) This passage is repeated from ch. 2 (p. 36 above). But the two versions have different conclusions, relating the story to the different themes of the two chapters, power and knowledge.

Before this Lieh-tzŭ liked travel. Hu-tzŭ asked him:

'What is it you like so much about travel?'

'The joy of travel is that the things which amuse you never remain the same. Other men travel to contemplate the sights, I travel to contemplate the way things change. There is travel

and travel, and I have still to meet someone who can tell the difference!'

Is not your travel really the same as other men's? Would you insist there is really a difference? Anything at all that we see, we always see changing. You are amused that other things never remain the same, but do not know that you yourself never remain the same. You busy yourself with outward travel and do not know how to busy yourself with inward contemplation. By outward travel we seek what we lack in things outside us, while by inward contemplation we find sufficiency in ourselves. The latter is the perfect, the former an imperfect kind of travelling.'

From this time Lieh-tzŭ never went out any more, thinking that he did not understand travel. Hu-tzŭ told him:

'How perfect is travel! In perfect travel we do not know where we are going, in perfect contemplation we do not **know what** we are looking at. To travel over all things without exception, contemplate all things without exception, this is what I call travel and contemplation. That is why I say: "How perfect is travel!"'

Lung Shu said to the physician Wen Chi[p]:

'Your craft is subtle. I have an illness, can you cure it?'

'You have only to command. But first tell me the symptoms of your illness.'

'I do not think it an honour if the whole district praises me, nor a disgrace if the whole state reviles me; I have no joy when I win, no anxiety when I lose; I look in the same way at life and death, riches and poverty, other men and pigs, myself and other men; I dwell in my own house as though lodging in an inn, look out at my own neighbourhood as though it were a foreign and barbarous country.

'Having all these ailments, titles and rewards cannot induce me, punishments and fines cannot awe me, prosperity and decline and benefit and harm cannot change me, joy and sorrow cannot influence me. Consequently it is impossible for me to serve my prince, have dealings with my kindred and friends, manage my wife and children, control my servants. What illness is this? What art can cure it?'

Then Wen Chih ordered Lung Shu to stand with his back to the light. He himself stepped back and examined Lung Shu from a distance facing the light. Finally he said:

'Hmm. I see your heart. The place an inch square is empty, you are almost a sage. Six of the holes in your heart run into each other, but one is stopped up. Can this be the reason why you now think the wisdom of a sage is an illness? My shallow craft can do nothing to cure it.'

To be born normally, coming from nowhere, is the Way. When a man follows a course consistent with life, and lives, so that although he dies when his term is up he does not perish before his time, this is normal; to follow a course consistent with life and perish before his time is misfortune.

To die normally, in accordance with your manner of life, is also the Way. When a man follows a course which leads to death, and dies, so that he perishes by his own fault even before his term is up, this is also normal; to live after following a course which leads to death is good luck.

Therefore to be born depending on nothing is called the Way, and to live out your term depending on the Way is called normal. Death which depends on your manner of life is also called the Way, and premature death which depends on the Way is also called normal.

When Chi Liang died, Yang Chu looked towards his gate

and sang. When Sui Wu died, Yang Chu wept embracing his corpse. (1) But ordinary people sing when anyone is born and weep when anyone dies.

Note. (r) For Yang Chu and Chi Liang, *cf.* p. 128 below. Chi Liang lived out *his* term 'normally', *Sui Wu* died by 'misfortune'.

The eye is about to grow dim when it can discern the tip of a hair; the ear is about to go deaf when it can hear the wings of a gnat; the palate is about to deteriorate when it can discriminate between the waters of the Tzŭ and the Sheng; the nostrils are about to clog when they can distinguish scorched and rotten smells; the body is about to stiffen when it delights in sprinting; the mind is about to go astray when it can recognise right and wrong. Therefore if a thing does not reach its limit it will not revert.

In Cheng there were many men of worth in Pu-tse, and many talented specialists in the East Quarter. When Pai-feng, one of the disciples in Pu-tse, was passing through the East Quarter, he chanced on Teng Hsi. (1) Teng Hsi looked round at his followers and smiled.

'What would you say if I make that fellow coming towards us do a dance for you?'

'It would please us immensely,' they answered.

Teng Hsi said to Pai-feng:

'Do you know the difference between being kept like a parent supported by his sons, and being kept like a dog? Such creatures as dogs and pigs are kept by man and cannot keep themselves; the effort of man keeps these animals and uses them for his own ends. If people like you are well fed and comfortably clothed,

you owe it to the administration. Herded together old and young as though you were animals for the sty or the kitchen, how do you differ from the dogs and the pigs?'

Pai-feng did not answer, but one of his disciples stepped out of the file, came forward and said:

'Have you not heard of the many skilled men in Ch'i and Lu? Some are clever at working with clay or wood, others with metal or leather; some are good singers or musicians, others good scribes or diviners; some know how to command armies, others to manage ancestral shrines; there is no shortage of any kind of talent. But they cannot give each other positions or tell each other what to do; the men who give them positions lack their knowledge, the men who tell them what to do lack their abilities, yet by these their knowledge and abilities are employed. It is we who employ you administrators; what have you to be conceited about?'

Teng Hsi was at a loss for an answer. With a glance to his disciples, he withdrew.

Note. (1) Pai-feng was a disciple *of* Lieh-tzŭ (p. 2o). Lieh-tzŭ and *his* disciples lived as hermits in Pu-tse (Pu-t'ien), the game preserve *of* Cheng *17).* The Prime Minister Tzŭ-ch'an lived in the East Quarter *(Analects ch.* 14/8); among his employees was Teng *Hsi,* who prepared the law-code *of* Cheng (p. 127). It may be mentioned that Tzŭ-ch'an died in **522 B.C.**, and that in another story (p. *162)* Lieh-tzii outlives the minister Tzŭ-yang (died *398 B.c.).* The chronology *of* the *Lieh-tzŭ is* quite vague; within the period *600-30o inc.,* anyone can meet anyone.

The Earl of Kung-yi was famous among the rulers of the states for his strength. The Duke of T'ang-hsi mentioned him to King Hsŭan of Chou, who invited him to court with the highest honours. When the Earl of Kung-yi arrived, the King examined his physique and found him **a puny** fellow. He was puzzled and asked doubtfully:

'How strong are you?'

'Your servant is strong enough to snap the leg of a grasshopper in spring and to pierce the wing of a cicada in autumn.'

'My strong men,' said the King, looking displeased, 'can rip the hide of a rhinoceros, and drag nine oxen by the tail, but it still irks me that they are too weak. How is it that you are famous for your strength throughout the world?'

The Earl of Kung-yi breathed a long sigh, withdrew from his mat, and answered:

'Your Majesty has asked an excellent question! I will venture to present you with the facts. I had a teacher named Shang-ch'iu-tzŭ, whose strength was unrivalled throughout the world; but his own kin did not know about it, because he never used his strength. I braved death in his service, and he told me:

"'Other men wish to see the invisible;
Look at the things which others ignore.
Other men wish to seize the unattainable,
Be expert in the things which others will not do."

'So a man who is learning to use his eyes should begin by seeing a cartload of firewood; a man who is learning to use his ears should begin by hearing the clang of bells. Whenever there is ease within there are no difficulties outside. The strong man meets no outside difficulties, so none but his own family hear of him.

'Now if my name is famous among the rulers of the states, it is because I have disobeyed my master's teaching and disclosed my ability. However, I am famous, not because I am proud of my strength, but because I am able to use my strength. Is not even this better than being proud of my strength?'

Prince Mou of Chung-shan was the cleverest of the sons of the

lord of Wei. He liked to go around with clever people, took no interest in state affairs, and delighted in the sophist Kung-sun Lung of Chao. Men like Yiieh-cheng Tzŭ-yii laughed at him for this. Prince Mou asked Tzŭ-yŭ:

'Why do you laugh at my taste for Kung-sun Lung?'

'Kung-sun Lung is the kind of man who goes ahead without a teacher, and studies without having friends to advise him. He is nimble with his tongue but eccentric, a syncretist who belongs to no one school, a lover of the extraordinary who talks wildly, trying to confuse men's minds and win verbal victories. He studies with men like Han T'an.'

Prince Mou looked grave and said:

'Why do you give such an exaggerated account of him? Let me hear you justify it.'

'I laugh at the way Kung-sun Lung fooled K'ung Ch'uan. He said that a good archer can make the point of the arrow behind hit the notch of the arrow in front. If he shoots so fast that each catches up with the one in front, all the arrows stick together. When the first arrow reaches the target none of them breaks off and drops and the notch of the last arrow is still fitted to the bowstring, so that to look at then you would think there is only one arrow.

'K'ung Ch'uan was startled, but Kung-sun Lung continued: "That is by no means the most remarkable case. Hung Ch'ao, a disciple of P'eng Meng, was once angry with his wife and wanted to frighten her. He drew the great bow Crow's Caw, fitted an arrow winged with the feathers of Chi, and shot at her eye. The point of the arrow touched her pupil without making the eyelid blink, and the arrow dropped to the ground without raising the dust." I ask you, are these the words of a wise man?'

'Naturally the words of a wise man are beyond the comprehension of fools. The point of the arrow behind hits the notch of the arrow in front because he makes each shot exactly equal to

the one before. (r) The arrow touches the pupil without making the eyelid blink, because the momentum of the arrow has given out. Why do you doubt it?'

'You are Kung-sun Lung's disciple, of course it is your duty to gloss over his defects. I will tell you the most outrageous case of all. This is what Kung-sun Lung said when he was making a fool of the King of Wei:

> "By conceiving something you fail to identify it;
> By pointing it out you fail to reach it;
> By treating it as an object you fail to exhaust it.
> A shadow does not move.
> A hair will draw a weight of a thousand *chisn.*
> A white horse is not a horse.
> An orphan calf has never had a mother."

There is no end to his perversions of reason and sense.'

'You pretend that these sublime sayings are outrageous simply because you can't understand them; it is your own attitude which is outrageous.

Without concepts, your mind is the same as it;
Without pointing, you reach everything;
Whoever exhausts the object exists for ever; (2)
"A shadow does not move": the explanation is that it is replaced; (3)
"A hair will draw a weight of a thousand *chŭn*", when the give and the pull are exactly equal; (4)
"A white horse is not a horse", because the name diverges from the shape (5)
"An orphan calf has never had a mother", because when it had it was not an orphan calf' (6)

'You **think that all Kung-sun Lung's mouthings make good**

sense. Even if he blew them out of another hole, you would go on believing him.'

Prince Mou was silent for a while. Then he took his leave, saying:

`Allow me to call on you another day and discuss the matter again.'

Notes. (1) The archer does not have to aim at the arrow in front; he merely needs to shoot each arrow with exactly the same stance. Chang Chan notes: `In recent times there was a man who could throw wu-mu (two-sided dice) so that in a hundred throws he never once failed to get the black side uppermost. People thought he had the Way and told Wang Yen. Wang Yen said: "There is nothing strange about it. It is simply that he makes each throw exactly like the one before." ' (Kung-sun Lung's argument is simply that the archer can hit the preceding arrow. The difficulty of shooting each arrow a little faster than the one before, so that they all stick together, does not enter into the question.)

(z) While the last four paradoxes are isolated logical puzzles, the first three seem to belong together and to be mystical propositions directed against logic. Although very obscure, their point is perhaps that, since we are one with all things, to analyse them, point them out and form ideas of them does not bring us nearer to them, but on the contrary separates us from them. But if we cease to make distinctions, we become the universe, and therefore eternal.

(3) This is a quotation from the *Mohist Canons,* where the explanation is given but is unfortunately corrupt. The paradox also occurs in the last chapter of the *Chuang-tzŭ* in the form `The shadow of a flying bird never moves'. A comment on this by Ssŭ-ma Piao (died A.D. 306) seems to be based on the *Mohist Canons,* which he may have known in a better text: `The bird screens the light as a fish excludes the water. When the fish moves it excludes the water but the water does not move. When the bird moves a shadow appears, and wherever the shadow appears the light disappears. But appearing and disappearing are not corning and going.'

(4) Cf. P. 105.

(5) A horse is identified as a horse by its shape, irrespective of colour; the name `white horse' does not necessarily apply to it. Kung-sun Lung's *Essay on the White Horse is* extant. It criticises the proposition `White horses are horses' on the assumption that it is identity, not class membership, which is being affirmed.

(6) This exploits a purely verbal ambiguity; the sentence *could* mean `At no period of history have orphans **had** mothers' (true) instead of `At no

period of their lives have orphans had mothers' (false). Cf. 'No Pope has ever been a young man.'

When Yao had ruled the Empire for fifty years, he did not know whether the Empire was in order or not, whether the millions desired to carry him on their heads or not. He turned to his courtiers and asked them, but his courtiers did not know. He questioned visitors who came to court, but his visitors did not know. He inquired in the provinces, but in the provinces they did not know. Then Yao wandered in disguise on the highroads. He heard a boy singing a **ballad:**

'You raised us up, the multitudes;
All observe your standards.
Unknowing, unremembering,
We obey the laws of God.'

Yao, delighted, asked him:
'Who taught you to repeat this saying?'
'I heard it from a high official.'
He asked the official, who knew only that it was an old verse.
Yao returned to his palace, summoned Shun and, because of what he had seen, abdicated the Empire. Shun made no formal excuses and accepted at once.

Kuan-yin said:

'If nothing within you stays rigid,
Outward things will disclose themselves.
Moving, be like water.
Still, be like a mirror.
Respond like an echo.'

Therefore this Way is accord with other things. Things make themselves go counter to the Way, the Way does not go counter to things. The man who successfully accords with the Way uses neither eyes nor ears, neither effort nor mind. If, wishing to accord with the Way, you seek it by means of sight and hearing, body and knowledge, you will not hit on it.

> Peer at it in front of you,
> Suddenly it is behind you.
> Use it, and it will fill every quarter of the void;
> Neglect it, and you will never know where it is.

It is not something that the presence of the mind can dismiss and the absence of the mind can bring nearer. It is grasped only by one who grasps it in silence and lets it mature naturally.

To know without passion, be able but not Do, is truly knowing and truly being able. Discard ignorance, and how can you feel passion? Discard inability, and what can you Do? To be like a heap of clods or a pile of dust is perverse, even though it is Doing Nothing.

5

The Questions of T'ang

The universe is infinite in space and time. Outside heaven and earth, who knows whether there may not be a greater heaven and earth? Beyond the narrow range of human perception there must be things too large or small for us to see; who knows whether there may not be insects so minute that they can settle in swarms on the eyelashes of mosquitoes? The *Questions of T'ang* is a prolonged assault against the unenlightened man's ignorance of the limitations of prosaic, everyday knowledge, beginning with a discussion of infinity (the only analytic reasoning in the *Lieh-tzŭ* which, against all the author's principles, is intended seriously), continuing with myths, folk tales and reports of monstrous animals and trees, proceeding to accounts of the strange customs of remote peoples, then to a tale which shows that even Confucius did not know everything, at last to a sequence of tall stories about anglers, surgeons, musicians, craftsmen, archers, charioteers and swordsmen. It concludes, as a final proof of the futility of common sense, with the case of the jade-cutting knife and the fireproof cloth (asbestos), two articles which reached China from Central Asia not long before the *Lieh-tzŭ* was written, confounding hard-headed people who had refused to believe ancient records of their existence.

It must not be supposed that the *Lieh-tzŭ* belongs to an age in which marvels were taken for granted. The whole range of Chinese sensibility associated with Confucianism is thoroughly sensible, sceptical, contemptuous of fantasy; the ascendency of Confucianism indeed obliterated most of the ancient mythology

of China. The Taoist delight in the extraordinary is a protest against the imaginative poverty of Confucianism, a recovery of numinous wonder, a reversion to a primitive and child-like vision. Taoism cultivates naivety as it cultivates spontaneity. In particular its insistence that we can know only a minute fraction of an immeasurable universe serves as another weapon against the pretensions of ordinary common-sense knowledge. This is the point stressed by the commentator Chang Chan, who is well aware that the fantasies of this chapter will not appeal to everyone. 'How can anyone suppose,' he asks, apostrophising Lieh-tzŭ, 'that you engage in pointless extravagances simply from a love of marvels and esteem for the extraordinary? Alas, when even Lao-tzŭ and Chuang-tzŭ are ridiculed by critics of the age, how can you escape?'

A second theme, which falls out of sight early in the chapter, is the relativity of judgments. Everthing is bigger than some things and smaller than others, similar to other things if you take account of resemblances and unlike them if you take account of differences, good by some standards and bad by others. In some parts of the *Chuang-tzŭ* this is the basic argument against analytic thought—it is useless to conceive alternatives because neither of them will be right or wrong. *The Questions of T'ang* assumes, without developing it further, the relativism of such passages as this:

> From the point of view of the Tao, no thing is noble or base. From the point of view of things, each considers itself noble and others base. From the point of view of conventions, nobility and baseness do not depend on oneself. From the point of view of degree, if you judge them arguing from positions where they are big (judge in relation to smaller things), all things are big; if you argue from positions where they are small, all things are small. If you know that heaven and earth may be treated as a tiny grain, and the tip of a hair as a hill or a mountain, estimates of degree will be graded.

From the point of view of their functions, if you judge them arguing from those which they have, all things have them; if you judge them arguing from those which they lack, all things lack them. If you know that East and West are opposites yet cannot do without each other, the allotment of functions will be decided.

From the point of view of tastes, if you judge them arguing from positions where they are right (judge in relation to people who approve them), all things are right; if you argue from positions where they are wrong, all things are wrong. If you know that the sage Yao and the tyrant Chieh each considered himself right and the other wrong, standards of taste will be seen in proportion)

The Emperor T'ang of Yin asked Chi of Hsia:

'Have there always been things?'

—If once there were no things, how come there are things now? Would you approve if the men who live after us say there are no things now?'

'In that case, do things have no before and after?' (1)

—'The ending and starting of things
Have no limit from which they began.
The start of one is the end of another,
The end of one is the start of another.
Who knows which came first?

But what is outside things, what was before events, I do not know.'

'In that case, is everything limited and exhaustible above and below and in the eight directions?'

—'I do not know.'

[1] *Chuang-tzŭ*, ch. 17.

When T'ang pressed the question, Chi continued:

—'It is Nothing which is limitless, Something which is inexhaustible. (2) How do I know this? ... (3) But also there is nothing limitless outside what is limitless, and nothing inexhaustible within what is inexhaustible. (4)

'There is no limit, but neither is there anything limitless; there is no exhausting, but neither is there anything inexhaustible. That is why I know that they are limitless and inexhaustible, yet do not know whether they may be limited and exhaustible.'

Notes. (r) If there was no absolute beginning, we cannot say which came first, day or night, spring or autumn, birth or death.

(a) Empty space has no limits, bodies are infinitely divisible. For the latter point, cf. a proposition of the dialectician Hui Shih (c. 300 B.C.):

'If you daily take away half of a stick a foot long, you will not come to the end of it for ten thousand generations.'

(3) A proof of infinity must have fallen out before the 'But ...'.

The commentator Chang Chan seems to refer to the missing passage:

'Since it is called Nothing, how can there be an outside? Since it is called Void, how can there be anything within it?'

In his final comment on the questions about infinity, Chang Chan mentions that the dialogue affirms the principle of 'No inside' and 'No outside'. These phrases do not occur in the present text, but they are found in a proposition of Hui Shih:

The absolutely large has no outside; it is called the largest One. The absolutely small has no inside; it is called the smallest One.'

The *Chuang-tzŭ* (ch. 17) criticises this:

'Debaters of the age all say: "The absolutely fine **has** no shape, the absolutely large cannot be embraced.". . . Fineness and coarseness are confined to what has shape. What has no shape number cannot divide, what cannot be embraced number cannot set bounds to.'

From these clues we can make a guess at the nature of the lost argument. There is no limit where there is nothing at all; there are limits only where there are bodies to limit. On the other hand, there is no point of exhaustion in taking away parts from a body, since a body however small is not a void, and therefore has something inside it. Empty space is limitless, bodies are inexhaustible.

(4) After affirming infinity Chi proceeds to refute it (cf. Hui Shih: 'The South is boundless yet has bounds'). If a whole is infinite, the parts are infinite. But an infinite space cannot **have** other infinite spaces outside it;

and inside an infinite aggregate of parts, every aggregate must be less than infinite.

Chinese arguments of this kind present great difficulties of interpretation. In this section I have made a point of translating very literally, and confining my interpretations (which are disputable) as far as possible to the notes.

'What is there outside the four seas?'

'Countries like the Middle Kingdom.'

'What is your evidence for that?

—I have travelled East as far as Ying; the people were the same as here. When I asked what lay East of Ying, it proved to be the same as Ying. I have travelled West as far as Pin; the people were the same as here. When I asked what lay West of Pin, it proved to be the same as Pin. This is how I know that the four seas, the four borderlands, the four limits, are no different from here. Therefore everything contains something smaller, and is contained in something larger, without bound or limit. Heaven and earth contain the myriad things, and are contained in the same way by something else, which contains both the myriad things and heaven and earth, and is therefore unbounded and limitless. Besides, how do I know that beyond heaven and earth there is not a greater heaven and earth? That is another thing I do not know.

'It follows that heaven and earth are "things" like the things within them; and things have imperfections. That is why in ancient times Nii-kua smelted stones of all the five colours to patch up the flaws, and cut off the feet of the turtle to support the four corners. Afterwards, when Kung-kung was fighting Chuan-hsŭ for the Empire, he knocked against Mount Pu-chou in his rage, breaking one of the pillars of heaven, snapping one of the threads which support the earth. For this reason heaven leans North West, and the sun, moon and stars move in that direction; the earth does not fill the South East, so the rivers and the rainfloods find their home there.'

T'ang asked again:

'Are there large things and small, long and short, similar and different?'

— To the East of the Gulf of Chih-li, who knows how many thousands and millions of miles, there is a deep ravine, a valley truly without bottom; and its bottomless underneath is named "The Entry to the Void". The waters of the eight corners and the nine regions, the stream of the Milky Way, all pour into it, but it neither shrinks nor grows. Within it there are five mountains, called Tai-yii, Yiian-chiao, Fang-hu, Ying-chou and P'eng-lai. These mountains are thirty thousand miles high, and as many miles round; the tablelands on their summits extend for nine thousand miles. It is seventy thousand miles from one mountain to the next, but they are considered close neighbours. The towers and terraces upon them are all gold and jade, the beasts and birds are all unsullied white; trees of pearl and garnet always grow densely, flowering and bearing fruit which is always luscious, and those who eat of it never grow old and die. The men who dwell there are all of the race of immortal sages, who fly, too many to be counted, to and from from one mountain to another in a day and a night. Yet the bases of the five mountains used to rest on nothing; they were always rising and falling, going and returning, with the ebb and flow of the tide, and never for a moment stood firm. The immortals found this troublesome, and complained about it to God. God was afraid that they would drift to the far West and he would lose the home of his sages. So he commanded Ya-ch'iang to make fifteen giant turtles carry the five mountains on their lifted heads, taking turns in three watches, each sixty thousand years long; and for the first time the mountains stood firm and did not move.

But there was a giant from the kingdom of the Dragon Earl, who came to the place of the five mountains in no more than a few strides. In one throw he hooked six of the turtles in a bunch,

hurried back to his country carrying them together on his back, and scorched their bones to tell fortunes by the cracks. Thereupon two of the mountains, Tai-yii and Yiian-chiao, drifted to the far North and sank in the great sea; the immortals who were carried away numbered many millions. God was very angry, and reduced by degrees the size of the Dragon Earl's kingdom and the height of his subjects. At the time of Fu-hsi and Shen-nung, the people of this country were still several hundred feet high.

'Four hundred thousand miles Eastward from the Middle Kingdom, we come to the kingdom of Chiao-yao, where the people are one foot five inches high. In the far North East there are people called the Cheng, who are nine inches high. To the South of Ch'u there is the *ming-ling* tree, which grows through a spring of five hundred years, declines through an autumn of five hundred years. In ancient times there was a great *ch un* tree, whose spring and autumn were eight thousand years each. There is a fungus which grows in manure, which is born in the morning and dies by evening. In the spring and summer months there are gnats which are born when it rains and die when they see the sun. To the North of the utmost North there is an ocean, the Lake of Heaven. There is a fish there, several thousand miles broad and long in proportion, named the *k'un.* There is a bird there named the *p'eng,* with wings like clouds hanging from the sky, and a body big in proportion.

'How is the world to know that such things exist? The Great Yii saw them in his travels, Po-yi knew of them and named them, Yi-chien heard of them and recorded them.

'Between the shores of the Yangtse river minute insects breed, named *chiao-ming,* which fly in swarms and gather on the eyelashes of mosquitoes without jostling each other, coming to perch and leaving without the mosquitoes noticing. Li Chu and Tzŭ-yii rubbed the corners of their eyes and lifted their eyebrows

peering after them by day, but could not see their shapes. Chih Yii and the Music-master K'uang scratched out their ears and bowed their heads to listen for them at night, but could not hear a sound. Only the Yellow Emperor and Jung-ch'eng-tzŭ, when they were living on Mount K'ung-t'ung, after fasting together for three months, till their hearts were dead and their bodies withered, watched at ease with the spirit within them and saw them as massive as the ranges of Mount Sung, listened at ease with the forces within them and heard them crashing as loud as thunder.

In the countries of Wu and Ch'u there is a big tree named the pumelo. It is a green tree which does not fade in winter; its fruit is red and tastes sour, and eating its skin and juice cures fits. It is treasured in the midlands, but when planted North of the Huai it changes into a dwarf orange. Mynahs do not cross the Chi, and badgers die when they cross the Wen. It is climate which causes this.

However, although the shapes and energies of things differ, they are equal by nature, none can take the place of another, all are born perfect in themselves, each is allotted all its needs. How do I know whether they are large or small, long or short, similar or different?'

The mountains T'ai-hsing and Wang-wu are seven hundred miles square, and seven hundred thousand feet high. They stood originally between Chi-thou on the North and Ho-yang on the South. When Mister Simple of North Mountain was nearly ninety, he was living opposite them; and it vexed him that, with the North flank of the mountains blocking the road, it was such a long way round to come and go. He called together the family and made a proposal:

Do you agree that we should make every effort to level the

high ground, so that there is a clear road straight through to South of YU and down to the South bank of the Han river?'

They all agreed. But his wife raised difficulties:

'You are too weak to reduce even the smallest hillock; what can you do with T'ai-hsing and Wang-wu? Besides, where will you put the earth and stones?'

They all answered:

'Throw them in the tail of the Gulf of Chih-li, North of Yin-t'u.'

Then, taking his son and grandson as porters, he broke stones and dug up earth, which they transported in hods and baskets to the tail of the Gulf of Chih-li. The son of their neighbour Mr Ching-ch'eng, born to his widow after his death, and now just cutting his second teeth, ran away to help them.

Mister Simple did not come home until the hot season had given way to the cold. Old Wiseacre of River Bend smiled and tried to stop him, saying:

'How can you be so unwise? With the last strength of your declining years, you cannot even damage one blade of grass on the mountains; what can you do to stones and earth?'

Mister Simple of North Mountain breathed a long sigh, and said:

'Certainly your mind is set too firm for me ever to penetrate it. You are not even as clever as the widow's little child. Even when I die, I shall have sons surviving me. My sons will beget me more grandsons, my grandsons in their turn will have sons, and these will have more sons and grandsons. My descendants will go on for ever, but the mountains will get no bigger. Why should there be any difficulty about levelling it?'

Old Wiseacre of River Bend was at a loss for an answer.

The mountain spirits which carry snakes in their hands heard about it, and were afraid he would not give up. They reported it to God, who was moved by his sincerity, and commanded the

two sons of K'ua-erh to carry the mountains on their backs and put one in Shuo-tung, the other in Yung-nan. Since this time there has been no high ground from Chi-thou in the North to the South bank of the Han river.

K'ua-fu, rating his strength too high, wanted to chase the daylight, and pursued it to the brink of the Yii valley. (I) He was thirsty and wished to drink, and hurried to drink the Yellow River and the Wei. The Yellow River and the Wei did not quench his thirst, and he ran North intending to drink the Great Marsh, but died of thirst on the road before he reached it. The staff which he dropped soaked up the fat and flesh of his corpse and grew into Teng forest. Teng forest spread until it covered several thousand miles.

Note. *(a)* Yii-yiian, where the setting sun goes for the night. K'ua-fu is variously described as a divine animal, and as a man wearing a pair of snakes as earrings and carrying another pair in his hands.

The Great Yii said:

'Within the six directions, inside the four seas, everything is lit by the sun and moon, traversed by the stars, ordered by the four seasons, presided over by the Year Star. The things which divine intelligence begets differ in shape and in length of life; only the sage can understand their Way.'

Chi of Hsia said:

'But there are also those which do not need the divine intelligence to beget them, nor the Yin and Yang to shape them, nor sun and moon to light them; which die young without needing an executioner to kill them, live long without needing anyone to welcome or see them off; which do not need the five grains for

food, nor floss silk for clothing, nor boat and car for travel. Their Way is to be as they are of themselves; it is beyond the sage's understanding.

When Yii was draining the Flood, he blundered and lost his way, and came by mistake to a country on the Northern shore of the North sea, who knows how many thousands and myriads of miles from the Middle Kingdom. The name of this country is Utmost North; I do not know where its borders lie. It has no wind and rain, frost and dew; it does not breed any species of bird or beast, fish or insect, grass or tree. The country is flat in all directions, with high ranges all around it; and right in the middle is a mountain named Urn Peak, shaped like a pot with a small mouth. On the summit there is an opening, round like a bracelet, which is named the Cave of Plenty. Waters bubble out of it, named the Divine Spring, which smell sweeter than orchids and spices, taste sweeter than wine and musk. Four streams divide from the one source, flow down the mountain and irrigate every corner of the country.

The climate is mild, and there are no epidemics. The people are gentle and compliant by nature, do not quarrel or contend, have soft hearts and weak bones, are never proud or envious. Old and young live as equals, and no one is ruler or subject; men and women mingle freely, without go-betweens and betrothal presents. Living close to the waters, they have no need to plough and sow, nor to weave and clothe themselves, since the climate is so warm. They live out their span of a hundred years, without sickness and early deaths; and the people proliferate in countless numbers, knowing pleasure and happiness, ignorant of decay, old age, sorrow and anguish. By custom they are lovers of music; they hold hands and take turns to sing ballads, and never

stop singing all day. Hungry and tiring they drink the Divine Spring, and are soothed and refreshed body and mind, and so drunk, if they take too much, that they do not wake for ten days. When they bathe and wash their hair in the Divine Spring, their complexions grow sleek and moist, and the fragrant smell does not leave them for ten days. (I)

King Mu of Chou passed this country when he travelled North, and for three years forgot his home. When he returned to the royal household he yearned for this country and became restless and distracted, refusing his wine and meat, never calling his concubines; it was several months before he recovered. Later Kuan Chung, taking advantage of a journey to Liao-k'ou, urged Duke Huan of Ch'i to go with him to that country, and they almost fixed a time to start. But Hsi P'eng protested:

'You will be leaving the broad and populous country of Ch'i, the splendour of its mountains and rivers, the abundance of its thriving resources, its civilised manners and morals, its elegant robes and ornaments. Beauty and enchantment fill your harem, loyalty and merit fill your court. Raise your voice, and a million foot-soldiers rise; a glance, a lift of the hand, and the other states obey you. Why should you long for somewhere else, abandoning the altars of Ch'i to follow a nation of barbarians? This is a senile whim of Kuan Chung; why should you follow it?'

Then Duke Huan changed his mind, and told Kuan Chung what Hsi P'eng had said. Kuan Chung answered:

'Of course this is beyond Hsi P'eng's understanding. I am afraid that we shall never know that country. But why care for the wealth of Ch'i? Why regard what Hsi P'eng says?'

Note. (1) Unlike other accounts of ideal communities in the DA-tail (cf pp. 34 ff.), this looks as though it may be inspired by confused reports of real primitive peoples, arousing the same nostalgia in Taoists as the early

reports of Polynesia did in Europe. The author, like an eighteenth-century *philosophe,* compares their customs favourably **with those of the civilised world.**

In the Southern kingdoms the people cut their hair short and go naked; in the Northern kingdoms they wear turbans and furs; in the Middle Kingdom they wear caps and skirts. The way in which the people of the nine regions make their living, whether they farm or trade, hunt or fish, is like wearing furs in winter and bean-cloth in summer, travelling by boat on water and by car on land; which of them is appropriate is grasped without speech and achieved by nature.

East of Yiieh is the country of Ch'e-mu. When a first son is born they cut him up and eat him; and they say that this will make the mother more fertile. When a grandfather dies, they carry off the grandmother on their backs and abandon her, saying: 'It is not right to live with the wife of a ghost.' South of Ch'u is the country of Yen-jen. When a parent or kinsman dies, they have failed in their duty as filial sons unless they strip off the flesh and throw it away before burying his bones. West of Ch'in is the country of Yi-ch'ii. When a parent or kinsman dies, they have failed in their duty as filial sons unless they collect a pile of firewood and burn him on it; and when the smoke goes up they say he has risen into the sky. These are official practices of the government and established customs among the people, but there is no need to find them strange.

When Confucius was travelling in the East, he saw two small children arguing and **asked** them the reason. One child said he thought that the sun is nearer to us at sunrise, the other that it is nearer at noon. The first child said:

'When the sun first rises it is as big as the cover of **a car; by**

noon it is as small as a plate or a bowl. Don't you think it must be nearer when it is big than when it is small?'

The other child answered:

'When the sun first rises the air is cool, by noon it is like dipping your hand in hot water. Don't you think it must be nearer when it is hot than when it is cool?'

Confucius could not decide the question. The two children laughed: 'Who says you are a learned man?'

Equalising the give and the pull is the ultimate principle of dealing with the world. The same applies to the things within it. '*Equalising.* Let a hair hang so that the give and pull are equal. Pull too hard, give too easily, and the hair will snap, because the give and pull are not equal. If they were kept equal, nothing that snaps would snap.' (i) Men doubt this, but there have been those who knew that it is so.

Chan Ho made a fishing line from a single thread of silk out of the cocoon, a hook from a beard of wheat, a rod from one of the pygmy bamboos of Ch'u, and baited it with a split grain of rice. He hooked a fish big enough to fill **a** cart, in the middle of a swift current in waters seven hundred feet deep. The line did not snap, the hook did not straighten out, the rod did not bend, because he let out and drew in the line following the pull and give of the water. The King of Ch'u marvelled when he heard of it, and summoned him to **ask** him the reason. Chan Ho told him:

'I heard my late father speak of P'u-chii-tzŭ's archery with a line attached to the arrow. Using a weak bow and thin line, and shaking the line so that it rode with the winds, he transfixed both of a pair of black cranes on the edge of a dark cloud—because his attention was concentrated and the movement of his hand equalised the give and the pull. I profited by this story, and took it as my model when I learned to fish. It took me five years to

learn all that there is to learn about this Way. When I overlook the river holding my rod, there are no distracting thoughts in my mind. I contemplate nothing but the fish. When I cast the line and sink the hook, my hand does not pull too hard nor give too easily, so that nothing can disturb it. When the fish see the bait on my hook, it is like sinking dust or gathered foam, and they swallow it without suspecting. This is how I am able to use weak things to control strong ones, light things to bring in heavy ones. If Your Majesty is really able to rule his state in the same way, he can turn the Empire within the span of his hand; what can give you trouble?'

'Good!' said the King of Ch'u.

Note. (r) From the *Mohist Canons* (3rd century B.C.), a collection of terms with definitions and problems with solutions (often touching logic and science) from the school of Mo-tzŭ.

Kung Hu of Lu and Ch'i Ying of Chao fell ill, and both asked P'ien Ch'iao to treat them. P'ien Ch'iao did treat them and when they had both recovered told them:

'You have just been suffering from diseases which attacked your organs from outside, and which of course medicine and the needle can cure. But you also have diseases which were born with you and **have** grown with the growth of your bodies; would you like me to treat them for you?'

'First tell us what makes you think so.'

'Your ambition is greater than your energy,' said P'ien Ch'iao to Kung Hu, 'so that you are capable of forming plans but seldom come to decisions. Ch'i Ying's energy is greater than his ambition, so that he rarely thinks ahead and comes to grief by acting irresponsibly. If I exchange your hearts you will benefit by the equalising of ambition and energy.' (1)

Then P'ien Ch'iao gave the two men drugged wine, and they

lost consciousness for three days. He cut open their breasts, pulled out their hearts, exchanged them, put them back, and applied a magic medicine. When they woke up they were as well as before.

The two men took their leave and went off home. Thereupon Kung Hu returned to Ch'i Ying's house and took possession of his wife and children, who did not recognise him. Ch'i Ying likewise returned to Kung Hu's house and took possession of his wife and children, who also did not recognise him. So the two families went to law against each other, and called on P'ien Ch'iao to explain. P'ien Ch'iao explained the cause, and the litigants were satisfied.

Note. (1) According to Chinese conceptions, mental functions are located in the heart instead of the brain; on the other hand the ch'i (breath, vitality, energy) is spread over the whole body.

When Hu Pa played the lute, the birds danced and the fishes bounded. Wen of Cheng heard this story, and left his family to travel as an apprentice with Music-master Hsiang. He would lay his fingers on the strings to tune them but for three years did not finish a piece.

'You may as well go home,' said Music-master Hsiang.

Wen put aside his lute with a sigh and answered:

'It is not the strings that I cannot tune, nor the piece that I cannot finish. What I have in mind is not in the strings, what I am aiming at is not in the notes. Unless I grasp it inwardly in my heart, it will not answer from the instrument outside me. That is why I dare not put out my hand to stir the strings. Let me stay a little longer and see if I do better later.'

Soon afterwards he saw Music-master Hsiang again.

'How are you getting on with the lute?' Hsiang asked.

'I've got it, let me show you.'

Then, during the spring, he touched the Autumn string and called up the note of the eighth month (I); a cool wind came suddenly, and fruit ripened on the bushes and trees. When autumn came he touched the Spring string and aroused the note of the second month; a warm breeze whirled gently, and the bushes and trees burst into flower. During the summer he touched the Winter string and called up the note of the eleventh month; frost and snow fell together and the rivers and lakes abruptly froze. When winter came he touched the Summer string, and aroused the note of the fifth month; the sunshine burned fiercely and the hard ice melted at once. When he was coming to the end he announced the Kung string and played the other four together; a fortunate wind soared, auspicious clouds drifted, the sweet dew fell, the fresh springs bubbled.

Then Music-master Hsiang slapped his chest and stepped high, saying:

'Sublime, your playing! Even the Music-master K'uang performing *the ch'ing-chiao* music, and Tsou Yen blowing the pitch-tubes (2), had nothing to add to this. They would have to put their lutes under their arms, take their pipes in their hands, and follow behind you.'

Notes. (i) Chinese music has a pentatonic scale in which the notes (exduding the first, Kung) are associated with the four seasons. Its absolute pitch depends on semitones blown through twelve pitch-tubes of standard lengths, associated with the twelve months. Each piece of music prescribes the semitone to which the Kung string is to be tuned.

(2) K'uang's performance of the *ch'ing-chiao* caused a drought which lasted three years. Tsou Yen, by blowing the pitch-tubes, warmed the climate of a country in the far North.

Hsiieh T'an studied singing under Ch'in Ch'ing. Before he had fathomed Ch'in Ch'ing's art he thought he had no more to learn, so took his leave and set off home. Ch'in Ch'ing raised no

objection; but as he presented his farewell gift at the crossroads outside the town, he sang a sad air beating the time. The sound shook the trees in the forest, the echoes stilled the drifting clouds. Then Hsiieh T'an apologised and asked to be taken back, and for the rest of his life never dared to speak of going home.

Ch'in Ch'ing turned to a friend and said:

'Once a woman named Erh of Han ran out of provisions while travelling East to Ch'i. She entered the capital through the Concord Gate, and traded her songs for a meal. When she left, the lingering notes curled round the beams of the gate and did not die away for three days; the by-standers thought that she was still there.

'She passed an inn, where the landlord insulted her. She therefore wailed mournfully in long-drawn-out notes; and all the people in the quarter, old and young, looked at each other sadly with the tears dripping down their faces, and could not eat for three days. They hurried after her and brought her back; and again she sang them a long ballad in drawn-out notes. The people of the whole quarter, old and young, could not help skipping with joy and dancing to handclaps, forgetting that they had been sad just before. Afterwards they sent her away with rich presents.

That is why even today the people of Concord Gate are good singers and funeral wailers, taking as their example the memory of Erh's singing.'

Po Ya was a good lute-player, and Chung Tzŭ-ch'i was a good listener. Po Ya strummed his lute, with his mind on climbing high mountains; and Chung Tzŭ-ch'i said:

'Good! Lofty, like Mount T'ai!'

When his mind was on flowing waters, Chung Tzŭ-ch'i said:

'Good! Boundless, like the Yellow River and the Yangtse!'

Whatever came into Po Ya's thoughts, Chung Tzŭ-ch'i always grasped it.

Po Ya was roaming on the North side of Mount T'ai; he was caught in a sudden storm of rain, and took shelter under a cliff. Feeling sad, he took up his lute and strummed it; first he composed an air about the persistent rain, then he improvised the sound of crashing mountains. Whatever melody he played, Chung Tzŭ-ch'i never missed the direction of his thought. Then Po Ya put away his lute and sighed:

'Good! Good! How well you listen! What you imagine is just what is in my mind. Is there nowhere for my notes to flee to?'

When King Mu of Chou made his royal tour of the West, he passed K'un-lun but did not reach Mount Yen. On the road back, before he arrived in the Middle Kingdom, someone introduced to him a craftsman named Yen-shih. King Mu received the craftsman and asked:

'What can you do?'

'Your Majesty may command what he pleases. But I have already made something, and I hope that Your Majesty will look at it first.'

'Bring it with you next time, and I will take a look at it with you.'

Next day Yen-shih asked to see the King. The King received him, and asked:

'Who is that man who has come with you?'

'It is something I made which can do tricks.'

The King looked at it in amazement; it was striding quickly looking up and down, undoubtedly it was a man. When the craftsman pushed its cheek it sang in tune; when he clasped its hand it danced in time; it did innumerable tricks, whatever it

pleased you to ask. The King thought it really was a man, and watched it with his favourite Seng-chi and his other concubines.

When the entertainment was about to end, the performer winked his eye and beckoned to the concubines in waiting on the King's left and right. The King was very angry, and wanted to execute Yen-shih on the spot. Yen-shih, terrified, at once cut open the performer and took it to pieces to show the King. It was all made by sticking together leather, wood, glue and lacquer, coloured white, black, red and blue. The King examined it closely; on the inside the liver, gall, heart, lungs, spleen, kidneys, intestines and stomach, on the outside the muscles, bones, limbs, joints, skin, teeth and hair, were all artificial, but complete without exception. When they were put together, the thing was again as he had seen it before. The King tried taking out its heart, and the mouth could not speak; tried taking out its liver, and the eyes could not see; tried taking out its kidneys, and the feet could not walk. The King was at last satisfied, and said with a sigh:

'Is it then possible for human skill to achieve as much as the Creator?'

He had it loaded into the second of his cars, and took it back with him.

Kung-shu Pan's ladder which reached the clouds, Mo-tzŭ's flying kite, seemed to them the utmost of which men are capable. When their disciples Tung-men Chia and Ch'in Ku-li heard of Yen-shih's skill, they told the two philosophers, who never dared to speak again of their accomplishments to the end of their lives, and always carried compass and square. *(1)*

Note. (1) Chang Chan (4th century A.D.) comments: 'Recently there have been people who say that man's intelligence is produced through a mechanism. Why? The achievements of Creation are extremely subtle, so that all the myriad varieties of things are developed, and their activities are boundless. Human techniques are rude and clumsy, and all they do is crudely move about things already fully shaped (cf. p. 65 above). But if

human skill could be perfected it would hardly fall short of Creation. But he is unwilling to fmd the same idea here. 'How can it mean that a thing does not have a spirit controlling it? This is very much mistaken.

It has been suggested that the story may be based on a very similar Indian story of an automaton in the Buddhist *Sheng-ching,* translated into Chinese in A.D. *285.* (There is a French translation of this by E. Chavannes, *Cinq Cents Contes et Apologues,* vol. *3, pp. 170-72.)*

Kan Ying was a great archer of ancient times. When he drew his bow, beasts lay on the ground and birds flew down without waiting for him to shoot. A disciple named Fei Wei learned archery from Kan Ying, and his skill surpassed his master's. (i) Chi Ch'ang in his turn was learning archery from Fei Wei.

Fei Wei told him:

'You must learn not to blink before you can start talking about archery.'

Chi Ch'ang went home and lay down on his back under his wife's loom, with his eye next to the pedal. After two years he did not blink even when the sharp point dropped to the corner of his eye. He told Fei Wei, who replied:

'It won't do yet. I shall not be satisfied until you learn how to look. Come and tell me when you can see the small as though it were big, the faint as though it were distinct.'

Chi Ch'ang hung a flea at his window by a hair from a yak's tail, and watched it from a distance with the sun behind it. Within ten days it was growing larger; at the end of three years it was as big as a cartwheel. When he observed other things in the same way, they were all hills and mountains. Then he shot at it with a bow tipped with horn from Yen and an arrow of *p eng* from the North, and pierced the flea's heart without snapping the thread. He told Fei Wei, who stepped high and slapped his chest, saying 'You've got it.'

After CM Ch'ang had learned all that Fei Wei could teach him,

he judged that only one man in the world was a match for himself. So he planned to kill Fei Wei. The two men met in the moorlands and shot at each other; their arrow-heads collided in mid-air and dropped to the ground without raising the dust. Fei Wei was the first to run out of arrows. Chi Ch'ang had one arrow left; when he shot it, Fei Wei interposed the tip of a bramble thorn and did not miss. Thereupon the two men threw aside their bows weeping, bowed down to each other on the road, and asked to become father and son. They drew blood from their arms and took an oath never to reveal their arts to other men.

Note. (i) A story attributed to the *Lieh-tzŭ* in the old encyclopedia *T'ai-p'ing yii-lan* (ch. *35o)* perhaps originally stood in the position of this sentence:

'Fei Wei learned archery from Kan Ying. He was skilled in all his master's methods, except that Kan Ying did not teach him his method of catching arrows between his teeth. Wei secretly took an arrow and shot at Ying. Ying caught the arrowhead between his teeth and shot it back at Wei. Wei ran round a tree, and the arrow swerved round the tree after him.'

The charioteer Tsao-fu's teacher was called T'ai-tou. When Tsao-fu first practised charioteering under him, he behaved with extreme humility, but for three years T'ai-tou told him nothing. He behaved even more punctiliously, and finally T'ai-tou told him:

'An old poem says:

> 'The son of a good bow-maker
> Must begin by making baskets.
> The son of a good blacksmith
> Must begin by making chisels."

'First watch me run; you will not be able to hold six bridles and drive six horses until you can run like me.'

'I will obey whatever you command,' Tsao-fu answered.

Then T'ai-tou set up a row of posts, just big enough to stand on, the length of a stride apart. He ran backwards and forwards stepping from one to the next without stumbling. Tsao-fu practised it and could do it perfectly in three days.

'How nimble you are!' T'ai-tou said. 'You have picked it up quickly! Charioteering is just the same. When you were running just now, you responded with your mind to what you felt in your feet. Applying this to charioteering, you must control the bridle from the point where it meets the bit, and pull tight or slacken feeling the corners of the lips; decision must come from within your breast and execution from within the palm of your hand. What you sense within in your innermost heart will accord outside with the horse's temper. In this way you will be able to advance and withdraw treading a stretched cord, and wheel round as exactly as a compass, take the road on far journeys and have strength and breath to spare; you will truly have mastered this art.

'If you respond with the bridle to what you feel in the bit, with the hand to what you feel in the bridle, with the mind to what you feel in the hand, then you will see without eyes and urge without a goad; relaxed in mind and straight in posture, holding six bridles without confusing them, you will place the twenty-four hooves exactly where you want them, and swing round, advance and withdraw with perfect precision. Only then will you be able to drive carving a rut no wider than the chariot's wheel, on a cliff which drops at the edge of the horse's hoof, never noticing that mountains and valleys are steep and plains and marshland are flat, seeing them as all the same. This is all I have to teach; remember it!'

Hei Luan of Liang had a private grudge against Ch'iu Ping-

chang and killed him. The dead man's son Lai-tan sought means to avenge his father. Lai-tan had a fierce temper but a skinny body; he ate his rice counting the grains, and was too weak to run against the wind. In spite of his anger, he was incapable of taking up arms to revenge himself; but he was ashamed to depend on other men's strength, and swore to butcher Hei Luan with his own hand and sword. Hei Luan had a savage disposition quite out of the ordinary, strength equal to a hundred men, and muscles, bones, skin and flesh which were more than human. He would stretch out his neck to meet the sword, bare his breast to receive the arrows; and the edge would bend and the points break without leaving a scar or a scratch on his body. Proud of his strength, he treated Lai-tan as though he were a chick or a fledgeling.

Lai-tan's friend Shen T'o said to him:

'You utterly hate Hei Luan. The way he slights you is beyond endurance. How are you going to deal with him?'

'I wish you would advise me,' Lai-tan answered, weeping.

'I have heard that the grandfather of K'ung Chou of Wei won the treasured swords of the Yin Emperors. A single small boy with one of these swords at his side could drive back a whole army. Why not ask him for them?'

So Lai-tan went to Wei and saw K'ung Chou. Before making his request, he addressed K'ung Chou with the politeness of a servant or a groom, and offered him his wife and children as slaves.

'I have three swords,' K'ung Chou said. 'Choose whichever you like, but none of them can kill anyone. Let me start by describing them for you. The first is called "Container of Light". Look for it and it is invisible, swing it and you cannot tell it is there. When it hits something there is no cut whatever; it passes right through without the victim noticing. The second is called

"Receiver of Shadows". In the twilight just before dawn, between light and darkness when the sun goes in, if you scrutinise it with your back to the sun, there is a faint semblance of something there, but no one can recognise its shape. When it hits something there is a hissing sound, and it passes right through without hurting the victim. The third is called "Tempered by Night". By day you see its shadow but not its glitter, by night its glitter but not its shape. When it hits something, it passes through with a tearing sound, and the wound closes as soon as it has passed; the victim feels pain but there is no stain on the blade. These three treasures have been handed down through thirteen generations without being put to use: I have kept them in their cases and never broken the seals.'

'Nevertheless,' said Lai-tan, 'I must ask you for the third one.'

Then K'ung Chou made him take back his wife and children, fasted with him for seven days, and at twilight on the seventh day knelt down and presented the least of his three swords. Lai-tan prostrated himself twice, took it, and returned home.

So Lai-tan went looking for Hei Luan with the sword in his hand. Picking a time when Hei Luan was lying drunk under his window, he slashed him three times from neck to waist. Hei Luan did not wake up.

Lai-tan thought that his enemy was dead and hurried out. He met Hei Luan's son at the gate and struck him three times; it was like beating the air. Hei Luan's son asked with a smile:

'Why did you wave your hand at me three times in that funny way?'

Lai-tan understood that the sword could not kill a man, and went home sighing. After Hei Luan sobered up, he said angrily to his wife:

'You didn't cover me up when I was drunk; it has given me a sore throat and my waist hurts.'

'When Lai-tan came yesterday,' his son said, 'he waved his

hand at me three times, and it gave me a pain in my body too, and my arms and legs are stiff. He must have put a curse on me!'

When King Mu of Chou made his great expedition against the Jung tribes of the West, they presented him with a knife from K'un-wu and a fire-proof cloth. The knife was one foot eight inches long with a red blade of tempered steel; cutting jade with it was as easy as cutting mud. The fire-proof cloth could be washed only by throwing it into fire; the cloth turned the colour of the fire, the dirt turned the colour of ash; take it from the fire and shake it, and it glistened like snow.

A Prince thought there were no such things, that the tradition was mistaken. Hsiao Shu said: 'How obstinate the Prince is in trusting his own judgement, how obstinate in his false reasoning!' (1)

Note. (I) Huang-tzil, translated 'Prince', could also be taken as a proper name. But it is likely that the author, although professing to be writing much earlier, wishes his readers to be reminded of Ts'ao P'i, who became the Emperor Wen (22o–226) of the Wei dynasty. Ts'ao P'i doubted the records of jade-cutting knives and fire-proof cloth sent as tribute to earlier Emperors by Western tribes. He was confounded by the arrival of both shortly afterwards.

The commentator Chang Chan notes: 'Concluding the chapter with this section explaining the jade-cutting knife and fire-proof cloth is to show that, since there is nothing fabulous about these two things, everything recounted earlier is fact also.'

6

Endeavour and Destiny

The Chinese word for 'destiny' is *t'ien-ming*, 'the decree of heaven', often reduced to *ming* alone, 'the decree'. Behind it is the image of heaven ruling events as the Emperor, the 'son of heaven', rules men. But heaven is only vaguely personal even for Confucians, and quite impersonal for Taoists. In the *Lieh-tzŭ* the 'decree' is a pure metaphor; events either happen 'of themselves', spontaneously, or are the effects of human endeavour, and are 'decreed' if they belong to the former class.

Where to place the dividing line between 'heaven' and 'man', the 'decree of heaven' and 'human action', is one of the constant problems of Chinese thought. According to Confucianism, whether we act rightly or wrongly depends on ourselves, but whether our actions lead to wealth or poverty, long life or early death, is decreed by heaven.[1] The Mohist school rejected this limited fatalism, claiming that wealth and long life also depend on ourselves, since they are heaven's reward's for righteous conduct. Both these theories of destiny are designed to encourage moral endeavour. Mohism, like the great Western and West Asiatic religions, promises rewards for the good. Confucianism, recognising that good is not always rewarded in practice, argues from a different direction, claiming that it is a mistake to let selfish considerations distract us from acting morally, since wealth and long life are the gifts of destiny, and no endeavour can bring them nearer.

Taoists are less interested in the problem of destiny, and it is

[1] Cf. p. 76.

interesting to find in the *Lieh-tzŭ* a complete theory which can stand beside those of the other schools. Its central point is that all endeavour is powerless against destiny. It is useless to weigh benefit and harm, right and wrong; the result will be the same whatever you do. If you fall ill, don't bother to call a doctor; you will recover if you are destined to recover. This extreme fatalism is something quite unusual in Chinese philosophy, although the sceptic Wang Ch'ung (born A.D. 27), an independent thinker who criticised all the schools, held a very similar position. Lu Ch'ung-hsiian, who wrote a commentary on the *Lieh-tzŭ* for the Taoist Emperor Ming-huang (713-755), found the fatalism of this chapter as detestable as the hedonism of the next.

At first sight such an extreme fatalism, like the Taoist principle of 'Doing Nothing', seems to be an invitation to complete inertia. On closer inspection we see that it is designed to encourage spontaneity in the same way that the Confucian and Mohist theories are designed to encourage moral endeavour. Fatalism disturbs us because it undermines our faith in the value of the moral choice. However, we do not mind hearing that actions are destined, if they are of a kind outside the range of conscious decision; the claim that a man may be destined to commit a murder no doubt alarms us, the suggestion that he may be fated to fall in love with a particular woman on the contrary has a romantic charm. But the *Lieh-tzŭ* directly repudiates conscious choice; it advises us to develop the capacity to respond without conceiving alternatives, and activities which are spontaneous in the sense of being unpremeditated are just those which we do not mind admitting are predictable. If we ought to train ourselves to allow our actions to be 'so of themselves', 'destined' instead of forced by conscious endeavour, then pure fatalism is healthy instead of baleful, precisely because it undermines our faith in the utility of conscious choice. Thus fatalism (like Calvinist

predestination and Marxist determinism) paradoxically provides a motive for disciplining oneself for a certain kind of action.

Chinese theories of destiny seldom touch the problem of free will. They assume the capacity to choose; the question is whether the success or failure of the chosen course of action is due to heaven or to man. But the *Lieh-tzŭ* comes near to crossing the line which separates fatalism from predestination and determinism. This chapter ends with the pronouncement that aims as well as achievements are outside our control, since they depend on our situation; a man's situation makes him aim at profit if he is a merchant, at power if he is an official. A series of anecdotes illustrates the claim that certain famous men who are praised for making the right choice in fact had no choice. However, in the last resort the author does not deny that we can choose if we make the mistake of supposing that it will benefit us to do so. His point is rather that we ought not to choose. The true Taoist empties his mind of all subjective principles, attends to the external situation with perfect concentration, and responds to it without conceiving alternatives. It is usual to praise Duke Huan of Ch'i (685-643 B.C.) for his lack of prejudice when he made his enemy Kuan Chung chief minister. But he wanted to become master of the Empire, and only Kuan Chung could achieve this for him. No doubt he could have acted differently, if he had let subjective preferences distort his vision; but if his mind accurately mirrored the objective situation, what choice had he?

'The highest man at rest is as though dead, in movement is like a machine.' The comparison with a machine recalls the story of the robot which performed before King Mu, and Chang Chan's comment that some of his contemporaries believed that the human organism is a mechanism without a spirit inside it.' It is at first sight surprising to find such a conception in a mystical philosophy. In the West this is an idea forced on us by science,

very offensive to moral, religious and aesthetic prejudices. Taoists, on the contrary, believe that there *ought* not to be any will preventing our actions from according with the Way like the movements of inanimate objects; the comparison with a mindless machine occurs naturally to them, even without the scientific basis which could give it plausibility. A Western example of a similar way of thinking is Kleist's essay *Uber das Marionetten Theater,* which argues that a puppet is more spontaneous than a living actor, since its movements depend on the interaction of parts, not on the mind of an actor thinking outside his role.

* * * *

Endeavour said to Destiny:

'How *can* your effect be as great as mine?'

'What effect on things do you have, that you should wish to compare yourself with me?'

'Whether a man lives long or dies young, succeeds or fails, has high rank or low, is poor or rich, all this is within the reach of my endeavour.'

'P'eng Tsu was no wiser than Yao and Shun, yet he lived eight hundred years; Yen Yŭan was no less talented than ordinary men, yet he died at eighteen. Confucius was no less virtuous than the feudal lords, but they distressed him in Ch'en and Ts'ai; the Yin Emperor Chou did not behave better than the three good ministers he executed, but he sat on the throne. Chi Cha had no rank in Wu, yet T'ien Heng became sole master of the state of Ch'i. Po Yi and Shu Ch'i starved to death on Mount Shou-yang, but the Chi family grew richer than Chan Ch'in. (I) If all this is within the reach of your endeavour, why did you give long life to one and early death to the other, why did you permit the sage to fail and villains to succeed, demean an able man and exalt a fool, impoverish good men and enrich a bad one?'

'If it is as you say, certainly I have no effect *on* things. But is it you who directs that things should be so?'

'When we say that a thing is destined, how can there be anyone who directs it? I push it when it is going straight, let it take charge when it is going crooked. Long life and short, failure and success, high rank and low, wealth and poverty, come about of themselves. What can I know about it? What can I know about it?'

Note. (1) P'eng Tsu is remembered only as the Chinese Methuselah.

For the sages Yao and Shun, and the tyrant Chou, see the chronological table.

Yen Yiian (Yen Hui) was the favourite disciple of Confucius (cf. pp. *75ff.).*

Chi Cha, youngest son of Viscount Shou-meng *(585-561 B.c.)* of Wu, was offered the throne of Wu on account of his virtue, but repeatedly declined it in deference to his three elder brothers, who occupied it in turn.

The minister T'ien Heng killed Duke Chien of Ch'i in *481* B.C. and set up a puppet in his place. The T'ien line became Dukes of Ch'i in name as well as in fact from *375* B.C.

Po Yi and Shu Chi were brothers who both refused the fief of Ku-chu, Shu Ch'i because he was the younger, Po Yi because their father had named Shu Ch'i as his heir. On the fall of the Yin (?1122 B.C.) they refused to recognise the authority of the new dynasty, fled to Mount Shou-yang, and starved to death.

Chan Ch'in (Liu-hsia Hui), Leader of the Knights in Lu, was three times dismissed because of his uncompromising honesty. The unscrupulous Chi family, on the other hand, won control of the state and forced Duke Chao *(541-510 B.C.)* of Lu into exile.

Pei-kung-tzŭ said to Hsi-men-tzŭ:

'I belong to the same generation as you, but it is you whom others help to success; to the same clan, but it is you whom they respect; we look the same, but it is you whom they love; we talk the same, but it is you whom they employ; we act the same, but it is you whom they trust. If we take office together, it is you whom they promote; if we farm together, you whom they

enrich; if we trade together, you whom they profit. I wear coarse wool and eat coarse millet, live in a thatched hut and go out on foot. You wear brocades and eat fine millet and meat, live under linked rafters and go out in a car with four horses. At home you complacently ignore me, in court you treat me with undisguised arrogance. Certainly it has been many years since we called on each other or made an excursion together. Is it because you think your worth greater than mine?'

'I have no way of knowing the truth of the matter. But whatever we undertake, you fail and I succeed. Does this perhaps show that there is more in me than in you? Yet you have the face to say that in every way you are the same as me.'

Pei-kung-tzŭ could find no answer, and went home lost in thought. On the road he met Master Tung-kuo, who asked him:

'Where have you come from, walking by yourself with such deep shame on your face?'

Pei-kung-tzŭ described what had happened.

'I am going to clear you of shame,' Master Tung-kuo said. 'Let us go back to Hsi-men-tzŭ and ask him some questions?'

He asked Hsi-men-tzŭ to explain why he had humiliated Pei-kung-tzŭ so deeply, and Hsi-men-tzŭ repeated what he **had** said to Pei-kung-tzŭ.

'When you say that one man has more in him than another,' Master Tung-kuo answered, 'you mean only that they are not equally gifted. What I mean is something different from this. Pei-kung-tzŭ has more worth than luck, you have more luck than worth. Your success is not due to wisdom, nor is his failure due to foolishness. Both are from heaven and not from man, yet you are presumptuous because you have more luck, while he is ashamed although he has more worth. Neither of you perceives the principle that things must be as they are.'

'Enough, Master!' said Hsi-men-tzŭ, 'I shall never dare to say it again.'

When Pei-kung-tzŭ got home, the coarse wool that he wore was as warm as the fur of fox or badger, the broad beans served to him were as tasty as rice or millet, the shelter of his thatched hut was as shady as a wide hall, the wicker-work cart on which he rode was as handsome as an ornamented carriage. He was content for the rest of his life, and no longer knew which was honoured and which despised, the other man or himself.

'Pei-kung-tzŭ has been fast asleep for a long time,' said Master Tung-kuo. 'But a man to whom you need to speak only once is easily awakened.'

Kuan Chung and Pao Shu-ya lived together in Ch'i as the closest of friends. Kuan Chung served Chiu, Pao Shu-ya served Hsiao-po, two of the sons of the Duke of Ch'i. There was much favouritism in the Duke's clan, and the sons of concubines were treated the same as the sons of his wife. The people were afraid that disorder would follow, and the Duke's son Chiu fled to Lu attended by Kuan Chung and a certain Shao Hu, while Hsiao-po fled to Chii attended by Pao Shu-ya.

Afterwards, when Kung-sun Wu-chin rebelled and there was no ruler in Ch'i, the two sons of the Duke contended for the throne. Kuan Chung fought a battle with Hsiao-po in Chŭ, and shot an arrow on the road which hit the buckle of Hsiao-po's belt. When Hsiao-po won the throne and became Duke Huan, he forced the people of Lu to kill his brother Chiu. Shao Hu committed suicide rather than survive his master, and Kuan Chung was imprisoned.

Pao Shu-ya said to Duke Huan:

'Kuan Chung is capable. He is fit to rule the state.

'He is my enemy, I wish to kill him.'

'I have heard that a worthy ruler has no personal grudges. Besides, a man who is capable of loyalty to his master will cer-

tainly be as capable of loyalty to another prince. If you wish to win hegemony among the rulers of the states, or the Imperial throne itself, you cannot do it without Kuan Chung. You must have him released.'

So the Duke called for Kuan Chung, and the people of Lu sent him back to Ch'i. Pao Shu-ya welcomed him outside the city and undid his chains. Duke Huan received him with all ceremony and gave him a position above the Kao and Kuo families, and Pao Shu-ya was content to be under him. Kuan Chung assumed responsibility for the government of the state and was given the name Chung-fu; and in due course Duke Huan attained hegemony among the rulers of the states.

Once Kuan Chung sighed and said:

'In my youth, when I was in difficulties, I used to trade in partnership with Pao Shu-ya. I took the larger share of the profits for myself, but he did not think me greedy, because he knew that I was poor. I used to plan enterprises for Pao Shu-ya, and got into still worse difficulties; but he did not think me a fool, because he knew that the times are not always favourable. I was in office three times, and three times was evicted by the Duke; but he did not think me worthless, because he knew that my opportunity had not come. I fought three battles and three times showed my back; but he did not think me a coward, because he knew that I had an old mother to support. When Chiu perished and Shao Hu committed suicide rather than survive him, I preferred the disgrace of imprisonment; but he did not think me shameless, because he knew that I was not embarrassed by small dishonours, but ashamed only that my name was not renowned throughout the world. It was my father and mother who bore me, but it is Pao Shu-ya who understands me.'

Consequently the world praised Kuan Chung and Pao Shu-ya for their skill in choosing allies, and Duke Huan for his skill in employing capable men. But really none of them was skilful in

either of these ways. This does not mean that anyone else has been more skilful in choosing allies or employing capable men. It is not that Shao Hu was able to give his life, he could not do otherwise; it is not that Pao Shu-ya was able to appoint a man of worth, he could not do otherwise; it is not that Duke Huan was able to employ his enemy, he could not do otherwise.

When Kuan Chung fell ill, Duke Huan asked him:

'Your illness is critical, it is time to say so directly. If it proves fatal, to whom should I hand over the state?'

'Whom would you prefer?'

'Pao Shu-ya might do.'

'No. His character is inflexibly moral to the point of bigotry. Anyone who is not as upright as himself he treats as less than human. If he once hears that a man has made a mistake he does not forget it for the rest of his life. If you let him govern the state, he will offend both yourself above him and the people below him; it will not be long before you find it necessary to punish him.'

'In that case whom would you suggest?'

'Unless you have someone better in mind Hsi P'eng will do. He is the sort of man who can forget his high position without those under him becoming insubordinate. He is ashamed that he is not as good as the Yellow Emperor, and is sorry for those who are not as good as himself.

The highest sage shares his moral possessions with others.
The next in wisdom shares his material possessions with others.
The man who because of his own wisdom looks down on others has never won men's hearts.
The man who in spite of his own wisdom is humble to others has never failed to win men's hearts.

Hsi P'eng does not want to be told everything which is wrong

with the state, does not want to notice everything which is wrong with his own family. Unless you have someone better in mind, Hsi P'eng will do.'

Thus it was not that Kuan Chung neglected Pao Shu-ya and favoured Hsi P'eng; he could not have treated them otherwise. Some whom we favour at first we end by neglecting, some whom we end by neglecting we favour at first. The alternations of favour and neglect do not depend on ourselves.

Teng Hsi maintained ambiguous assertions and never ran out of arguments to support them. When Tzŭ-ch'an was chief minister in Cheng, Teng Hsi wrote a code of laws on bamboo slips; the state adopted it. He often criticised Tzŭ-ch'an's administration; Tzŭ-ch'an bowed to his criticisms. But suddenly Tzŭ-ch'an arrested and executed him.

Thus it is not that Tzŭ-ch'an was able to adopt his law code, nor that Teng Hsi was able to make him bow to criticism, nor that Tzŭ-ch'an was able to execute Teng Hsi; they could not have acted otherwise.

To live and die at the right time is a blessing from heaven. Not to live when it is time to live, not to die when it is time to die, is a punishment from heaven. Some get life and death at the right times, some live and die when it is not time to live and die. But it is neither other things nor ourselves that give us life when we live and death when we die; both are destined, wisdom can do nothing about them. Hence it is said:

`Inscrutably, in endless sequence,
They come to pass of themselves by the Way of Heaven.
Indifferently, the unbroken circle
Turns of itself by the Way of Heaven.
Heaven and earth cannot offend against this,

The wisdom of sages cannot defy this,
Demons and goblins cannot cheat this.
Being of themselves as they are
Silently brings them about,
Gives them serenity, gives them peace,
Escorts them as they go and welcomes them as they come.

Yang Chu's friend Chi Liang fell ill. After seven days, when the crisis arrived, his sons stood in a circle round him weeping and asking him to call a doctor. 'Look how foolish my sons are!' Chi Liang said to Yang Chu. 'Why don't you compose a song for me which will help them to understand?'

Yang Chu sang:

'What heaven does not know
How can man discern?
Blessings do not come from heaven,
Nor calamities from the sins of men.
Is it you and I who are ignorant?
Do doctors and shamans understand?'

Chi Liang's sons did not see the point, and finally called three doctors named Chiao, Yii and Lu to feel his pulse and diagnose the illness.

Mr Chiao said to Chi Liang:

'Your temperature, and the filling and emptying of your vital forces, are out of order. The illness is due to irregular meals, sexual over-indulgence, and worrying too much. It is not the work of heaven or of spirits, and although critical it can be cured.

'The usual sort of doctor!' said Chi Liang. 'Get rid of him at once.'

Mr Yii said:

'At your birth there was too little vital fluid in your mother's

womb and too much milk in your mother's breast. The illness is not a matter of one morning or evening; its development has been gradual and is irreversible.'

'A good doctor!' said Chi Liang. 'Let him stay for dinner.'

Mr Lu said:

'Your illness is not from heaven, nor from man, nor from spirits. Ever since you were endowed with life and a body, you have known what it is that governs them. What can medicine and the needle do for you?'

'A divine doctor!' said Chi Liang. 'Send him off with a rich present.'

Soon afterwards Chi Liang's illness mended of itself.

Valuing life cannot preserve it, taking care of the body cannot do it good; scorning life cannot shorten it, neglecting the body cannot do it harm. Hence some who value life do not live, some who scorn it do not die, some who take care of the body do it no good, some who neglect it do it no harm. This seems unreasonable, but it is not; in these cases life and death, good and harm, come of themselves.

Some value life and live, some scorn it and die, some take care of the body and do it good, some neglect it and do it harm. This seems only reasonable but it is not; in these cases also life and death, good and harm, come of themselves.

Yii Hsiung said to King Wen:

'What is long of itself we have not increased, what is short of itself we have not reduced. Estimating chances makes no difference.'

Lao-tzŭ said to Kuan-yin:

'When heaven hates someone
Who knows the reason?'[1]

Tao-te-ching 73

They meant that there is no point in trying to accord with the will of heaven, and measuring the benefit or harm of what we do.

Yang Pu asked his elder brother Yang Chu:

'Take the case of two men, who are as alike as brothers in age, speech, talents and appearance, yet as unlike as father and son in their time of death, rank, reputation, and the affection given them by others. I am perplexed by this.'

'There is a saying of the men of old,' Yang Chu answered, 'which I have kept in mind and shall tell you. "All that is so without us knowing why is destiny." All that happens for obscure and confused reasons, however we act or do not act, corning one day and gone the next no one knows why, is destiny. For the man who trusts destiny, there is no difference between long life and short; for one who trusts the principles by which things happen, nothing to approve or reject; for one who trusts his mind, nothing which is agreeable or offensive; for one who trusts his nature, nothing which secures or endangers him. Then we may say that there is nothing at all which he either trusts or distrusts. He is true, he is genuine; what should he shun or approach, enjoy or grieve over, do or not do?'

The Book of the Yellow Emperor says:

'The highest man at rest is as though dead, in movement is like a machine. He knows neither why he is at rest nor why he is not, why he is in movement nor why he is not. He neither changes his feelings and expression because ordinary people are watching, nor fails to change them because ordinary people are not watching. He comes alone and goes alone, comes out alone and goes in alone; what can obstruct him?'

Four men, Artful and Hothead, Sleepy and Wide-awake, went about together in the world, each following his own bent. To

the end of their lives they never understood each other, for each was satisfied of the profundity of his own wisdom.

Four men, Tricky and Simple, Tactless and Fawning, went about together in the world, each following his own bent. To the end of their lives they never discussed their methods, for each was assured of the subtlety of his own skill.

Four men, Underhand and Frank, Tongue-tied and Brow-beater, went about together in the world, each following his own bent. To the end of their lives they never explained themselves to each other, for each was convinced that his talents would win him success.

Four men, Cheeky and Stolid, Daring and Timid, went about together in the world, each following his own bent. To the end of their lives they never pointed out each other's faults, for each of them supposed that his conduct was irreproachable.

Four men, Hanger-on and By-himself, Privileged and On-his-own, went about together in the world, each following his own bent. To the end of their lives they never took a close look at each other, for each of them thought that his behaviour suited the times.

These various attitudes are outwardly very different, yet all these men travelled on the Way in the direction destined for them.

Success on one side seems to be success, but fundamentally it is not. Failure on one side seems to be failure, but fundamentally it is not. Hence error is born from seeming. The division between seeming and truth is confused; but if you are not confused by seeming, you will not be shocked when misfortune befalls you, will not rejoice in the good fortune you have achieved.

Wisdom cannot know the time to act and the time to stop. He who trusts destiny does not think of the things outside him in one way and of himself in another. Rather than think of them

in different ways, it is better to cover your eyes and stop up your ears, and stand with your back to the city wall facing the moat; you will not fall over.

Hence it is said: 'Death and life depend on destiny, riches and poverty depend on the times.' He who resents being cut off in his prime does not know destiny. He who resents poverty and distress does not know the times. To meet death unafraid, to live in distress without caring, is to know destiny and accept what time brings.

Men of much knowledge, who measure benefit and harm, estimate fact and falsehood, and calculate the feelings of others, lose as often as they win. Men of little knowledge, who do not, win as often as they lose. What difference does it make whether or not you measure, estimate and calculate? If only you measure nothing and so measure everything, you will be complete and without deficiency. But it is not by knowledge that one is complete or deficient; completeness and deficiency come of themselves.

Duke Ching of Ch'i went on an excursion to Ox Mountain. He looked Northward down on the walls of his capital, and said with tears streaming:

'How beautiful, this city of mine, teeming and thriving! Why must the drops fall one by one, why must I some day leave this city and die? If from of old there had been no death, should I ever leave it for another?'

Shih K'ung and Liang-ch'iu Chŭ both followed his example and wept, saying:

'Your servants owe it to your bounty that we are lucky enough to have tough meat and coarse rice to eat, jaded hacks and plain carriages to ride. Yet even we do not wish to die, and how much less our master!'

Yen-tzŭ alone was smiling to himself. The Duke wiped away his tears, turned to Yen-tzŭ and said:

'My excursion today has been a melancholy one. K'ung and Chi' both wept as I did; why should you alone be smiling?'

'If by merit we could hold on to life,' Yen-tzŭ answered, 'your ancestors T'ai-kung and Duke Huan would have lived for ever. If by courage we could hold on to life, Duke Chuang and Duke Ling would have lived for ever. If these princes had held on to life, my lord would now be standing in the ricefields wearing a grass coat and bamboo hat, caring about nothing but his work, with no time to think about death! For how does my lord come to be sitting on this throne? Because your ancestors occupied and left it one after another until it was your turn; and it is ignoble that you should be the only one to shed tears over it. I see an ignoble lord and flattering ministers; and this sight is the reason why I alone ventured to smile.'

Duke Ching was ashamed of himself. He lifted his winecup and sconced himself, and sconced his two ministers two cups each.

There was a man of Wei, Tung-men Wu, who did not grieve when his son died. His wife said to him:

'No one in the world loved his son as much as you did. Why do you not grieve now he is dead?'

'I used to have no son,' he answered, 'and when I had no son I did not grieve. Now that he is dead, it is the same as it was before when I had no son. Why should I grieve over him?

Farmers hurry to keep up with the seasons, merchants run after profit, craftsmen chase new skills, officials hunt power; the

pressure of their circumstances makes this so. But farmers meet with both water and drought, merchants with both gain and loss, craftsmen with both success and failure, officials with both good luck and ill; destiny makes this so.

7

Yang Chu

The 'Yang Chu' chapter is so unlike the rest of the *Lieh-tzŭ* that it must be the work of another hand, although probably of the same period (3rd or 4th century A.D.). Its message is very simple: life is short, and the only good reasons for living are music, women, fine clothes and tasty food. Their full enjoyment is hindered by moral conventions which we obey from an idle desire to win a good reputation in the eyes of others and fame which will outlast our deaths. If there is any philosophy which is near enough to the rock bottom of human experience to be the same through all variations of culture, this is it; and the author presents it with uncompromising lucidity. The 'Yang Chu' chapter is the one part of the *Lieh-tzŭ* in which everything is familiar, and we follow effortlessly nearly every turn of the thought without ever sensing elusive differences of preconception which obscure the point.

The historical Yang Chu (c. 350 B.C.) was the first important Chinese thinker who developed a philosophy for the individual disinclined to join in the struggle for wealth and power. Little is known of his teaching, which was submerged in Taoism during the next century. He seems to have held that, since external possessions are replaceable while the body is not, we should never permit the least injury to the body, even the loss of a hair, for the sake of any external benefit, even the throne of the Empire. For moralists such as the Confucians and Mohists, to refuse a throne would not be a proof of high-minded indifference to personal gain, but a selfish rejection of the opportunity to benefit the

people. They therefore derided Yang Chu as a man who would not sacrifice a hair even to benefit the whole world. On the other hand the Taoists of the 3rd century B.C. and later, also concerned with the cultivation of personal life, easily accepted Yang Chu as one of themselves. Outside this chapter the Yang Chu of the *Lieh-tzŭ is* a Taoist, although a group of sayings and stories in 'Explaining Conjunctions" shows some traces of his original doctrine.

When the hedonist author puts his very different theories into the mouth of Yang Chu he is merely following a recognised literary convention of his time. He expressed the same opinions through a dialogue between Kuan Chung (died *645 B.C.)* and Yen-tzŭ (died *493 B.C.),* although he must have known that these famous ministers of the state of Ch'i were not even contemporaries. However, there is evidence that the editor of the *Lieh-tzŭ* has expanded the hedonist document with five additions alternating with its last five sections, and that the first three of these are from older sources and concern the historical Yang Chu. Consequently there is danger of confusion, and in the present translation these passages (as well as a minor interpolation) are printed in italics in order to distinguish them.

The first of them is a dialogue between Yang Chu and Ch'in Ku-1i, the chief disciple of Mo-tzŭ (c. *479-c.* 381 B.C.). It is evidently from a Mohist source, among other reasons because the story is told from the side of Ch'in Ku-1i. This passage, in which Yang Chu refuses to give a hair to benefit the world, gives the false impression, if we overlook its separate origin, that the author of the 'Yang Chu' chapter was an amoral egoist as well as a hedonist. But there is nothing else in the chapter which supports this conclusion. The hedonist author is a rebel against all moral conventions which hinder sensual enjoyment, and an enemy of the respectability, the obsession with face, which the

Chinese and the English confuse with morality; but he wants pleasure for other men as well as for himself. In one story the voluptuary Tuan-mu Shu gives away all his possessions as soon as he is too old to enjoy them, and dies without the money for his own funeral; those whom he has helped then club together to restore the property to his children.

There is no sign of hedonism elsewhere in the *Lieh-tzŭ,* and the opening stories of the 'Yellow Emperor' and 'King Mu' chapters both reject it explicitly. The 'Yang Chu' chapter on the other hand is almost untouched by Taoist thought and language. The contrast is all the more striking since Chinese poets in their cups, exhorting us to enjoy life while it lasts, find it very easy to mix hedonism with mysticism. No other part of the book evokes a mood in the least like the sombre and passionate tone of this chapter. There is no question, for this writer, of seeking a standpoint from which to look with equanimity on life and death. The word 'Death' echoes through everything he writes, warning us to make merry while we can, and the only consolation which he admits is the thought that life, brief as it is, is long enough to weary us of its few pleasures. A Taoist, just as much as a Confucian, is a moderate, a compromiser who balances every consideration against its opposite, and avoids any excess which might shorten his natural span of life. This hedonist, on the contrary, is by temperament an extremist, who presents all issues with harsh clarity, and prefers the intense enjoyment of an hour to any consideration of health, safety or morality. A Taoist laughs at social conventions, and eludes or adapts himself to them; the hedonist abhors them as a prison from which he must escape at any cost. Any Taoist would understand part of what we mean by 'Liberty', but the author of this chapter is perhaps the only early Chinese thinker who would have appreciated the passion which this word excites in the West.

Yang Chu travelled in Lu, and lodged with Mr Meng. Mr Meng asked him a question.

'We are simply the men we are. What use is reputation?'

—'A reputation helps us to get rich.'

'Once rich, why not be done with it?'

—'It helps us to win high rank.'

'Once we have high rank, why not be done with it?'

—'It will help when we are dead.'

'Once dead, what good will it do us?'

—'It will help our descendants.'

'What use will our reputations be to our descendants?'

—'Caring for reputation vexes the body and withers the heart; but the man who takes advantage of his reputation can prosper his whole clan and benefit his whole district, not to speak of his own descendants.'

'But whoever cares for reputation must be honest, and if honest he will be poor. He must be humble, and if humble he will not rise in rank.'

—'When Kum Chung was chief minister in Ch'i, he was lewd when his ruler was lewd, extravagant when his ruler was extravagant. He accorded with his ruler in thought and in speech, and by the practice of his Way the state won hegemony; but after his death, the Kuan family was still only the Kuan family. When T'ien Heng was chief minister in Ch'i, he behaved unassumingly when his ruler was arrogant, behaved generously when his ruler was grasping. The people all went over to him, and in this way he won possession of the state of Ch'i, and his descendants have enjoyed it without interruption down to the present day.' (i)

'So if you really live up to your reputation, you will be poor; if your reputation is pretence, you will be rich.'

—'Reality has nothing to do with reputation, reputation has nothing to do with reality. Reputation is nothing but pretence. Formerly Yao and Shun pretended to resign the Empire to Hsii

Yu and Shari Chiian but did not give it up, and were blessed with its possession for a hundred years. Po Yi and Shu Ch'i, who really resigned the fief of Ku-chu, did end by losing this state, and died of starvation on Mount Shou-yang. (2) The difference between the reality and the pretence could not be put more plainly.'

Note. (1) For Kuan Chung, who lived up to his reputation as a good minister, cf. **p. 124.** For T'ien Heng, whose good reputation was pretence, cf. **p. 122.**

(2) Hsii Yu and Shan Chiian were hermits who rejected the offer of the Imperial throne because they refused to burden themselves with worldly cares. For Po Yi and Shu Ch'i, cf. **p.** 122.

Yang Chu said:

'A hundred years is the term of the longest life, but not one man in a thousand lives so long. Should there be one who lives out his span, infancy and senility take nearly half of it. The nights lost in sleep, the days wasted even when we are awake, take nearly half the rest. Pain and sickness, sorrow and toil, ruin and loss, anxiety and fear, take nearly half of the rest. Of the dozen or so years which remain, if we reckon how long we are at ease and content, without the least care, it does not amount to the space of an hour.

`Then what is a man to live for? Where is he to find happiness? Only in fine clothes and good food, music and beautiful women. But we cannot always have enough good clothes and food to satisfy us, cannot always be playing with women and listening to music. Then again, we are checked by punishments and seduced by rewards, led forward by the hope of reputation, driven back by fear of the law. Busily we compete for an hour's empty praise, and scheme for glory which will outlast our deaths; even in our solitude we comply with what we see others do, hear others say, and repent of what our own thoughts approve and

reject. In vain we lose the utmost enjoyment of the prime of life, we cannot give ourselves up to the hour. How are we different from prisoners weighted with chains and fetters?

'The men of the distant past knew that in life we are here for a moment and in death we are gone for a moment. (1) Therefore they acted as their hearts prompted, and did not rebel against their spontaneous desires; while life lasted they did not refuse its pleasures, and so they were not seduced by the hope of reputation. They roamed as their nature prompted, and did not rebel against the desires common to all things; they did not prefer a reputation after death, and so punishment did not affect them. Whether they were reputed and praised more or less than others, whether their destined years were many or few, they did not take into account.

Note. (1) The suggestion of the Buddhist doctrine of reincarnation (cf. p. is) is curious; elsewhere the hedonist author assumes the finality of death.

Yang Chu said:

'It is in life that the myriad things of the world are different; in death they are all the same. In life, there are clever and foolish, noble and vile; these are the differences. In death, there are stench and rot, decay and extinction; in this we are all the same.

'*However, whether we are clever or foolish, noble or vile, is not our own doing, and neither are stench and rot, decay and extinction. Hence we do not bring about our own life or death, cleverness or foolishness, nobility or vileness. However, the myriad things all equally live and die, are equally clever and foolish, noble and vile.* (1)

'Some in ten years, some in a hundred, we all die; saints and sages die, the wicked and foolish die. In life they were Yao and Shun, in death they are rotten bones; in life they were Chieh and Chou, in death they are rotten bones. Rotten bones are all the

same, who can tell them apart? Make haste to enjoy your life while you have it; why care what happens when you are dead?'

Note. (1) This looks like a Taoist interpolation, in the manner *of* the *Endeavour and Destiny* chapter.

Yang Chu said:

'It is not that Po Yi had no desires, his was the worst sort of pride in one's own purity, and because of it he starved to death. It is not that Chan Ch'in had no passions, his was the worst sort of pride in one's own correctness, and because of it he weakened his clan. They went to these extremes in treating mistaken "purity" and "correctness" as virtues.' (I)

Note. (I) For *Po Yi* and Chan Ch'in, *cf.* **p. 122.**

Yang Chu said:

'Yŭan Hsien grew poor in Lu, Tzŭ-kung grew rich in Wei[1] Yŭan Hsien's poverty injured his life, Tzŭ-kung's wealth involved him in trouble.'

'If that is so, wealth and poverty are both bad; where is the right course to be found?'

'It is to be found in enjoying life, in freeing ourselves from care. Hence those who are good at enjoying life are not poor, and those who are good at freeing themselves from care do not get rich.'

Yang Chu said:

'There is an old saying that each of us should pity the living and abandon the dead. This saying puts it exactly. The way to

[1] *Two* disciples *of* Confucius.

pity others is not simply to feel for them. When they are toiling we can give them ease, hungry we can feed them, cold we can warm them, in trouble we can help them to get through. The way to abandon the dead is not to refuse to feel sorry for them. But we should not put pearls or jade in their mouths, dress them in brocades, lay out sacrificial victims, prepare funeral vessels.'

Yen-tzŭ asked Kuan Chung about 'tending life'. (1) Kuan Chung answered:

'It is simply living without restraint; do not suppress, do not restrict.'

'Tell me the details.'

'Give yourself up to whatever your ears wish to listen to, your eyes to look on, your nostrils to turn to, your mouth to say, your body to find ease in, your will to achieve. What the ears wish to hear is music and song, and if these are denied them, I say that the sense of hearing is restricted. What the eyes wish to see is the beauty of women, and if this is denied them, I say that the sense of sight is restricted. What the nostrils wish to turn to is orchids and spices, and if these are denied them, I say that the sense of smell is restricted. What the mouth wishes to discuss is truth and falsehood, and if this is denied it, I say that the intelligence is restricted. What the body wishes to find ease in is fine clothes and good food, and if these are denied it, I say that its comfort is restricted. What the will wishes to achieve is freedom and leisure, and if it is denied these, I say that man's nature is restricted.

'All these restrictions are oppressive masters. If you can rid yourself of these oppressive masters, and wait serenely for death, whether you last a day, a month, a year, ten years, it will be what I call "tending life". If you are bound to these oppressive masters, and cannot escape their ban, though you were to survive miser-

ably for a hundred years, a thousand, ten thousand, I would not call it "tending life".'

Then Kuan Chung in his turn questioned Yen-tzŭ:

'I have told you about "tending life". What can you tell me about taking leave of the dead?'

'It does not matter how we take leave of the dead. What is there to say about it?'

'I insist on hearing.'

'Once I am dead, what concern is it of mine? It is the same to me whether you burn me or sink me in a river, bury me or leave me in the open, throw me in a ditch wrapped in grass or put me in a stone coffin dressed in a dragon-blazoned jacket and embroidered skirt. I leave it to chance.'

Kuan Chung turned to Pao Shu-ya and Huang-tzŭ, and said:

'Between the two of us, we have said all that there is to say about the Way to live and to die.'

Note. (r) The phrase *yang-sheng* ('tending life', 'tending the living') had different meanings for different schools. For individualists of the 4th century B.C. (deriving from the historical Yang Chu himself) it meant the satisfaction of personal needs without injuring health and life. For Confucians, 'tending the living' and 'taking leave of the dead' were the filial duties of supporting and decently burying one's parents. The present passage gives the Confucian terms a hedonist reinterpretation.

Tzii-ch'an was chief minister in Cheng. Within three years of his taking sole charge of the government, the good had submitted to his reforms and the wicked dreaded his prohibitions; the state of Cheng was in good order and the other states were afraid of it. But he had an elder brother called Kung-sun Ch'ao who was fond of wine, and a younger brother called Kung-sun Mu who was

fond of women. Chao had collected in his house a thousand jars of wine and a whole hillock of yeast for brewing; and for a hundred paces outside his door the smell of the dregs came to meet men's nostrils. When he was carried away by wine, he did not know whether there was peace or war in the world, he did not notice mistakes which he had time to repent, he forgot the possessions in his own house, the degrees of affinity of his kinsmen, and that it is better to live than to die. Even if he had stood in water or fire with sword blades clashing before him, he would not have known it.

In the back courtyard of Mu's house there was a row of several dozen rooms, and he picked young and lovely girls to fill them. When he was excited by lust, he shut the door on his kinsmen and stopped meeting and going out with his friends; he fled into his harem, where the nights were too short to satisfy him, and felt thwarted if he had to come out once in three months. Any beautiful virgin in the district he was sure to tempt with gifts and invite through go-betweens, giving up only if he could not catch her.

Tzii-ch'an, who worried about them night and day, went privately to consult Teng Hsi.

'I have heard,' he said, 'that a man should influence his family by setting his own life in order, influence the state by setting his own family in order—meaning that the example you set to those nearest to you extends to those further away. My administration has set the state in order, yet my family is in anarchy. Have I been doing things the wrong way round? Tell me a method of helping these two men.'

'I have long marvelled at it,' said Teng Hsi, 'but did not wish to be the first to raise the question. Why not look out for an opportunity to set their lives in order, make them understand the importance of keeping their health, appeal to their respect for propriety and duty?'

Tzŭ-ch'an took his advice. He found an opportunity to visit his brothers, and told them:

`It is knowledge and foresight which make man nobler than the beasts and birds. Knowledge and foresight lead us to propriety and duty. Learn to live properly and dutifully, and reputation and office will be yours. But if you act on the promptings of your passions, and excite yourselves with pleasure and lust, you will endanger health and life. Should you listen to what I say, you can repent in a morning and draw your salaries by the evening.'

Chao and Mu answered:

`We have long known it, and long since made our choice. Why should we need your advice to make us see it? Always life is precious and death comes too soon. We must never forget that we are living this precious life, waiting for death which comes too soon; and to wish to impress others with your respect for propriety and duty, distorting your natural passions to call up a good name, in our judgement is worse than death. We wish to enjoy this single life to the full, draining the utmost pleasure from its best years. For us the only misfortune is a belly too weak to drink without restraint, potency which fails before our lust is satisfied. We have no time to worry that our reputation is ugly and our health in danger.

`Besides, is it not mean and pitiable that you, whom success in ruling the state has made proud, should wish to disturb our hearts with sophistries, and flatter our thoughts with hopes of glory and salary? We in our turn would like to dispute the issue with you. The man who is good at ordering the lives of others does not necessarily succeed, but overworks himself trying. The man who is good at ordering his own life gives scope to his nature without needing to disorder the lives of others. Your method of ruling others may be realised temporarily in a single state, but it is out of accord with men's hearts. Our method of ruling ourselves

may be extended to the whole world, until the Way of ruler and subject is brought to an end. We have long wanted to make you understand our way of life, but on the contrary it is you who come to teach us yours!'

Tzŭ-ch'an was bewildered and had no answer to give. On another day he told Teng Hsi, who said:

'You have been living with True Men without knowing it. Who says you are a wise man? The good government of the state of Cheng is mere chance, you cannot take the credit for it.'

Tuan-mu Shu of Wei was a descendant of Tzŭ-kung.' He lived on his inheritance, a family property worth ten thousand pieces of gold. He did not bother with the issues of his time, but followed his impulse and did as he pleased. The things which all men desire to do, with which our inclinations desire to be amused, he did them all, amused himself with them all. His walls and rooms, terraces and pavilions, parks and gardens, lakes and ponds, his food and drink, carriages and dress, singers and musicians, wife and concubines, bore comparison with those of the rulers of Ch'i and Ch'u. Whatever his passions inclined him to enjoy, whatever his ear wished to hear, his eye to see and his mouth to taste, he would send for without fail, even if it came from a different region or a border country and was not a product of the Middle Kingdom, as though it were something from just across his wall or his hedge. When he travelled he always went wherever he pleased, however perilous the mountains and rivers, however long and distant the roads, as other men walk a few paces. Every day the guests in his court were counted in hundreds, and down in his kitchen the fire never went out, up in his hall and chambers the musicians never stopped playing. The leftovers of his banquets he scattered far and wide, first in his own

' A disciple of Confucius.

clan, next in the town and the villages around, finally all over the country.

When he reached the age of sixty, and his vitality and health were beginning to wane, he let go of his family affairs, and gave away all the precious things in his treasuries and storehouses, all his carriages and robes and concubines, finishing them all within a year, keeping nothing for his own children and grandchildren. When he fell ill, he had no medicine or needle in store; and when he died, lacked the price of his own burial. The people throughout the whole country who had enjoyed his bounty made a collection among themselves to bury him, and restored the property of his children and grandchildren.

When Ch'in Ku-li heard of it, he said:

'Tuan-mu Shu was a madman. He disgraced the disciple of Confucius who was his ancestor.'

When Tuan-kan Mu heard of it, he said:

'Tuan-mu Shu was a man who understood; his qualities surpassed those of his ancestor. All his actions, everything he did, astonished commonplace minds, but truly reason approves them. Most of the gentlemen in Wei live by the manners they have been taught; naturally they are incapable of grasping what was in this man's mind.'

Meng Sun-yang asked Yang Chu:

'Suppose that a man values his *life* and takes care of his body; may he hope by such means to live for ever?'

'It is impossible to live for ever.'

'May he hope to prolong his life?'

'It is impossible to prolong life. Valuing life cannot preserve it, taking care of the body cannot do it good. Besides, what is the point of prolonging life? Our five passions, our likes and dislikes, are the same now as they were of old. The safety and danger of

our four limbs, the joy and bitterness of worldly affairs, changes of fortune, good government and discord, are the same now as they were of old. We have heard it already, seen it already, experienced it already. Even a hundred years is enough to satiate us; could we endure the bitterness of still longer life?'

'If it is so, and swift destruction is better than prolonged life, you can get what you want by treading on blades and spear-points, rushing into fire and boiling water.'

'No. While you are alive, resign yourself and let life run its course; satisfy all your desires and wait for death. When it is time to die, resign yourself and let death run its course; go right to your destination, which is extinction. Be resigned to everything, let everything run its course; why need you delay it or speed it on its way?'

Yang Chu said:

'Po-ch'eng Tzŭ-kao would not benefit others at the cost of one hair; he renounced his state and retired to plough the fields. The Great Yii did not keep even his body for his own benefit; he worked to drain the Flood until one side of him was paralysed. A man of ancient times, if he could have benefited the Empire by the loss of one hair, would not have given it; and if everything in the Empire had been offered to him alone, would not have taken it. When no one would lose a hair, and no one would benefit the Empire, the Empire was in good order.' (1)

Ch'in Ku-li asked Yang Chu:

'If you could help the whole world by sacrificing one hair of your body, would you do it?'

'The world certainly will not be helped by one hair.'

'But supposing it did help, would you do it?'

Yang Chu did not answer him. When Ch'in Ku-li came out he told Meng Sun-yang, who said:

'You do not understand what is in my Master's mind. Let me explain.

If you could win ten thousand pieces of gold by injuring your skin and flesh, would you do it?'

'I would.'

'If you could gain a kingdom by cutting off one limb at the joint, would you do it?'

Ch'in Ku-1i was silent for a while. Meng Sun-yang continued:

'It is clear that one hair is a trifle compared with skin and flesh, and skin and flesh compared with one joint. However, enough hairs are worth as much as skin and flesh, enough skin and flesh as much as one joint. You cannot deny that one hair has its place among the myriad parts of the body; how can one treat it lightly?'

Ch'in Ku-1i said:

'I do not know how to answer you. I can only say that if you were to question Lao-tzŭ and Kuan-yin about your opinion they would agree with you, and if I were to question the Great Yŭ and Mo-tzŭ about mine they would agree with me.'

Meng Sun-yang thereupon turned to his disciples and changed the subject.

Note. (1) This passage (with the succeeding dialogue) does not come from the hedonist author; it is a garbled account of the doctrines of the historical Yang Chu from a much older source, probably a document of the rival school of Mo-ten, the advocate of universal love. The original doctrine of Yang Chu is still visible behind the passage, which makes much better sense when its distortion is corrected:

'Po-ch'eng Tzŭ-kao would not *accept any external benefit* at the cost of one hair; he renounced his state and retired to plough the fields ... When no one would lose a hair, and no one would *take* the Empire, the Empire was in good order.'

In the dialogue which follows, it is clear that Yang Chu and his disciple are arguing against the sacrifice of a hair to *'gain* a kingdom', while Ch'in Ku-1i (a disciple of Mo-tzŭ) interprets this as refusing to 'help the world'. This is why it embarrasses Ch'in Ku-Ii to admit that he would not cripple himself to gain a kingdom; it amounts to admitting that he would refuse the opportunity to benefit its people by good government (cf. pp. 135 if. **above).**

Yang Chu said:

The men whom the world admires are Shun, YU, the Duke of Chou and Confucius. The men whom the world condemns are Chieh and Chou. Yet Shun ploughed at Ho-yang, and made pots at Lei-tse; his four limbs did not find a moment's ease, his mouth and stomach did not get good and sufficient food; he was a man unloved by his parents, treated as a stranger by his younger brothers and sisters. He was thirty before he married, and then without telling his parents. When Yao abdicated the throne to him, he was already old and his wits had deteriorated. Since his eldest son Shang-chiin was incompetent, he had to abdicate the throne to Yii, and died at the end of a miserable life. He was the most wretched and afflicted man under the sky.

`When Kun, the father of Yii, was in charge of draining the earth during the Flood, and failed to complete the work, Shun executed him in Yii-shan. Yii inherited the work and served the enemy who had killed his father, thinking of nothing but his duty to the land. His children and estate were uncared for, he passed his door too busy to go in, half his body became paralysed, his hands and feet calloused. When Shun abdicated the throne to him, he made his palace humble but his ceremonial sash and cap beautiful, and died at the end of a miserable life. He was the most careworn and overdriven man under the sky.

`After the death of King Wu, in the childhood of King Ch'eng, the Duke of Chou controlled the administration of the Empire, to the displeasure of the Duke of Shao. Rumours slandering the Duke of Chou circulated through the country, forcing him to retire to the East for three years. He executed his elder brothers and banished his younger brothers, himself barely escaping with his life. He died at the end of a miserable life, in more danger and fear than any man under the sky.

`Confucius understood the Way of the Five Emperors and Three Kings, and accepted the invitations of the rulers of his

time. They chopped down a tree over his head in Sung, he had to scrape away his footprints in Wei, he was at the end of his resources in Sung and Chou, he was trapped by his enemies in Ch'en and Ts'ai, he was humiliated by the Chi family and insulted by Yang Hu, and died at the end of a miserable life. He was the most harried and distraught man under the sky.

`All those four sages lived without a day's joy, and died leaving a reputation which will last ten thousand generations. Truly the reality was not what their reputation should have earned them. Though we praise them they do not know it; though we value them they do not know it. It matters no more to them than to stumps of trees and clods of earth.

`Chieh inherited the wealth of successive reigns, and sat facing South on the Imperial throne. He had enough wit to hold down his subjects, enough authority to make all tremble within the four seas. He gave himself up to all that amused his ears and eyes, did all that his thought and inclination suggested to him, and died at the end of a merry life. He was the freest, most boisterous man under the sky.

`Chou also inherited the wealth of successive reigns, and sat facing South on the Imperial throne. His authority prevailed everywhere, his will was obeyed everywhere. He vented his passions in a palace a hundred acres square, and let loose his desires in a night four months long. (i) He did not vex himself about propriety and duty, and was executed at the end of a merry life. He was the most carefree, the least constrained man under the sky.

`Those two villains lived in the joy of following their desires, and dying incurred the reputation of fools and tyrants. Truly the reality was not what their reputation deserved. Whether we revile or praise them they do not know it; does it mean any more to them than to stumps of trees and clods of earth?

`The four sages, although the world admires them, suffered to

the end of their lives, and death was the last home of all of them. The two villains, although the world condemns them, were happy to the end of their lives, and again death was their last home.'

Note. (r) A banquet lasting a hundred and twenty days, called the 'Drinking Bout of the Long Night'.

Yang Chu visited the King of Liang, and told him that ruling the Empire was like rolling it in the palm of your hand. The King said:

'You have one wife and one concubine, whom you cannot control, and a garden of three acres, which you cannot weed. Are you the person to tell me that it is so easy to rule the Empire?'

'Have you seen a shepherd with his flock? Send a boy four foot high with a stick on his shoulder to follow aflock of a hundred sheep, and it will go East or West as he wishes. Make Yao lead one sheep, with Shun following behind with a stick on his shoulder, and they couldn't make the sheep budge. Besides, I have heard that the fish which can swallow a boat does not swim in side streams, the high flying hawk and swan do not settle in ponds and puddles. Why? Because their aims are set very high. The Huang-chung and Ta-lŭ music cannot accompany the dance in common entertainments. Why? Because its sound is too far above the ordinary. It is this that is meant by the saying: "One who sets out on a great enterprise does not concern himself with trifles; one who achieves great successes does not achieve small ones."'

Yang Chu said:

'The events of the distant past have vanished; who has recorded them? The actions of the Three Highnesses are as nearly lost as surviving; the actions of the Five Emperors are as near dream as waking; the actions of the Three Kings hover in and out of sight.

Out of a hundred thousand we do not remember one. Of the events of our own time, we have seen some and heard of some, but we do not remember one in ten thousand. Of events happening this very moment, we notice some and ignore some, and we shall not remember one in a thousand. From the distant past to the present day the years are indeed too many to count; but during the three hundred thousand years and more since Fu-hsi, the memory of worth and folly, beauty and ugliness, success and failure, right and wrong, has always without exception faded and vanished . . . swiftly or slowly, that is the only difference.

'If we presume on the praise or slander of an hour, so that we wither the spirit and vex the body, seeking a reputation which will survive our deaths by a few hundred years, how will this *suffice* to moisten our dry bones, and renew the joy of life?'

Yang Chu said:

'Man resembles the other species between heaven and earth, and like them owes his nature to the Five Elements. He is the most intelligent of living things. But in man, nails and teeth are not strong enough to provide defence, skin and flesh are too soft for protection; he cannot run fast enough to escape danger, and he lacks fur and feathers to ward off heat and cold. He must depend on other things in order to tend his nature, must trust in knowledge and not rely on force. Hence the most valuable use of knowledge is for self-preservation, while the most ignoble use of force is to attack others.

'However, my body is not my possession; yet once born, I have no choice but to keep it intact. Other things are not my possessions; yet once I exist, I cannot dispense with them. Certainly, it is by the body that we live; but it is by means of other things that we tend it.

'Although I keep life and body intact, I cannot possess this body; although I may not dispense with things, I cannot possess these things. To possess ***these things, possess this body, would be violently to reserve***

for oneself body and things which belong to the world. Is it not only the sage, only the highest man, who treats as common possessions the **body** *and the things which belong to the world? It is this which is meant by "highest of the highest".' (1)*

Note. (r) This passage is clearly not the work of the hedonist author; nor, since it values knowledge, does it seem to be characteristically Taoist. It discusses the relative importance of external possessions and the preservation of one's body, the problem which engaged the historical Yang Chu, and perhaps comes from some offshoot of his school. The extreme doctrine, ascribed to Yang Chu himself, that the body should always be preferred, is rejected on the grounds that (1) Men, unlike animals, cannot exist without external possessions, (2) We cannot possess even the body (cf. p. 29 **above),** since we cannot prevent it undergoing the processes of growth and decay common to all things.

Yang Chu said:

People find no rest because of four aims—long life, reputation, office, possessions. Whoever has these four aims dreads spirits, dreads other men, dreads authority, dreads punishment. I call him "a man in flight from things".

He can be killed, he can be given life;
The destiny which decides is outside him.

If you do not go against destiny, why should you yearn for long life? If you are not conceited about honours, why should you yearn for reputation? If you do not want power, why should you yearn for office? If you are not greedy for wealth, why should you yearn for possessions? One who sees this I call "a man in accord with things".

Nothing in the world counters him;
The destiny which decides is within him.

Hence the saying,

> "Without office and marriage
> Men's satisfactions would be halved.
> If they did not eat and wear clothes
> The Way of ruler and subject would cease." (1)

A Chou proverb says that 'You can kill a peasant by letting him sit down'. He thinks it natural and normal to work from morning to night; he thinks that nothing tastes better than a dinner of beans. His skin and flesh are thick and coarse, his joints and muscles supple and vigorous. If one morning you were to put him on soft furs behind silken curtains, and offer him good millet and meat and fragrant oranges, it would unsettle his mind and injure his health, and he would fall ill with fever. On the other hand if the ruler of Sung or Lu were to change places with the peasant, he would be worn out before he had worked an hour. Therefore when the rustic is satisfied and pleased with anything, he says there is nothing better in the world.

There was once a peasant in Sung, whose ordinary coat was of tangled hemp and barely kept him alive through the winter. When the spring sun rose in the East, he warmed his body in the sunshine. He did not know that there were such things in the world as wide halls and secluded chambers, floss silk and fox furs. He turned to his wife and said:

'No one knows how warm it is to bare one's back to the sun. I shall make a present of this knowledge to our ruler, and he will richly reward me.'

But a rich man of the village told him:

'Once there was a man who had a taste for broad beans, nettle-hemp seeds, celery and southernwood shoots, and recommended them to some important people of the district. When they tried the dish, it stung their mouths and pained their stomachs. They all smiled coldly and put the blame on him, and he was very embarrassed. You are just like him.'

Note. (1) It is likely that the next saying of Yang Chu should follow straight on here, the intervening passage being an interpolation by the editor of *Lieh-tzŭ.*

Yang Chu said:

'A grand house, fine clothes, good food, beautiful women—if you have these four, what more do you need from outside yourself? One who has them yet seeks more from outside himself has an insatiable nature. An insatiable nature is a grub eating away one's vital forces.'

Being loyal is not enough to make the ruler safe; all it can do is endanger oneself. Being dutiful is not enough to benefit others; all it can do is interfere with one's life. When it is seen that loyalty is not the way to make the ruler safe, the good reputation of the loyal will disappear; when it is seen that duty is not the way to benefit others, the good reputation of the dutiful will come to an end. It was the Way of ancient times that both ruler and subject should be safe, both others and oneself should be benefited.

Yii *Hsiung said that 'The man who dispenses with reputation is free from care'. Lao-tzŭ said that 'Reputation is the guest who comes and goes, reality is the host who stays', yet fretful people never stop running after a good reputation. Is a reputation really indispensable, is it really impossible to treat it as a passing guest?*

Now a good reputation brings honour and glory, a bad one humiliation and disgrace. Honour and glory bring ease and joy, **humiliation** *and disgrace bring care and vexation. It is care and vexation which go against our nature, ease and joy which accord with it. Then a real gain is attached to reputation. How can we dispense with it, how can we treat it as a passing guest? The one thing we* **should** *dislike is getting*

involved in real difficulties by clinging to reputation. If you involve yourself in real difficulties by clinging to it, you will have irremediable ruin to worry about, not only the choice between ease and care, joy and vexation!

8

Explaining Conjunctions

Explaining Conjunctions is the most heterogeneous of the eight chapters. More than half of it is taken from known sources of the 3rd and 2nd centuries B.C., not all Taoist, and it is likely that much of the rest is from sources no longer extant. Nevertheless, there is a single theme guiding the selection, the effect of chance conjunctions of events. The chance combinations which make each situation unique decide both whether an action is right and how others interpret its motives. The moral is that we should discard fixed standards, and follow the external situation as the shadow follows the body. 'Whether we should be active or passive depends on other things and not on ourselves.'

Lieh-tzŭ was studying under Hu-tzŭ.

'When you know how to keep to the rear,' Hu-tzŭ told him, 'I can start teaching you how to behave.'

'Please tell me about keeping to the rear.'

'Look round at your shadow, and you will understand.'

Lieh-tzŭ looked round and watched his shadow. When his figure bent his shadow was crooked, when his figure stood upright his shadow was straight.

So whether to bend or stand upright rests with the figure and not with the shadow; and whether we should be active or passive depends on other things and not on ourselves. This is what is meant by 'staying at the front by keeping to the rear'.

Kuan-yin said to Lieh-tzŭ:

'If your words are beautiful or ugly, so is their echo; if your

person is tall or short, so is its shadow. Reputation is the echo, conduct is the shadow. Hence it is said:

"Be careful of your words,
For someone will agree with them.
Be careful of your conduct,
For someone will imitate it."

... (I) Therefore the sage knows what will go in by seeing what came out, knows what is coming by observing what has passed. This is the principle by which he knows in advance.

We judge by our own experience, verify by the experience of others. If a man loves me I am sure to love him; if he hates me I am sure to hate him. Similarly T'ang and Wu became Emperors because they loved the Empire, Chieh and Chou were ruined because they hated the Empire; this is the verification. When judgement and verification are both plain, refusing to act on them is like refusing to go by the door when you leave or follow the path when you walk. If you do this, will it not be difficult to get the benefit you seek?

I have observed this in the virtue of Shen-nung,and Yu-yen, verified it in the books of Shun and the Hsia, Shang and Chou dynasties, judged it by the sayings of exemplary scholars and worthy men; and I have never found a case where survival or ruin, rise or decline did not derive from this principle.

Note. (r) What follows is evidently a fragment, of which the introduction is lost. It does not seem to be Taoist; the claim that the rise and fall of dynasties depends on winning and losing the love of the people, as well as several incidental features, strongly suggest the school of Mo-tzŭ.

Yen Hui said to Lieh-tzŭ: (I)

'The reason for inquiring about the Way is to get rich. I might

get rich by finding a pearl, and then why should I need the Way?'

'Chieh and Chou gave weight to nothing but their own interests and neglected the Way; that is why they perished. How lucky that I have the chance to tell you in time!

"Men, yet devoid of honour,
Living for food and nothing else,"

—such are no better than chickens and dogs.

"They lock their horns fighting for food,
And the victor makes the rules,"

—such are no better than the wild beasts and birds. If you are as lazy as a chicken or dog, or as savage as a wild beast or bird, you cannot expect other men to respect you. If others do not respect you, danger and disgrace will befall you.'

Lieh-tzŭ was studying archery, and hit the target. He sought advice from Kuan-yin, who asked him:

'Do you know why you hit the target?'

'No.'

'It won't do yet.'

He went away to practice, and after three years again reported to Kuan-yin.

'Do you know why you hit the target?'

'I know.'

'It will do. Hold on to this knowledge and do not lose it.'

This applies, not only to archery, but to ruling the state and ruling oneself. Therefore the sage scrutinises, not the fact of survival or ruin, but its reasons. (2)

Notes. (1) This is not Yen *Hui* the disciple of Confucius, whose name is written differently in Chinese.

(2) This is obviously not a Taoist story. It comes **from the chapter** *Shen chi'* ('Self-examination') in the *Lü-shih ch'un-ch'iu,* a collection representing several philosophical schools (c. 240 B.c.). There it illustrates a principle directly opposed to Taoism: 'Whatever is so of a thing must have reasons; if you do not know the reasons, even if you succeed as well as one who does know, you will certainly end by getting into difficulties.'

Lieh-tzŭ said:

'Those in the prime of their beauty are proud, those in the prime of their strength are impetuous; you cannot talk to them about the Way. People with no white streaks in their hair go wrong when they talk about the Way, still more when they try to walk it. If a man is proud and impetuous no one tells him things, and if no one tells him things he is alone with no one to keep him steady.

'The clever man gives responsibility to others, and therefore his power does not diminish when he grows old, and he is not thrown into confusion when his knowledge runs out. Therefore the difficulty in ruling a state lies in recognising cleverness, not in being clever oneself'

There was a man of Sung who made a mulberry leaf out of jade to give to his prince. It took him three years to finish; and when it was mixed up with real mulberry leaves, its indentations, stalk, veins and lustre were indistinguishable from those of the rest. So the man's skill won him a regular salary from the government of Sung. When Lieh-tzŭ heard of it, he said:

'If heaven and earth grew things so slowly that it took them three years to finish a leaf, there would not be many things with leaves.'

Therefore the sage trusts the transforming process of the Way, and puts no trust in cunning and skill.

Lich-tzŭ was in need, and his face had a starved look. A visitor mentioned him to Tzŭ-yang, the chief minister of Cheng:

'Lieh-tzŭ is known to be a man who possesses the Way. If he is in need while living in your state, may it not be thought that you are not a generous patron?'

Tzŭ-yang immediately ordered the department concerned to send him a present of grain. Lieh-tzŭ went outside to see the messenger, bowed twice, and refused the gift. After the messenger left and Lieh-tzŭ came in, his wife glared at him and beat her breast, saying:

'I have heard that the wives and children of men who possess the Way all live comfortably and happily. But now, when starvation shows in our faces, and the Duke hears of you and sends you food, you refuse the gift. We must be destined to misery!'

'It is not that the Duke knows me personally,' answered Lieh-tzŭ .smiling.' He sent me grain because of what another man said. If he should ever condemn me, it will also be on the word of another man. (i) This is why I did not accept.'

In the end it did happen that the people made trouble and killed Tzŭ-yang.

Note. (i) Lieh-tzŭ is afraid of being involved with Tzŭ-yang when he falls from favour. Like the stories which follow, this illustrates the importance of adapting oneself to the particular situation, and not sticking to unvarying principles.

Mr Shih of Lu had two sons; one loved learning, the other loved war. The former presented himself as a teacher to the Marquis of Ch'i, who admitted him to the court as tutor to his sons. The latter went to Ch'u, and presented himself as a strategist to the King, who was pleased with him and put him in command of the army. The two men's salaries enriched the family and their rank brought honour to their parents.

Mr Shih's neighbour Mr Meng also had two sons, trained in the same two professions, but he was miserably poor. Envying the wealth of Mr Shih, he asked him by what method his family had risen in the world so fast; and Mr Shih's two sons told him what they had done.

Then one of Mr Meng's sons went to Ch'in, and presented himself as a teacher to the King of Ch'in. The King said:

'At present the princes of the states are in violent contention, and are occupied solely with arming and feeding their troops. If I rule my state in accordance with moral teaching, this will be the Way to ruin and extinction.'

So he castrated the man and banished him.

The other son went to Wei, and presented himself as a strategist to the Marquis of Wei. The Marquis said:

'Mine is a weak state, situated between big states. Bigger states I serve, smaller states I protect; this is the Way to seek safety. If I rely on military force, ruin and extinction will be a question of hours. But if I let this man leave unharmed, he will go to another state and cause me serious trouble.'

So he cut off the man's feet and sent him back to Lu.

After their return, Mr Meng and his two sons beat their breasts and cursed Mr Shih.

'Pick the right time and flourish,
Miss the right time and perish,'

answered Mr Shih. 'Your Way was the same as ours, yet you failed where we succeeded—not because you did the wrong things, but because you picked the wrong time to do them. In *any* case, nowhere is there a principle which is right in all circumstances, or an action that is wrong in all circumstances. The method we used yesterday we may discard today and use again in the future; there are no fixed right and wrong to decide whether we use it or not. The capacity to pick times and snatch

opportunities, and be never at a loss how to answer events, belongs to the wise. If you are not wise enough, even if you are as learned as Confucius or as great a strategist as Lii Shang,[1] you will get in trouble wherever you go.'

Mr Meng and his sons were satisfied and showed no more ill will. 'We understand,' they said. 'You need say no more.'

Duke Wen of Chin set out to meet his allies, intending to attack Wei. Kung-tzŭ Ch'u looked up at the sky smiling. The Duke asked why he smiled.

'I am smiling at a neighbour of mine, who was escorting his wife on a visit to her family. He saw a woman at the roadside working on the mulberries, found her attractive and spoke to her. But when he looked round at his wife, there was another man beckoning to her. I take the liberty of smiling at this.'

The Duke saw the point, and halted. He returned with his army, but before he arrived another state had attacked his North borders.

The state of Chin was infested with robbers. There was a certain Hsi Yung who could read a man's face, and recognise him as a robber by scrutinising the space between his eyebrows and eyelashes. The Marquis of Chin sent him to identify robbers; he did not miss one in a hundred or a thousand. The Marquis was delighted and told Chao Wen-tzii:

'By discovering this one man I have made an end of robbery throughout the country. Why should we need anyone else?'

'My lord will never get rid of robbers if he relies on an in-

[1] Lii Shang (T'ai-kung), enfiefed as first Duke of Ch'i (cf. p. 133) by King Wu of Chou (1156–1116 B.C.). He is the supposed author of the military classic *Liu-t'ao.*

spector to catch them. I would add that Hsi Yung certainly will not die a natural death.'

Immediately afterwards the robber bands plotted together, saying: 'The man who has brought us to this pass is Hsi Yung.' Then they joined forces to waylay him, and murdered him. The Marquis of Chin was very startled at the news, and at once called Wen-tzŭ:

'It has turned out as you said, Hsi Yung is dead. But how are we going to catch the robbers?'

'There is a proverb of Chou:

> "Scrutiny which reveals the fish in a pool is unlucky.
> The wisdom which guesses secrets is fatal."

'If you wish to be done with robbers, your best course is to appoint worthy men to office, and let them enlighten those above them and reform those below them. If the people have a sense of shame, why should they become robbers?'

Then the Marquis made Sui Hui chief minister, and the robber bands fled to Ch'in.

When Confucius was returning from Wei to Lu, he rested his horses at a bridge over the river and looked at the view. There was a waterfall more than two hundred feet high, and ninety miles of whirlpool; fish and turtles could not swim there, crocodiles could not live there, but there was a man just about to ford it. Confucius sent someone along the bank to stop him, saying:

'This waterfall is over two hundred feet high, the whirlpool covers ninety miles; fish and turtles cannot swim here, crocodiles cannot live here. I would suggest it may be difficult to cross.

The man took no notice, crossed over and came out. Confucius questioned him:

'**What skill! Have** you some special **art?** How **is it** that you are able to get through?'

'When I first enter, I start by being loyal and true to the water, and when I come out, I continue to be loyal and true to it. Throwing my body into the current, I do not dare to act selfishly. That is how I am able to get out again once I am in.'

Confucius said to his disciples:

'Bear it in mind, my children. By loyalty, truth and personal integrity we can make friends even with the water, not to speak of men!' (i)

Note. (1) This is a Confucian adaptation (also found in the *Household Sayings of Confucius)* of the story reproduced from the Taoist *Chuang-tzŭ* in ch. 2. There the swimmer trusted to the Tao of the water; here, less plausibly, he depends on the moral virtues loyalty and trustworthiness.

The Duke of Pai asked Confucius: (1)

'Is it possible to hint to a man without giving yourself away to others?'

Confucius did not answer.

'Suppose I were to throw a stone into water?'

'A good diver from Wu could find it.'

'Suppose I throw water into water?'

'Mix the waters of the Tzŭ and the Sheng, and Yi Ya (a) would know by the taste.'

'Then is it really impossible to hint without giving yourself away?'

'Why shouldn't it be possible? But only with men who know what is behind words. The man who knows what is behind words speaks without words.

Fishermen get wet,
Hunters get out of breath,

but not for the fun of it. Hence the utmost in speech is to be rid of speech, the utmost doing is Doing Nothing. Shallow minds contend for what does not matter.'

The Duke of Pai did not see the point, and his death in the baths was the consequence.

Notes. (1) The Duke of Pai was the grandson of King P'ing of Ch'u (528-516 B.C.). After the execution of his father in Cheng, he urged the Prime Minister of Ch'u to make war on Cheng. Instead a Ch'u army was sent to help Cheng against an invasion by Chin. The Duke rebelled, killed the Prime Minister, but was himself killed in a bath-house.

(2) Yi Ya, the chef of Duke Huan of Ch'i, is the most famous of Chinese cooks.

Chao Hsiang-tzŭ sent Hsin-chih Mu-tzŭ to attack Ti. The general was victorious, took the towns of Tso-jen and Chung-jen, and sent a runner to report the victory. Hsiang-tzŭ, who was at dinner, looked worried.

'Two cities have fallen in a morning,' his courtiers said. 'This should be enough to content anyone. Why do you look so worried?'

'The Yangtse and the Yellow River are at high tide only for three days; stormy winds and fierce rains do not last out the morning; the sun is at high noon for less than a moment. Now I have no steady accumulation of noble deeds behind me. When two cities fall to me in a morning, ruin will surely come to me!'

When Confucius heard of it, he said:

'Will not Chao Hsiang-tzŭ win glory?

Worrying leads to glory,
Contentment leads to ruin.'

To win is not the difficulty; the difficulty is to make victory last. It is by worrying that a worthy prince makes victory last, so that his good fortune passes on to later generations. Ch'i,

Ch'u, Wu, Yiieh, all enjoyed victory in their time, but were finally ruined by victory, because they did not fathom how to make it last. Only the prince who has the Way is able to make victory last.

Confucius was strong enough to lift the bar of the main gate of the capital, but he did not wish to be renowned for strength. Mo-tzŭ made plans for defence which Kung-shu Pan could not beat, but he did not wish to be known as a warrior. Therefore the man who is good at making victory last represents his strength as weakness.

There was a family in Sung which was unremitting in its love of virtuous conduct for three generations. For no reason a black cow belonging to the family gave birth to a white calf. They asked Confucius about it.

'It is a fortunate omen,' said Confucius. 'Offer it to God.'

A year later, the father for no reason went blind.

Again the cow gave birth to a white calf, and again the father ordered his son to ask Confucius.

'The last time you asked him you lost your sight, why ask him again?'

'The words of a sage at first seem to defy the facts, later are seen to agree with them. We have not seen the end of this matter; ask him again.'

Again the son asked Confucius, who said the calf was a fortunate omen and again instructed him to sacrifice it. The son returned to report.

'Do as Confucius says,' his father told him.

A year later, the son too for no reason went blind.

Afterwards Ch'u attacked Sung and besieged the city. The people exchanged their children and ate them, and split the bones

for fuel. All able-bodied men mounted the walls to fight; more than half died. The father and son, being cripples, both escaped. When the siege was raised both regained their sight.

There was a vagabond of Sung who offered to perform a trick before Lord Yiian. Lord Yiian summoned him and let him show what he could do. The man's trick was to fasten to his legs a pair of stilts twice as long as himself, and run backwards and forwards juggling seven swords which he threw up in rotation, keeping five in the air at the same time. Lord Yiian was astounded, and at once gave him a present of gold and silk.

There was another vagabond who could perform acrobatic tricks. Hearing of it, he too presented himself to Lord Yuan. Lord Yiian was furious, saying:

'Not long ago there was a man who came to me with an extraordinary trick. There was no point in the trick, but just then I happened to be in a good mood, so I gave him a present of gold and silk. This other man must have come because he heard about it and hopes for a reward from me too.'

He had him bound and punished, and did not loose him for a month.

Duke Mu of Ch'in said to Po-lo:

'You are getting on in years. Is there anyone in your family whom I can send to find me horses?'

'A good horse can be identified by its shape and look, its bone and muscle. But the great horses of the world might be extinct, vanished, perished, lost; such horses raise no dust and leave no tracks. My sons all have lesser talent, they can **pick a** good horse but not a great one. But there is a man I know who carries and

hauls, and collects firewood for me, Chiu-fang Kao. As a judge of horses he is my equal. I suggest that you see him.'

Duke Mu saw the man and sent him **away** to find horses. After three months he returned and reported to the Duke.

'I have got one. It is in Sha-ch'iu.'

'**What** kind of horse?'

'A mare, yellow.'

The Duke sent someone to fetch it; it turned out to be a stallion, and black. The Duke, displeased, summoned Po-lo.

'He's no good, the fellow you sent to find me horses. He cannot even tell one colour from another, or a mare from a stallion. What can he know about horses?'

Po-lo breathed a long sigh of wonder.

'So now he has risen to this! It is just this that shows that he is worth a thousand, ten thousand, any number of people like me. What such a man as Kao observes is the innermost native impulse behind the horse's movements. He grasps the essence and forgets the dross, goes right inside it and forgets the outside. He looks for and sees what he needs to see, ignores what he does not need to see. In the judgement of horses of a man like Kao, there is something more important than horses.'

When the horse arrived, it did prove to be a great horse.

King Chuang of Ch'u asked Chan Ho:

'How shall I put my state in order?'

'Your servant understands how to put one's own life in order, but not the state.'

'I **have** inherited the shrines of my royal ancestors and the altars of the state; I wish to learn how to keep them.'

'Your servant has never heard of a prince whose own life was in order yet his state in turmoil, nor of any whose life was in turmoil but his state in order. Therefore the root lies in your

government of yourself; I would not presume to answer you by talking of the tips of the branches.'

'Good!' said the King of Ch'u.

The Old Man of Fox Hill said to Sun Shu-ao:

'There are three things which men resent; do you know them?'

'What do you mean?'

'If your rank is high, others will envy you.

'If your office is great, your prince will hate you.

'If your salary is large, resentment will live with you.'

'The higher my rank, the humbler my ambitions; the greater my office, the more meticulous I shall be; the larger my salary, the further shall my bounty extend. Acting like this, may I avoid the three causes of resentment?'

When Sun Shu-ao was sick and on the point of death, he warned his son:

'The King several times offered me a fief, but I did not accept. Should I die he will make the same offer to you; be sure not to accept strategically useful land. Between Ch'u and Yiieh is Graveyard Hill, which is strategically useless land with a very inauspicious name. The men of Ch'u fear ghosts and the men of Yiieh believe in omens. This is the only place which can be owned for long.'

When Sun Shu-ao died, the King did offer to enfief his son in excellent land. The son made excuses and did not accept, requesting Graveyard Hill. It was granted to him, and his family has not lost it yet.

Niu Ch'iieh was a great Confucian from the **highlands.**

Going down to Han-tan, he met with robbers at Ou-sha. They took all he had, clothes and equipment, carriage and horses. Niu Ch'iieh went off on foot; he looked quite content, showed no sign of anxiety or regret. The robbers ran after him and asked him why.

'A gentleman does not risk life for the sake of possessions, which are means of supporting life.'

'Ah, a wise man, isn't he?' said the robbers. But afterwards they talked it over:

'If such a wise man goes to see the lord of Chao, and asks him to do something about us, he will certainly get us into trouble. We had better kill him.'

So they all ran after him and killed him.

A man of Yen who heard about it called together his clansmen and warned them:

'If you meet with robbers, don't be like Niu Ch'iieh of the highlands.'

They were all impressed by his advice.

Soon afterwards his younger brother went to Ch'in. When he arrived below the passes, he did meet with robbers. Remembering his brother's warning, he put up a fight against the robbers. After getting the worst of it, he ran after them and humbly begged them to return his property. The robbers said angrily:

'Sparing your life was generosity enough, and now you won't stop running after us. People will know which direction we took. Once a man turns robber, what room has he for kindness?'

So they killed him, and wounded four or five of his party into the bargain.

Mr Yii was a rich man of Liang. His family was at the height of its prosperity, and he had more money and silk and property than he could count. One day he climbed a tall house overlook-

ing the main road, called for wine and music, and played backgammon up at the top. Some soldiers of fortune were walking together in the street below. One of the players made a lucky throw, and laughed as he turned over the two fish (i). Just then a kite flying above dropped a mouldy rat which hit one of the soldiers. The soldiers took council together:

'**YU has** been rich and happy for many a day, and he has always had an inclination to treat others too lightly. We have done nothing to offend him, yet he insults us with a mouldy rat. If we fail to avenge such an insult as this, we shall lose our reputation for courage in the eyes of the world. Let us unite our efforts to one end, bring all our men-at-arms and retainers, and **make** sure of exterminating the whole family.'

The whole party agreed. On the night appointed, they assembled men and weapons to attack Yii and exterminated the whole family.

Note. (i) In this game (called po) the pieces are advanced, by throwing dice, towards a 'river' across the middle of the board; the player who takes two pieces in the river, called 'fish', is the winner.

There was a man from the East called Yiian Hsing-mu. He was travelling, and lay starving on the road. A robber of Hu-fu called Ch'iu saw him and handed food and water down to him. Yiian Hsing-mu ate three mouthfuls before his eyesight returned.

'What man are you?'

'I am Ch'iu of Hu-fu.'

'What? Aren't you a criminal? What do you mean by giving me food? I am a respectable man, I will not eat your food.'

He pressed both hands against the ground to vomit it up, but it stuck gurgling in his throat; then he flopped on his face and died.

The man from Hu-fu was a criminal, but there was nothing

criminal about the food. To call food criminal and refuse to eat it, because the man who *offers* it is a criminal, is to confuse the name and the reality.

Chu Li-shu was in the service of Duke Ao of Chii. Feeling that the Duke did not appreciate him, he went away and lived on the seashore, eating water-chestnuts and lotus-seeds in the summer, and chestnuts and acorns in the winter. But when Duke Ao was in trouble, he took leave of his friends and went to fight to the death for him.

'You felt that the Duke did not appreciate you,' his friends said, 'and that is why you left him. If you go and die for him now, it will have made no difference whether he appreciated you or not.'

'Not at all. I left because I felt that he did not appreciate me; and to die for him now will prove that he did not appreciate me. I shall die for him in order to shame the lords of future generations who do not appreciate their vassals.'

To die for a lord who appreciates you, and refuse to die for a lord who does not, this is walking straight in the Way.

We may call Chu Li-shu a man who carried resentment to the point of no longer caring for his own life. *(i)*

Note. (i) This **and** the preceding story come from the *Lii-shi*[p] *ch'un-ch'iu (c.* 240 B.c.), in which Yiian Hsing-mu and Chu Li-shu are **presented** as heroes. The editor of the ***Lieh-tzŭ*** **thinks** differently.

Yang Chu **said:**

'If benefit goes out from you the fruits will return to you; if resentment goes forth from you harm will come back to you. What issues from within and is answered outside is mere passion. Therefore the wise man is careful of what he lets go out.'

A neighbour of Yang Chu lost a sheep. Not only did he lead out all his retainers to chase it, he also begged servants from **Yang** Chu.

'Curious! You have lost only one sheep, why do you need so many people to chase it?'

'There are many forks in the road.'

When they returned, Yang Chu asked:

'Did you catch the sheep?'

'No, we lost it.'

'How did you come to lose it?'

'There were other forks inside the forks. We did not know which road to take, so turned back.'

A worried expression came over Yang Chu's face. He did not talk for some time, did not smile for the rest of the day. His disciples found this strange and inquired about it.

'A sheep is an inexpensive animal, and in any case it was not yours. Why should this stop you talking and smiling?'

Yang Chu did not answer, and the disciples could get nothing out of him. His disciple Meng Sun-yang went out and told Hsin-tu-tzŭ. On another day Hsin-to-tzŭ came in with Meng-Sun-yang and asked Yang Chu a question:

'Once there were three brothers who travelled in Ch'i and Lu, studied under the same teachers, and came home knowing all there is to know about the principles of moral duty. Their father asked them:

'What can you tell me about the principles of moral duty?'

'The eldest said: "Moral duty makes me take care of my body and put it before my reputation." (1)

'The next said: "Moral duty makes me kill my body for the sake of my reputation."

'The youngest said: "Moral duty makes me preserve both body **and** reputation."

'Those three doctrines are contradictory, yet have the same source in Confucianism. Which is right and which is wrong?'

'There was a man who lived by the riverside,' answered Yang Chu. 'He was familiar with water and a bold swimmer, he made his living as a boatman ferrying people across, and the profits supported a hundred people. A crowd of people came with their bundles of provisions to learn from him, but nearly half were drowned. They wanted to learn how to swim, not how to drown, but you can see to what an extent some were harmed while others benefited. Which of them do you think were right and which wrong?'

Hsin-to-tzŭ came out in silence. Meng Sun-yang upbraided him:

'Why did you ask in such a roundabout way, and why did the Master give such an obscure answer? I am more puzzled then ever.'

'Our neighbour lost his sheep on the highroad because there were many forks; the ferryman's apprentices lost their lives because there were many methods. The root of what they were learning was one and the same, but you can see how far the tips of the branches had diverged. Only return to where they are one, go **back** to where they are the same, restore the missing and find the lost. How sad that you, who have grown old as his disciple and are familiar with his Way, should fail to see through the Master's parable!'

Note. (r) It was the duty of a Confucian to keep his body unmutilated, since it is a gift received from his ancestors. This, as the story points out, is hard to reconcile with other duties.

Yang Chu's younger brother Pu went out wearing a white silk coat. It rained, and he took off the white coat and came back wearing a black one. His dog did not recognise him, and barked

when it came out to welcome him. Yang Pu, angry, was about to beat the dog. But Yang Chu told him:

'Don't beat it. You are no different yourself. Supposing that just now your dog had gone out white and come back black, wouldn't you have been surprised?'

Yang Chu said:

'It is not for the sake of reputation that you do good, but reputation follows. You expect reputation without benefit, but benefit comes. You expect benefit without contention, but contention arrives. Therefore a gentleman must be careful when he does good.'

There was once a man who said he knew the Way to become immortal. The Lord of Yen sent a messenger to fetch the secret, but he dawdled and the man died before he arrived. The Lord of Yen was very angry with the messenger and intended to execute him. But a favourite minister protested:

'None of a man's cares is more urgent than death, and there is nothing that he values more than his life. That man has lost his own life, how could he have made you immortal?'

So he did not execute him.

A certain Ch'i-tzŭ also wished to learn this Way, and beat his breast with vexation when he heard that the man who could reveal it was dead. Another philosopher, Fu-tzŭ, heard about it and laughed at him, saying:

'A man who wishes to learn how to become immortal, and is vexed when the teacher dies himself, does not know what it is he wants to learn.'

'Fu-tzŭ is wrong,' said a third philosopher, Hu-tzŭ. 'There are always men who possess a theory they cannot act on, or who can

act without possessing the theory. There was a man of Wei who was good at mathematics. When he was near death he disclosed his secrets to his son, who remembered the words but could not apply them. Another man questioned the son, who told him what his father had said. The other man went by what he said and applied the theory as successfully as his father had done. Why then should not a mortal be able to talk about the theory of living for ever?'

The people of Han-tan presented doves to Chao Chien-tzŭ[1] on New Year morning. He was delighted and richly rewarded them. When a visitor asked the reason, Chien-tzŭ explained:

'We release living things on New Year's Day as a gesture of kindness.'

'The people know you wish to release them, so they vie with each other to catch them, and many of the doves die. If you wish to keep them alive, it would be better to forbid the people to catch them. When you release doves after catching them, the kindness does not make up for the mistake.'

'You are right,' said Chien-tzii.

T'ien of Ch'i was going on a journey; he sacrificed in his courtyard to the god of the roads, and banqueted a thousand guests. Someone was serving fish and geese at the seat of honour. T'ien looked at them; then he sighed and said:

'How generous heaven is to mankind! It grows the five grains and breeds the fish and birds for the use of man.'

All the guests answered like his echo. But a twelve-year-old boy of the Pao family, who had a seat among the guests, came forward and said:

[1] Minister of Duke Ting (511-474 B.c.) of Chin.

'It is not as your lordship says. The myriad things between **heaven** and earth, born in the same way that we are, do not differ from us in kind. One kind is no nobler than another; it is simply that the stronger and cleverer rule the weaker and sillier. Things take it in turns to eat each other, but they are not bred for each other's sake. Men take the things which are edible and eat them, but how can it be claimed that heaven bred them originally for the sake of man? Besides, mosquitoes and gnats bite our skin, tigers and wolves eat our flesh; did heaven originally breed man for the sake of mosquitoes and gnats, and his flesh for the sake of tigers and wolves?'

There was a poor man in Ch'i who always begged in the city market. The crowd in the market got tired of seeing him so often, and no one would give him anything. So he went to the stables of the T'ien family, and made a living as a horse-doctor's servant. The people in the suburbs made fun of him:

'Don't you think it a disgrace to be kept by a horse-doctor?'

'There is nothing in the world more disgraceful than to beg. If even begging did not disgrace me, how can I be disgraced by a horse-doctor?'

There was a man of Sung who was strolling in the street and picked up **a half** tally someone had lost. He took it home and stored it away, and secretly counted the indentations of the broken edge. He told a neighbour:

'I shall be rich any day now.'

There was a man who owned a withered *wu-t'ung* tree. The old man next door **said** that a withered *wu-t'ung* is unlucky, so he

hurried to chop it down. The man next door took the chance to beg it for firewood. This displeased him.

The old man next door taught me to chop it down simply because he wanted it for firewood. That my own neighbour should be so tricky!'

There was a man who lost his axe, and suspected the boy next door. He watched the boy walking: he had stolen the axe! His expression, his talk, his behaviour, his manner, everything about him betrayed that he had stolen the axe.

Soon afterwards the man was digging in his garden and found the axe. On another day he saw the boy next door again; nothing in his behaviour and manner suggested that he would steal an axe.

The Duke of Pai was meditating rebellion. Coming out of court, he stood leaning on his horse-goad, without remembering to hold it right way up. The point stuck in his cheek and the blood ran down to the ground, but he did not notice it.

`If he forgets his own head,' said the men of Cheng when they heard of it, is there anything he will not forget?' (I)

When a man's thoughts are fixed on something, he walks stumbling over treestumps and holes, and knocking his head on door-posts and trees, without coming to himself.

Note. (r) The men of Cheng had killed the Duke of Pai's father (cf. p.16'7 **above). They** think he has forgotten it; actually his plans of revenge are the reason for his absent-mindedness.

Once there was a man of Ch'i who wanted gold. At dawn he put on his coat and cap and set out for market. He went to the

stall of a dealer in gold, snatched his gold and made off The police caught him and questioned him.

'Why did you snatch somebody else's gold in front of so many people?'

'At the time when I took it, I did not see the people, I only saw the gold.'

Short Reading List

TRANSLATIONS

Tao-te-ching:

J. J. L. Duyvendak, *Tao to thing,* Wisdom of the East, London, 1954.
Arthur Waley, *The Way and its Power,* London, 1934.

Chuang-tzŭ :

H. A. Giles, *Chuang Tzŭ,* 2nd edition (revised), London, 1926.
Musings of a Chinese Mystic (selective translation), Wisdom of the East, London, 1906.
R. Wilhelm, *Dschuang Dsi* (German), Leipzig, 1940.
Y. L. Fung, *Chuang Tzŭ* (English translation of ch. 1-7), Shanghai Commercial Press, 1931.

Lieh-tzŭ :

Lionel Giles, *Taoist Teachings from the Book of Lieh-Tzŭ* (selective translation), Wisdom of the East, London, 1912.
R. Wilhelm, *Lid Dsi* (German), Jena, 1921.
A. Forke, *Young Chu's Garden of Pleasure* (translation of ch. 7), Wisdom of the East, London, 1912.

Tao-te-ching, Chuang-tzŭ and *Lieh-tzŭ:*

L. Wieger, *Les peres du systeme Taoiste,* 1913.

GENERAL

H. Creel, *What is Taoism?* Journal of the American Oriental Society, vol. 76, No. 3 (July 1956), pp. 139-52.
Y. L. Fung, *History of* ***Chinese Philosophy,*** translated Derk Bodde, 2 vols., Princeton, 1952.
H. Maspero, *Le Taoisme (Melanges posthumes sur les religions et l'histoire de la Chine,* vol. 2), Paris, 1950.
Arthur Waley, *Three Ways of Thought in Ancient China,* London, 1939. (Part 1, *Chuang Tzŭ).*

Textual Notes

Most of the variants and emendations used in the translation are conveniently assembled in the *Lieh-tzŭ chi-shi*[p] of Yang Po-chiin (Shanghai, 1958). But I have made a few further emendations, and there are also cases where Yang Po-chiin omits important evidence.

Editions, unless otherwise stated, are those of the *Ssŭpu ts'ung-k'an.*

p. 21, *ff.* '... these are all examples of things altering'. This clause, needed to complete the sentence, and echoed in Chang Chan's comment, is preserved only in a parallel passage quoted from *Chuang-tzŭ* in T'*ai-p'ing yii-lan,* 887.

p. 33 · In *Tao-te-ching,* ch. 43, the words *ch'u yi*, 'comes out from', have been displaced from the text into Wang Pi's commentary. Cf. Kao Heng, *Lao-tzŭ cheng-ku* (Peking 1956), 98.

p. 43, ll. 15, 23. Read *shu,* 'quickly' (Mathews, No. 5505), for *shu,* 'number', as in *Tao-te-ching,* ch. 5. Cf. Kao Heng, 15.

p. 44, l. 11. The translation omits a long repetition, as does the parallel in *Chuang-tzŭ,* 7/IoB.

p. 49, 1. 23. ? *ke,* 'hard' (Mathews, No. 3368, with Radical, 148), for *chieh,* 'loosen'. Cf. Waley, *Three Ways of Thought in Ancient China,* 274 (Note for p. 81).

p. 52, 1. 7. ? su, 'spent the night' (Mathews, No. 5498), for *tung chih,* 'went East', with the parallel in *Chuang-tzŭ,* 7/28A.

p. 53, 1. 9 · ? *erh t'ung,* 'and are the same' (Mathews, Nos. 1756, 6615), for *kang,* 'hard', with the parallel in *Huai-nan-tzŭ,* 1/9B.

p. 88, 1. 8. ? *chih,* 'stop' (Radical, 77), for *hsin,* 'heart'. Cf. *Journal of Oriental Studies,* 2/2 (July 1955), 287, n. 24.

p. 95, 1. I. *Chang* Chan twice implies that his text, which is the ancestor of all others, read *wu chin,* 'inexhaustible', for yu *chin,* 'exhaustible' *(Lieh-tzŭ chi-shih,* 92/13, 94/13. Yang Po-chiin does not mention the latter).

p. 105, 11.21–23. '... because he let out and drew in the line following the pull and give of the water'. There is more evidence for restoring this clause to the text than Yang Po-chiin (107/10) admits. Cf. Wang Shu-min, *Lieh-tzŭ pu-cheng* (Commercial Press, 1948), 3/27A.

p. 153, 1. 14. ? *tsai,* 'again' (Mathews, No. 6658), for *ho,* 'what'. Cf. T'*ang* Ching-kao, *Lieh-tzŭ (Kuo-hsŭeh hsŭeh-sheng ts'ung-shu),* 73.